

**NEPALI MODERNITY IN THE BACKDROP OF SOUTH ASIAN
MODERNITY**

A Dissertation

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in

ENGLISH

By

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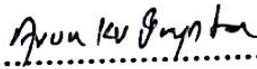
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April 2016

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that that this dissertation entitled “Nepali Modernity in the Backdrop of South Asian Modernity” was prepared by Komal Prasad Phuyal under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examinations by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY in ENGLISH.

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APPROVAL LETTER

This dissertation entitled **Nepali Modernity in the Backdrop of South Asian Modernity** was submitted by **Komal Prasad Phuyal** for final examination by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**. I hereby certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore accepted it for the degree.

Prof. Chinta Manj Pokharel, PhD
Dean and Chairman
Research Committee

Date: 18/04/2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Dissertation is my own work and it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind and any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

K Phuyal
.....

Komal Prasad Phuyal

Date: *17* April 2016

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ABSTRACT

This research argues that Nepali modernity can be approached through two features: influence and initiation. Studying Nepal in the backdrop of South Asia, I examine both similarities and the differences between two modernities. This study makes use of literary and historical texts to analyze Nepali modernity, and critical and theoretical texts to outline the contours of South Asian modernity. I take the conventional geography of South Asia in order to locate the regional backdrop for analysis of Nepali modernity. In this context, the distinct position of Nepali modernity is perceived in South Asian cultural milieu even while the local shares certain attributes with the regional. Since the historical jolts that are reflected in historical transformation are the crucial points for examination in such study of modernity, both Nepali and South Asian modernities show variation in terms of social change and its various dimensions like the nature of subjectivity formation, the approach to assert agency, the formation of social imagination, and the quest for social well-being. The way of relating each category with the ethos of present also displays that South Asia is deeply affected by the colonial encounter whereas Nepal still continues to maintain its associations with classically established practices in the past.

Through content analysis of the literary and historical texts, this study examines modernity in relation to social change in that formation of subjectivity, evolution of agency, projection of social imagination, and the drive to social well-being which appear in historical transformation are found in such texts. The social structures shape human personality in terms with the prevailing norms, whereby resulting in subjectivity. In other words, subjectivity is conceptually linked and grounded in the notion of tradition. Thus, it reasserts the notion of influence in

examination of modernity. Similarly, as a major dynamics of modernity, agency helps understand the nature of change by analyzing the absences in society in quest for new attributes. Agency identifies the lapses in the social structures in order to contribute to larger cause of equality and freedom. In fact, initiation in modernity finds itself in the formation of agency in society. Likewise, both influence and initiation find balance in social imagination that play a very crucial role in identifying the core issues and approach to address them in the process of social change since drive of such change is directed towards social well-being. Thus, the frame of analysis focuses on influence and initiation as the frame for analysis of both modernities.

Nepali modernity turns within its own structure of underlying social codes in order to seek the areas promoting inequalities and contradictions. In the historical shifts at multiple points, the society has itself corrected through revision and rewriting. This study primarily analyzes literary writings by Dharanidhar Koirala, Gopal Prasad Rimal, Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Bal Krishna Sama, Bhawani Bhikshu and Krishna Dharabasi, and historical texts from Chandra Shumsher, Ganesh Man Singh, and Diamond Shumsher Rana to discuss the first phase of historical transformation in Nepal's quest for widening the horizons of agency in all the people. Similarly, literary texts by Bhupi Sherchan, Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan, Parijat, Sankar Lamichhane, and Madan Mani Dixit, and historically significant narrative of B.P. Koirala, *Jail Journal* have been taken to determine the nature and course of social transformation in Nepal after establishment of democratic polity in 1950. In order to examine South Asia, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi have been taken as the primary icons. Besides, the secondary resources that interpret and examine the primary sources have been profusely consulted in the course of study.

Placing Nepali modernity in the backdrop of South Asia, the dynamics of Nepali modernity and South Asian modernity have been devised so as to examine how close and/or far each of them appears in the graph. Whereas South Asian resistance is directed against the colonial impact in the social structure and composition of subjectivity, the abolition of two social systems like Sati and Slavery, and the collective aspiration to set up a democratic polity appear as the part of collective quest for a 'just society' in Nepal. The social aspiration is directed towards attaining reconfiguration of the underlying codes in order to attain the ultimate possible realization of human agency through liberty and equality.

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CHAPTER 1. MODERNITY: INFLUENCE AND INITIATION

Nepali modernity holds a unique position in the backdrop of South Asian modernity: the former shares certain attributes with the latter while Nepal still holds certain typical features different from South Asia. Since the study is based on the discourses of multiple modernities, the two modernities in question have been studied as both dissimilar and complementary. Nepali modernity has developed as the outcome of the initiatives to organize and democratize society, emerging from the various movements like the struggle for democracy in the 1940s and 1950s. It has also addressed some fundamental questions of slavery and sati which was eradicated in the process of social awakening. Society writes off certain contradictions in its structure through revision and rewriting when it realizes that there exist such problems. In the backdrop of South Asia, ways of relating to the contemporary social reality are influenced by socio-political trends in the region. Analyzing various similarities and dissimilarities between the local and the regional modernities, this study presents that Nepali modernity can be understood through two basic characteristics: influence and initiation.

This study proposes that influence appears as the pivotal attribute in perceiving Nepali modernity. The literary and historical texts that have been studied for this research show that the historical and mythical structures appear and reappear in process of social advancement in Nepal in order to understand the nature of contemporary reality. The continuous flow of the past in the present that is manifest in the form of temporal dimension in formation of modernity implies that the traditional attributes and features function as a background for the emergent properties to stand on their own. The factors that are discontent with the nature of contemporary state of

affair do not completely dislocate the agency. These factors help agency renew and recharge itself through revision and rewriting; yet, they firmly maintain its place in historical tradition. Furthermore, past serves agency a source of knowledge in order to provide it with mythical and historical narratives that help understand the nature of contemporary reality on the one hand, and relate the present to the self and self to the present on the other. The contemporary nature of reality shows influence as one of its prime attributes. Thus, Nepali modernity exhibits influence as its key feature.

Modernity in Nepal is founded on the ways of perceiving and relating to human participants of social transformation. First of all, evaluation of human being in the prevailing social structure is the first condition in preparation for change. The evolution of subjectivity that leads to formation of collectivity in the process of change in Nepal is seen as founded in the continual evolution from the past. In this sense, Nepali subjectivity does not view the past as a dark category in that the mythical historical structures become a lens to interpret, evaluate, and question the contemporary reality and social well-being as quest of society. The literary and historical documents like Madan Mani Dixit's *Mādhavi* (2039 B.S.) and Chandra Shumsher's "Slavery Abolition Speech" (1981 B.S.) substantially depend on mythical and historical references to establish and justify their argument against slavery in specific and in general oppression of every form imposed upon human subjectivity. Similarly, Krishna Dharabasi's "Jholā" presents the historical jolts that write off the sati as a social institution. In both cases, the change retains the influence of the past in that the contemporary reality does not perceive itself in terms with the different, isolated state from the past. Rather, the present finds itself as a revised form of the past. Nepali society asserts complementary relationship between modernity and

tradition since the present that evolves out of the past as the repository of mythical and historical attributes also revises the contradictions, forcing limitation upon agency to exercise liberty and freedom.

Secondly, this study attributes initiation as the other characteristic feature of Nepali modernity. In order to bring about newness in social structure, society activates social agency through formation of collective voice. The emergent voice in the process of social change finds itself as the spirit of the collective subjectivity which is the effect of the structure. Subjectivity and agency are intertwined in influence and initiation since they are two dimension of the personhood. Subjectivity emerges as the effect of the structure while agency functions as the cause of the structure. The underlying contradictions of the society and the lapses therein are pointed out in this process so as to correct the course of action to freedom and liberty. With reference to the texts selected from Nepali literature and history, I have analyzed the process of change. For instance, Madan Mani Dixit's *Mādhavi* and B. P. Koirala's *Jail Journal* refer to the time devoid of human dignity and freedom. Dixit critiques the contemporary social problem through mythical narrative of Gālav and Mādhavi while Koirala posits himself in the present to delve into the problem of his time. Furthermore, Krishna Dharabashi's "Jholā" or Chandra Shumsher's "Slavery Abolition Speech" presents the willingness on the part of Nepali agency to identify the problems deeply rooted in the social structure. Dharabashi focuses on the social system sati that was eradicated from Nepal some five years earlier than slavery. The initiation does not assume break from its historical foundation. On the contrary, initiation in Nepali modernity leads to rewriting and revision in the underlying structure in order to reward the people with more freedom and liberty.

The texts selected for the study show that the points of historical and social transformations present the negotiation of two ages in which the preceding age loses certain attributes as the succeeding time imposes the expectations of the social agency. More significantly, Nepali history also presents the case of complete extermination of social institutions like the sati and slavery that promoted inequalities among humans. The nature of social change in Nepal exemplifies that the agents begin to relate the process as both personal and collective social enterprise. In such process of change that is both personally and socially interpreted as necessary for the betterment of social organization, self-sacrifice is seen as the foundational attribute which aspires to bring about social welfare as exemplified in *Mādhavi* through Mādhavi and Gālav. Thus, two ages are brought together in historical transformation through self-sacrifice and social welfare in Nepal.

Studying modernity in South Asia through the selected text, this study identifies four major dynamics, namely, tradition and culture, representation, resistance, and social imagination to locate the regional modernity. When they are observed through the frame of influence-initiation, the first category falls under influence in that South Asian modernity is continuously evolving phenomenon. Similarly, representation as the second dynamics can be located somewhere between influence and initiation since representation of the self in this modernity is both rooted in tradition and founded in accordance with the changing ethos of time. Likewise, resistance and social imagination which this study introduces as two remaining dynamics of South Asian modernity fall into initiation. The colonial past of the region largely results in resistance, for the imperial forces exercise coercion in quest of profit from the local resources. In this process of material quest of the imperial power, the

original and the pure from the society were lost. Hence, initiation in such situation refers to reconstruction of the self in order to help oneself and the society as their own.

This study also finds linkage between initiation and heterogeneity in that multiplicity in South Asian modernity implies multiple initiations within it. In this region, modernity finds expression in the heterogeneity in cultural practices, geography, and language. The heterogeneity also contributes to the formation of dynamics of modernity in the region. Besides, the colonial encounter of the region with European rule further adds to the diversity of historical experiences in the region. As the spirit of fleeting time, modernity in South Asia gets expressed in four major dynamics: tradition and culture, representation, resistance, and social imagination. In quest of empowering the agency, the social quest faces the colonial rule as a hindrance. The foreign values imposed in the region created a seemingly strong layer between the aspiration of the mass and the decisions of the ruling elite. The colonial rule and the public aspiration could not come to any kind of agreement, whereby creating in distance between each other: it resulted in a deep chasm between the rule and the people. Hence, the regional modernity is shaped by the colonial content to a significant degree. The loss resulting from colonial intrusion in this region seeks high attention in attempting to understand its modernity. The cultural encounter with the imperial forces has led to loss, modification, and production of some of its features. Therefore, South Asian modernity incorporates the issues of cruelty and violence in transformation of the region. Also, the reconstruction of historical discourses appears major debate in South Asian modernity.

South Asian modernity celebrates and valorizes the past, tradition, and culture.

It assumes that social organization and political configuration are deeply rooted in the classically established principles of life and society which get revised and rewritten as and when necessary. Unlike the Western modernity that assumes that immaturity lies in past, modernity in South Asia values the cultural contents from past. The issue of representation in this modernity emanates from quest for the pure precolonial past as well since the cultural encounter with the colonial rule in South Asia had resulted in significant amount of influence of foreign cultural and social practice upon the native mode of living. The nationalist arousal in South Asian society is also informed by the results of quest for self-representation and rewriting the misrepresented domains of social life during colonial rule. Mahatma Gandhi's resistance and Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of nationalism are placed at the core of this study because of their resistance to social and political practice. The political philosophy of the time is largely shaped and articulated as social need to cope up with the changing mode of perception at the regional level. Both of them shaped the social imagination which results in substantial transformation of the region in general.

In this context, Nepali modernity finds its typical expression in the South Asian cultural milieu. The regional and the local share some of the feature and still the local asserts some of its own approach to influence and initiation. The historical landscape of South Asia shows that the major part of the region was under the colonial rule in the beginning of the twentieth century when the social collective began to evolve with a voice to transform the situation. Both Nepal and South Asia seek refinement in tradition, implying historical evolution in society. Unlike the Western modernity that is founded on Immanuel Kant's argument of immaturity of past, South Asian and Nepali modernity do not perceive historical and traditional

practices as the matters to be condemned. In fact, both modernities are rooted in the classical values that get revised and rewritten as society proceeds in its quest for reorganizing itself for the collective gain. The quest for empowering the social agency through self-reflection is present in both modernities.

However, the form of resistance appears differently in two modernities. The colonial context of the regional modernity under discussion provides the ground for it to resist the foreign culture and rule. Mahatma Gandhi's struggle for independence is an illustrative instance that employs resistance as a means of struggle. In Nepali history, the society turns to seek for the structural inequalities and contradictions as evident in Slavery, Sati, and establishment of democratic polity in 1950. The society turns into the inner configuration to examine the roots of the social evils. The subjectivity thus produced begins to relate itself to the emerging trends of representation. The post-independence context also illustrates the desire to correct the course and reconstruct the damages imposed upon national history. In the regional modernity, the nationalist quest appears in such a way that the issues of representation in own discourses and the colonial discourses gains prominence whereas Nepali modernity presents representation as collective approach to social ills and call for change.

1.1 Selection of Texts

This study is carried along the line of thought that modernity is best reflected in historico-political shift/transformation of society. In a particular point of history when the social forces negotiate in formulating a new state that the collective voice of society projects through its aspiration, the totality of social milieu can be observed. The texts theorizing the social change and arguing for various possibilities of

theorizing such state of social life have been consulted for the philosophical debate and scholarship on modernity as such. The major thinkers of modernity from Immanuel Kant have been incorporated in this study. The debate is further carried on by Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Jean-François Lyotard, and Richard Rorty. This study has also been much benefitted from the ideas of Peter Wagner and S. N. Eisenstadt. Peter Wagner provides the modes of theorizing modernity while S. N. Eisenstadt gives the epistemological frame of reference to theorize every modernity in their own ways. The ideas of Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Volker H. Schmidt have been brought as both of them present counter possibilities to what Eisenstadt presents as the frame for multiple modernities. Both Gaonkar and Schmidt accept that the West is the center and source for modernity to emerge and propagate to the areas lying outside it. The key readings from the stated authors have also been supplemented with some other texts that have made elaborate discussion on the key ideas propagated by the authors.

With the theoretical framework from the philosophical debate on modernity, the study examines the South Asian modernity and Nepali modernity. For the discussion on South Asian modernity, the research study uses Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, and Amartya Sen. This kind of selection of text may give rise to a doubt about heavy domination of Indic influence in formation of what is known as the South Asian. When Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj* [Indian Home Rule] in 1909, he analyzed the effects of colonialism in Indian societies. The document functions in the form of resistance, a means to organize social movement for independence. Gandhi thus provides both content and method to fight against the

structural problems in South Asian societies. Similarly, when Rabindranath Tagore discusses about the form and nature of nationalism in 1917, he has cosmopolitan vision for the region. Moreover, he is the only person in the world who has contributed his poems as national anthems of three nations in South Asia at present: India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Furthermore, the notions of nation and statehood appear in his argument as the cultural zones, variously maintained in his time in the region. Spivak's *The Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Chakrabarty's *Habitations of Modernity*, and Chatterjee's *Our Own Modernity* collectively claim that the colonial societies have remained misrepresented and they need to struggle to rescue themselves from the discourses of the colonizers. Thus, as Chatterjee states the struggle turns out to be towards gaining a nationalist momentum in theorizing modernity. Besides, other texts methodologically dealing with the historical, political, and social transformation of the region have been adequately reviewed to bring about the whole picture of regional modernity. Since this study centers itself in the social transformation resulting in independence from the British Raj, specific issues of Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka have not been dealt in detail.

Like epistemological frame of modernity and South Asian modernity, Nepali modernity has been studied by bringing historical jolts as reflected through historical and literary documents into scrutiny and theorizing. The major literary texts from Dharanidhar Koirala, Gopal Prasad Rimal, Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Bal Krishna Sama, Bhawani Bhikshu and Krishna Dharabasi, and historical texts from Chandra Shumsher, Ganesh Man Singh, and Diamond Shumsher Rana have been taken for the analysis of first phase of historical transformation in quest for widening the horizons of agency in all the people. Similarly, literary texts by Bhupi Sherchan,

Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan, Parijat, Sankar Lamichhane, and Madan Mani Dixit, and historically significant narrative of B.P. Koirala, *Jail Journal* have been taken to determine the nature and course of social transformation in Nepal after establishment of democratic polity in 1950. The section on Nepali modernity also benefits from the revolt presented in Dixit's *Mādhavi* which parallels the author's quest to break free the chains of the authoritarian rule in the Panchayat era. During the course of the research, Dixit has elaborately discussed on the socio-political dimension of the time he had written the novel in an audio interview with this researcher. The interview has also been used as a text to substantiate the argument in this study.

The texts used for analysis of Nepali modernity carry both local and regional significance. For instance, Madan Mani Dixit's *Mādhavi* presents Mādhavi and Gālav travelling through thirteen states of the Subcontinent. In this sense, the novel brings the narrative of the region on the one hand; on the other, it presents the need to resist against the tyranny of socio-political system in order to assert that human agency can break free the rigidity of social structure. When Dixit tells such tale during the peak hours of the Panchayat era, he fights against the whole political system as well (Personal Interview). Likewise, Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan's "A Letter from Gautam Buddha to Asoka" delves in to the local and the regional issues at the same time. In fact, Pradhan celebrates the local for its share in the regional. The dialogue between the Buddha and the Emperor Asoka turns significant in that both require the other in order to gain full dynamism in the region. The text chosen for the research carry both local and regional significance in that the research is built on epistemological ground of multiple modernities.

1.2 Methodology

This research is framed along the qualitative approach with the basic mode of interpretation of historical and literary documents. As part of content analysis to explore the various facets of historical and literary crisscross in the development of social imagination, this study employs inductive mode of reasoning when exemplars are brought about in order to reach the generalities about the society at local and regional level. Such instances are taken from various historical and social treatises, and literary writings. As this study assumes that the organization of society and modification of the rules completely rely on the course of social imagination which shapes the subjectivity and the perception of the contemporary reality. The society that does not find the contemporary lens to relate itself with the contemporary reality and the spirit of the age to its self fails to attain its potential. The values underlying in the social structure function as the most significant impetus for such kind of organization of society. This sort of study of configuration of social functioning falls under the qualitative paradigm of research.

Also, this study makes use of grounded theory as the method of arriving at conclusion. According to this mode of reasoning, this study brings together the historical and literary evidences in order to draw mediate inferences and reach at the generalities that can function as the theory of modernity for Nepal and South Asia. For one thing, the crisscross of the history and social imagination as evident through literary writings are highlighted; for the other, the perception of contemporary reality as reviewed through the mythical structure in the changed situation is also brought into the frame of analysis. Thus, the generalities about modernity in Nepal and South Asia, and the concluding section that discusses the former in the cultural milieu of the

latter are fully developed through the content analysis and employment of grounded theory as approach to arrive at the conclusion.

Some of the literary and historical texts used for analysis in this section are published in Nepali language. I have myself translated the texts for the purpose of textual discussion. These texts include Diamond Shumsher's *Seto Bāgh*, Madan Mani Dixit's *Mādhavi*, Krishna Dharabasi's "Jholā," B. P. Koirala's *Jail Journal*, Gopal Prasad Rimal's "Āmāko Sapana" [Mother's Dream], Ganesh Raj Sharma's "Bhumikā" [Foreword] to *Jail Journal*, Bhupi Sherchan's "Ek Kabitā" [A Poem], Chandra Shumsher's "Kariyā Amlekha Speech" [Slavery Abolition Speech], Ganesh Man Singh's "Shree Teen Prabhuko Swargārohan" [Arrival of His Highness Lord Mohan at the Heaven], and Dharanidhar Koirala's "Jāga, Jāga" [A National Call] and "Swatantratā" [Freedom]. The citations from the texts are my own translation.

1.3 Plan of the Dissertation

The study focuses on characteristics of Nepali modernity that can be understood as influence and initiation. This research is organized in an order that exemplifies Nepali modernity (presented in Chapter 4) in relation to the selected historical and literary documents. I show the connection of Nepali modernity with South Asian modernity (presented in Chapter 3) by presenting the discourse on Western modernity (presented in Chapter 2) as the point of reference providing frame of study for other modernities. The dissertation of this research has been presented in five chapters. The first chapter presents three key domains the research: selection of texts, methodology, and the plan for organization of the dissertation. After I discuss the functional understanding of modernity as a concept in this study, I present in the first chapter the basic conceptualization of South Asian modernity and Nepali

modernity. Then, it examines both the points of conversance and divergence between them. Stating the specific features of the literary and historical texts, the chapter then states the hypothesis, presents a list of major works reviewed, devises methodological procedure adopted for the study, and ends the chapter with plan of the dissertation on the whole.

The second chapter focuses on the key notions of modernity as it is variously practiced in a variety of discourses. Conceptually locating the Western discourse on modernity as a point of reference, this chapter examines the epistemological set-up of the western modernity and the ways to overcome its limitation. Many approaches have been devised in order to understand the formation of modernity as it is assumed that every society forms its own modern state with some unique features underlying every modernity. As a matter of fact, modernity greatly varies from society to society and from one point of time in history to the other point of time since the ways and content of every society so as to relate to the contemporaneity differ in themselves. The second chapter builds the epistemological base for the whole research in that it presents the heterogeneous dimensions of modernity and concludes that modernity as a field of contestation is heterogeneous and multiple. Finally, it presents a telescopic purview of the terrain of both Nepali and South Asian modernity.

The third chapter examines the South Asian modernity in detail. Since this chapter seeks to see the social transition of the region in the 1930s and 1940s, Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi are placed at the focal position of the chapter. Still, later social scientists like Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gyan Prakash and Gayatri Spivak have adequately been brought into discussion to provide the basic argument with critical support of the theoretical frame. Four major dynamics of South

Asian modernity, viz, tradition and culture, representation, resistance, and social imagination have found their due place in the discussion of South Asian modernity in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter delves into the key concerns of Nepali modernity as evidenced through literary and historical documents reflecting the process of social change in Nepal. Looking at the issues of temporality, negotiation between ages, revision and rewriting of the society to do away with certain evil institutions, the emergence of new voice and formation of the collective, self-sacrifice and social welfare, and finally subjectivity as composition of Nepali self, Nepali modernity is discussed in detail so as to present the development of ethos of contemporaneity in Nepal.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation concludes the study by examining Nepali modernity by placing it in the backdrop of South Asian modernity. This chapter presents a comparison and contrast between two modernities at regional and local level. Finally, this chapter also states the implication of this research for future research. Lastly, the dissertation presents a list of the works that are cited in developing the arguments. The plan of dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 1. Modernity: Influence and Initiation

Chapter 2. Modernities: Singular vs Multiple

Chapter 3. South Asian Modernity

Chapter 4. Nepali Modernity

Chapter 5. Modernity: Nepal in South Asia

Works Cited

CHAPTER 2. MODERNITIES: SINGULAR VS MULTIPLE

This study presents that Nepali modernity expresses itself through influence and initiation in South Asian cultural milieu. This global claim requires that modernity be discussed as the frame of reference for the study. Since the focus of the study is Nepali modernity as it appears in the backdrop of South Asian study, this chapter prepares a theoretical ground for modernity by bringing together the scholarly debate on it. The focus of this chapter lies in modernity as both concept and method to study the process through which every society finds its expression and realization of potentiality for equality and freedom. In this context, I build my argument in the multiplicity of modernities after assessing the limitations of singular modernity.

Nepal presents some of the typical ways in the formation of its modernity even while it shares some of the features with modernity in South Asia. Modernity in general finds its expression through various dimensions ranging from temporal development to structural changes that bring about various values. Seen from the jolt in which the two ages come to dialogue and negotiate with each other, the process of relating to the spirit of the age emerges as the project of social revision and rewriting in that the issues hindering the ultimate potentials of human subjectivity are revised and rewritten in such ways that allow the ultimate possible realization of human potential. In this process of change the people participating in the process of social change find their unique voice while in quest of liberty and equality. The historical experience from Nepal shows that two evil institutions, namely, the Sati and the Slavery, were abolished in the social evolution in order that the dignity of all the members of society be maintained as human beings. The social imagination that resisted the external forces in the colonial societies of other South Asian societies

turns into own social structure in order to explore and correct the contradictions underlying in Nepali society.

The present research studies Nepali modernity through influence and initiation as its major attributes and analyzes dynamics of Nepali modernity in relation to that of South Asia. This chapter discusses scholarly debate of modernity as it appeared in the beginning in the West. In the Enlightenment discourses of modernity, the idea of homogeneity was firstly perceived as the West saw industrial revolution and rationalization of the society at that time. However, later scholarship that focuses on cultural forces in the formation of understanding in relation to modernity leads to accept heterogeneity as the feature of modernity. This chapter brings in both line of argument in order to set the frame of reference for modernity.

Modernity refers to a state of achieving the ethos of time at present in its literal sense. The contemporariness marks the achievement. The quest for freedom (as opposed to tyranny), liberty (as opposed to bondage), and broader awareness – often leading to global and/or cosmic awareness (as opposed to parochialism) – are the major dimensions that help understand the level of contemporariness in any society. Primarily, the debate was begun in the enlightenment discourses of German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724 -1804), who attempted to show it as an ahistorical state. In fact, Kant heavily relied on the rationalization as a liberating force, failing to grasp the ethos of freedom. Surely, both industrialization and democratization lead to achieve greater liberty and awareness by opposing bondage and parochialism of any sort in society. However, the questions relating to freedom vs tyranny do not get answered through his analysis. Besides, the observations of Western European (Germany, France, and England) socio-politico-historical development function at the

core of the enlightenment discourses on modernity that claim itself as an ahistorical development. The present study comes across the multiple problems in the Singular (Western) Modernity that assumes that it arrives at homogeneous, unified state in every society.

Presuming that every society possesses within themselves their unique approach to transform themselves and thus bring about their own modernity, this study in this introductory chapter discusses, in brief, various approaches to view modernity. Various tools to assess modernity have been devised thus far in the academic debate. Primarily, discussing singular modernity as developed in Immanuel Kant, Jürgen Habermas, Peter Wagner, and other relevant studies, the chapter moves on to examine its offshoots as evident in the various discussions outside singular modernity approach. As the methodological approach, the following section is built around the notion of multiple modernities as advanced by S. N. Eisenstadt (1923-2010) who argues the every society is uniquely organized on some primary assumptions that drive it to the achievement of unique sort through modernity. On the whole, following multiple modernities as both methodological and epistemological paradigm of the research, the chapter moves to the discourse of South Asian modernity. South Asia presents a fertile site of observation of struggle for all the key dimensions of modernity: awareness, liberty, and freedom. Finally, a very brief survey of Nepali modernity is presented through the readings of critical and creative writings from Nepal. Examining the three dimensions of modernity, preliminary understanding of Nepali modernity is brought about in the final section of this chapter.

2.1. Modernity in the West

Modernity in the West basically dwells around the key notion of reason that gathers excessive faith in the Enlightenment discourse in general and Immanuel Kant (1724 -1804) in specific. The line of thinking in the twentieth century is carried further on by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1929-). For both of them, the

social transformation revolves around the key notion of reason and rationality. Their analyses of the Western form of modernity are basically based on the political changes of the West: Glorious Revolution of England in 1688, Declaration of Independence in the US in 1776, and the French Revolution in 1789. The first in these events is the point of departure for capitalism to grow in the West whereas the latter two mark as the turning point in understanding of people about themselves. Hence, the 1776- and 1789-event show people's aspiration for democracy –a belief in the sovereign autonomy of people. In this regard, the Western modernity attempts to generate a theory that modernity –which is also the story of being updated with the ethos of the present – emerges a bifurcate process of democratization in political transformation and industrialization in economic mode of production, both leading to social transformation.

Modernity basically attempts to update the social structures with the ethos of present. In this sense, the temporal dimension of modernity is also implicitly expressed in this understanding. Besides, modernity gets manifest in the ways of relating the social reality to oneself and oneself to such reality that can be observed in every period of history. Jürgen Habermas etiologically surveys:

The word 'modern' in its Latin form 'modernus' was used for the first time in the late 5th century in order to distinguish the present, which had become officially Christian, from the Roman and pagan past. With varying content, the term 'modern' again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new. ("Modernity vs Postmodernity" 3)

Habermas does not see sudden emergence; rather, he seeks to establish chain in tradition and thus link the later development with the previous ones. Still, tradition appears as the temporal space that lacks certain aspects prevalent in the present form of life. Depicting this form of life more negatively, Kant uses the term ‘immaturity’ which he finds relevant to abandon in quest of a matured state. The matured state for him implies the enlightened stage of life. Answering the question “What is Enlightenment?” posed in *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in 1784, Kant argues, “Enlightenment is mankind’s release from its self-incurred immaturity” (58). The negative portrayal of tradition lies at the root of Kantian definition of enlightenment. Both Kant and Habermas view the past in negative terms. The tradition or the past does not offer a desired state for people to enjoy the bliss of life.

Kantian quest for the Enlightenment rests on the notion of freedom. He argues that only freedom to public use of reason can enlighten every mind, leading to the state of modernity. He emphasizes on freedom as the primary attribute to attain the state of modernity since he sees the prospect of use of reason in a society that is guaranteed with freedom. The limit imposed upon exercise of agency and reason results in a state where the human subjects are devoid of agency. In this sense, Kant states, “For this enlightenment, however, nothing more is required than *freedom*; and indeed the most harmless form of all the things that may be called freedom: namely, the freedom to make a *public use* of one’s reason in all matters” (emphases in original 59). For him, human action in quest of fulfilling the inner that is guided by apriori reason makes history. Human release from immaturity that he believes to be the precondition for the Enlightenment to emerge results from human quest for freedom on the one hand and autonomy on the other. The freedom and autonomy of individual

in Kantian discourse arise from reason as the “inner spirit of the external laws” (Richard B. Day 9). The inner in Kantian argument about modernity refers to the higher form of rationalization which he firmly believes brings about a state of equality and freedom for everybody.

Kant’s philosophy of history leads to the formulation of totality based on ‘apriori history’ whereas Habermas assumes that socio-economic circumstances objectify human subjects. The fundamental difference between the two comes into stage when the latter rejects the possibility of ‘apriori history,’ arguing that the totality of philosophy has collapsed (Day 5). However, the transcendental project that Kant envisioned in the beginning of the discourse on modernity is still maintained in Habermas when the latter discusses the feature of modernity thus:

Modernity revolts against the normalizing functions of tradition; modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative. The revolt is one way to neutralize the standards of both morality and utility. The aesthetic consciousness continuously stages a dialectical play between secrecy and public scandal; it is addicted to a fascination with that horror which accompanies the act of profaning, and yet is always in flight from the trivial results of profanation.

(“Modernity –An Incomplete Project” 1750)

The negative portrayal of history in the Western discourses of modernity is thus heavily rooted in the foundation of reason as the ultimate drive to bring about enlightenment in society. For Habermas, the unity of aesthetics, ethics, and science was the basic agenda of the Enlightenment philosophy which was variously disturbed at different junctures of history (1754); thus, he argues that modernity as a project

begun in the Enlightenment could not complete.

Kant visions the transcendental mode of reasoning as the ultimate source of generating meaning and liberating society from the dictation of outside forces and Habermas carries on with it in seeking the unity of life world. Joining the long line of debate on modernity, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) sees “man’s relation to present, man’s historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject” (“What is Enlightenment?” 42) as the three factors deeply rooted in making modernity as propagated through the discourse of the Enlightenment. Both Kant and Habermas in their approach follow transcendental method to explore metaphysics of the universal self. Transcendental method implies the limitation in that it aims at producing certain unchangeable grammar of the self. In order to investigate multiple forces at play in shaping the course of a society at large, Foucault focuses on the historical investigation by asserting critiquing as the most significant approach of the present time. He argues for genealogical approach based on individual aesthetics, for it fulfills two purposes: firstly, it helps “separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think” (“What is Enlightenment?” 46); secondly, conceptualizing the undefined work of freedom becomes impossible. In fact, critiquing Kant, Foucault rejects the idea of transcendental unity or universality for that matter. Arguing for “the necessity and importance of ‘local’ and ‘specific’ contexts” (Patrick McHugh 97) that are multiple and plural, he goes on to present the intellectual in the form of creative artist to refer to ethos of modernity. Patrick McHugh argues:

In order to oppose established interests of power, the new intellectual would analyze contemporary social and institutional organization to

uncover the dynamics of power that establish and sustain that organization, and to show what interests it serves and what interests it opposes. (92)

Foucauldian creative genius emphasizes on the ways of relating contemporary ethos of time to self. The historical analyses provide such intellectual with a vantage point to reframe the lenses through which to understand the present reality.

In search of individual aesthetics as the only way to envision modern subjectivity, Foucault takes creative arts as the locale where creative genius breaks all the oppressive chains and begins to guide the society. For Foucault, aesthetics moves at a greater speed than science and ethics. Unlike Kant who assumes that the modification of pre-existing relation among will (personhood), authority (polity), and the use of reason (method to knowledge) at the occurrence of modernity, Foucault posits human as both element and agent of this process. He argues, “Men are at once elements and agents of a single process” (“What is Enlightenment?” 35) in their attempt to understand the contemporary state of life which produces the condition for future. Also, he goes against Kantian and Habermasian analysis of passing subjective judgment upon history. Rather, he argues that modernity must open up a realm of historical inquiry and must put itself to test of reality when he states, “... the historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical” (“What is Enlightenment?” 46). The uniqueness of the participant/creator of modernity adds to their contemporariness to such an extent that ultimate perspective of the agent is solely rooted in the temporality of the present.

Habermas seeks universal logic of modernity in his quest for homogeneity and universalism as he declares, “...while that which is merely ‘stylish’ will soon become

out moded, that which is modern preserves a secret tie to the classical” (“Modernity vs Postmodernity” 4). The convergence claim aspires to reproduce mindset with the same mould everywhere, paying no heed to the possibility of uniqueness in time and space. Habermas’s secret ties are derived from transcendental mode of reasoning. The ultimate level of abstraction in inductive reasoning surely lead to a particular state in which general statements are possible; yet, the fixed frame targeted for is rooted in Euro-American perspective. The singular modernity aspires to see the world structures emerging as the ultimate outcome of abstractions based in such perspective. Similarly, the ‘classic’ in his use also denotes to the genus of Greco-Roman ideals as the Western intellectual development. On the contrary, Foucault moves against the convergence claim of European form of modernity and argues, “We are now witnessing a globalization of economy? For certain. A globalization of political calculation? Without a doubt. But a universalization of political consciousness – certainly not” (“For an Ethics of Discomfort” 446). Foucault does not accept Kantian and Habermasian mode of transcendental reasoning.

Focusing on the institutional and economic development, the Western modernity is taken as source of homogeneity and rationalization. From Kantian and Habermasian perspective emerges transcendental vantage point for modernity that helps explore similarities where the convergence claim of modernity is grounded. Still, Habermas devises to explain the social development two terms: expert culture and ordinary culture. However, ordinary and expert cultures negotiate to produce the third entity called new subjectivity which is best reflected in literary and creative production in every society. Habermas states, “The profounder paradoxes of *societal* rationalization, however, are still not even touched by the complicated relationships

between the ordinary and expert *cultures*” (“Normative Content of Modernity” 340). Although expert culture tends to lead to homogenization of the world culture, singularist approach fails to see the differences lying in European cultures as well. Besides, ordinary culture as the source, motivation, and context for expert culture makes the administration of expert culture a different thing. As implied in industrialization of economy and democratization of politics, expert culture under globalization dominates the idea of modernity, thereby failing to see the significance of ordinary culture in formation of new subjectivity. The government institutions and market economic functions are taken as the part of expert culture from this perspective. Regarding the birth of rationalized and compartmentalized world systems taking place in current global order, John W. Meyer et al. also argue, “World models have long been in operation as shapers of states and societies, but they have become especially important in the postwar era as the cultural and organizational development of world society has intensified at an unprecedented rate” (145). Hence, the convergence claim does not allow any possibility of developing individual uniqueness, for it aspires at propagation and reproduction of institutional models, whereby paying no attention to the development of aesthetics that encourages creative activities in social domain. The singularist and homogeneous vision of the Western modernity is sustained as long as its focus lies in market economy and bureaucratic administrative state, grounded in expert culture.

Homogeneity that the Western modernity aims at producing is deeply seated in the Enlightenment conceptualization of rationalization. In Kantian form of rationalization, he cannot completely ignore the socio-economic forces working upon individuals in that he says that economic independence alone can enable citizens to

practice the principles of apriori reasons. Thus, Western rationalization on the one hand is intertwined with the industrial development; on the other, capitalism is also at its base for people to achieve the state of justice and harmony. Richard B. Day states, “Only citizens enjoying economic independence could be expected to make political judgment which might approach the requirement of justice” (10). Likewise, Habermas wants aesthetics, ethics, and reason to come together in the formation of modernity as an organic whole. He aspires to achieve modernity with the unity at the transcendental realm whereby attaining perfection in each society aiming at being modern (“Modernity –An Incomplete Project” 1754). The organic structure in Habermasian quest for modernity promotes only the homogeneous structures that economic and scientific forces at transcendental realm make it possible. Still, he does not leave aesthetics as the integral component of this organicity.

Construction of distinct cultural or social identity refers to creating a sense of belongingness to an ‘imagined’ community. It functions as a uniting force at the national level; hence, it can also be taken as the form of national imagination that brings all the divergent groups of people together. Stuart Hall (1932 -), cultural theorist of the modern world, states that the formation of modernity emerges from four basic domains: the polity, the economy, the social structure, and the cultural sphere (7). Construction of distinct cultural or social identity requires organization of language, image, and symbol in that the meaningfulness of a society depends on the shared cognitive domains. For Habermas, the commonality is thus implied:

Not only the devastating consequences of an objectifying relation-to-self are condemned along with this principle of modernity, but also the other connotations once associated with subjectivity as an unredeemed

promise: the prospect of a self-conscious practice, in which the solidarity self-determination of all was to be joined with the self-realization of each. (“Normative Content of Modernity” 337-38)

The cognitive values shared in a people make them a separate entity, different from others and make them a different unit from others, adding in them a sense of being a part of community that, in its broad form, appears as the nation-state. Thus, the polity is also founded on what is shared by the people at the level of their cognitive values.

The convergence claim of modernity upholds that every society achieves similar state of social arrangement after undergoing the process of modernity. In this process of transformation, certain privileged class with assumed divine power to rule others is made to abandon the power. Tiryakian points out that Europe experienced it when “Protestantism stripped the world of the magical mystification associated with the Catholic Church” (83). For one thing, such disenchantment empowers modernity with more vigor to create equality. For the other, it results in the awareness that “human agency was the decisive in this world” (84), whereby making humans responsible of all of their acts. However, arguing that the formation of subjectivity as the principle of modernity leads to subject-centered rationality, Habermas stands against the role of agency in examination of modernity. He accepts that subjectivity is the principle of modernity; however, he goes against the subject centered reasoning that challenges the ethical domain of society. As he observes:

As the principle of modernity, subjectivity was supposed to determine its normative content as well; at the same time, subject-centered reason led to abstractions that fragmented the ethical totality; and yet only self-reflection, which emanated from subjectivity and strove to get

beyond its narrow-mindedness, supposedly proved itself equal to the task of reconciliation. (“Normative Content of Modernity” 347)

For him, the unifying motive always comes to the fore in discussion of modernity. As he implies that focus of modernity on human agency as such shows the prospect of fragmentation in the much-sought unity in various domains of human life, he drops the idea. He thus implies that any attempt to scrutinize modernity through the angle of subjectivity violates the paradigm of homogeneity; and hence, it is forbidden.

Still, one of the most important aspects of modernity is creation of human agency in both understanding and social practice. After the emergence of modernity, the people begin to make themselves responsible of every act of their life. However, the role of human agency shaping the forces of social change and social change reframing the subjectivity is lately discussed in the modernization process. Peter Wagner critically assesses this phenomenon thus:

... modernity refers to a situation in which human beings do not accept any external guarantors, i.e. guarantors that they do not themselves posit, of the certainty of knowledge, of the viability of the political orders or of the continuity of their selves. Despite the enormous variety of specific conceptualization of modernity, the great majority of them take it to be the key characteristic of modernity that human beings think of themselves as setting their own rules and laws for their relation to nature, for their living together and understanding themselves. (“Modernity, Capitalism and Critique” 4)

Without any external force to rule the people, they begin to develop some social structures that benefit all of them; still, the challenge which is posited in this line of

argument is whether modernity is the result of such attitude or the vice-versa. The sole motive of this process can be stated, in the other words, as the maximum satisfaction in all the participants. Hence, it is claimed the way of achieving satisfaction and taste for certain aspect of social life cannot be heterogeneous.

At the deep level of modernity, it fails to, as Kant assumes, acknowledge the individual differences among various people. For Habermas, the leading role of aesthetics in society is a hindrance to achieve homogeneity (“Modernity –An Incomplete Project” 1756). The Enlightenment science and ethics attempt at creating certain form of human agency that at times is disturbed due to the development of aesthetics. The contradiction is grounded in multiplicity of comprehension of the Enlightenment. James Kurth presents the ways in which variation in understanding of the Enlightenment prevails in the West. His analysis indicates the over-use of transcendental reasoning when he identifies two broad varieties: Anglo-American with specific focus on liberal democracy and French variety emphasizing bureaucracy. Hence, he assesses:

For American political and economic elites, this largely means the British (or Anglo-American) Enlightenment, with its emphasis on the liberty of individuals, institutionalized in liberal democracy and free markets. For European political, intellectual, and economic elites (and for the American intellectual elite located in academia and the media), this largely means the French (or Continental) Enlightenment, with its emphasis on the rationalism of elites, institutionalized in bureaucratic authority and the credentialed society. (10)

Subjectivity formation in each individual is different; yet, Kantian modernity –also

called the enlightenment –wants to structure every human being in the same mould, whence the purpose of the project turns into homogenizing the heterogeneous.

Michel Foucault critiques the idea of the Enlightenment rationality, and defines modernity as a matter of perspective. In other words, it refers to the way people perceive and define reality for them. “For the attitude of modernity, the high value of present is indissociable from a desperate,” writes he, “eagerness to imagine it ... and to transform it not by destroying but by grasping it in what it is” (“What is Enlightenment?” 41). Whereas Kant focuses on cognition with the power of rationality and logic, and thus dislocates modernity from its historical context, Foucault genealogically moves on to scrutinize and explore what is meant by being modern in every era. In fact, he takes modernity as a way of relating oneself to the present and the present to oneself, thereby letting variation in the understanding of modernity in every age. Foucault’s historicization of the process, to the extent that he believes in truth as the effect of power (“Truth and Power” 1141), acknowledges the dissimilarities; nonetheless, it also transforms into a homogenizing mission when he proposes the power structure that functions universally. Like Kant, Foucault fails to see the uniqueness of social hierarchy when he focuses on the institutional structures. Besides, he wants people to be critically aware about the historical process to be modern. In this way, Foucault succeeds to posit tradition at the background of modernity and heads towards the scrutiny of consciousness that is developed, shaped, and framed specifically in different periods of history.

Rationalization focuses on the subjective potential of an individual to achieve emancipation with the power of logic and reasoning. Besides, such subjective way is, as the Enlightenment implies, assumed to be universal in that everybody is capable of

getting such liberation. The creation of newer values regarding human, society, and life in general keep changing from an era to the next. These perceptions in function before the eighteenth century got transformed in the Enlightenment as the result of scientific and rational innovation in attitude and perception. In this light, Peter Hamilton defines the Enlightenment thus:

In its simplest sense the Enlightenment was the creation of a new framework of ideas about man, society and nature, which challenged existing conception rooted in a traditional world-view, dominated by Christianity. The key domain in which Enlightenment intellectuals challenged the clergy, who were the main group involved in supporting existing conceptions of the world, concerned the traditional view of nature, man and society which was sustained by the Church's authority and its monopoly over the information media of the time. (23)

The tussle of old order and new one for social space marks the ethos of that time. For one thing, Kant believes that the Enlightenment comes after the “release from self-incurred tutelage” (15); for the other, his focus to achieve the desired liberation lies on subjective caliber of the individuals. In fact, he traps himself in the vicious circle of his own argument when he sets freedom as both the cause and consequence of the Enlightenment. He states that “... if only freedom is granted, enlightenment is almost sure to follow” (16). A question at this point: Is it the Enlightenment that freedom brings or is it freedom that the Enlightenment brings? The absence of any implication in Kant to answer these questions further adds to the complexity of comprehending his discourse. On the other hand, he says, ““Have courage to use your own reason!””(15) is the central motif of the Enlightenment. So too, Michel Foucault

critiques:

Kant in fact describes Enlightenment as the moment when humanity is going to put its own reason to use, without subjecting itself to any authority; now its role is precisely at this moment that the critique is necessary, since its role is that of defining conditions under which the use of reason is legitimate in order to determine what can be known, what must be done, and what may be hoped. (“What is Enlightenment?” 37-38)

Foucault appears more practical when he seeks for the legitimacy of unchecked use of reason. Kantian discourse focuses on rationalization with implication of market economy on the one hand and the democratization on the other. Both market economy and democracy have to check each other since the pure focus on either of them is not possible. Thus, the regulatory bodies in the polity formation and/or restructuring are born out of their mediation. The fundamental ambiguity appears to be the emergence of regulatory bodies in power network that check the quest of autonomy.

The subjects have to undergo negotiation and curtailment in their potential growth in bureaucratic state with capitalist economy that institutionally functions as effect and source of power system. The contradiction of Habermasian rationalization in modern issues forms the unsolved question of personal versus institutional rationalization. He does not solve the riddle –though his transcendental approach implies celebration of institutional one –when he argues:

Those who lump together the very project of modernity with the state of consciousness and the spectacular action of the individual terrorist are no less short-sighted than those who would claim that the

incomparably more persistent and extensive bureaucratic terror practiced in the dark, in the cellars of the military and secret police, and in camps and institutions, is the *raison d'etre* of the modern state, only because this kind of administrative terror makes use of the coercive means of modern bureaucracies. (“Modernity vs Postmodernity” 11)

Unlike Kantian modernity that emphasizes on the regulatory aspects of rationalization resulting in nation state and bureaucratic structure for service delivery, modern society attempts to loosen power relations that allow liberty for everyone living in the society. In fact, it results in tussle between the system and individuals in that the subject in quest of autonomy attempts to shape and reshape the regulatory bodies. When the power relations turn less intense, liberty is strengthened in society in that the people get to exercise their liberty more than in the situation that enhances the power relations.

Foucault, unlike Kant, argues that modernity is not solely founded on the subjective potential of the individual: many other historical factors play significant role to produce this prospect. Besides, Foucault analyzes that the intellectual development of the Enlightenment set a line of demarcation for the development of subjectivity as well: universal intellectual or subjectivity is the state which everyone has to reach in order to fully realize the potential within. Hence, he observes:

It is possible to suppose that the ‘universal’ intellectual, as he functioned in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was in fact *derived from a quite specific historical figure*: the man of justice, the man of law, who counterposes to power, despotism, and the abuses and

arrogance of wealth the universality of justice and the equity of an ideal law. (Emphasis added “Truth and Power” 70)

As the critical debate in the eighteenth century was centered basically on the issues of law, constitution, right, and reason, the whole aspiration was directed towards creation of transcendental state for new subjectivity to emerge and function with rational precision in all times and spaces. The historico-political backdrop of the time plays a significant role in forming the ideals in relation to the issues under consideration at that time.

Indeed, the Enlightenment aimed at producing intellectuals as its original subjectivity and thus claimed itself universal consciousness. As the primary site of modernity, subjectivity emerges as the most essential attribute in formation of agency that brings about change at both personal and social level. In general, the attributes associated with subjectivity and agency gain primacy. For instance, Foucault thinks that autonomy, freedom, and self-determination are required to attain the Enlightenment. Hence, Christopher Norris argues:

For it is now Foucault’s central concern to articulate an ethics premised on the values of autonomy, freedom, and self-determination attained through an *exercise of practical will*. And when he comes to describe this project in more detail, it turns out remarkably akin to Kant’s own, as expressed in the famous threefold question ‘What can I know?, What should I will?, and What may I reasonably hope for?’ (Emphasis added 169)

The question of practical will heavily relies on the negotiation of historical forces and the current socio-political realities. Although both Kant and Foucault appear to agree

on the fundamental questions of modernity, for Foucault, attitude to respond to these question matters. He does view modernity as a way to responding to contemporariness through critique.

Valorizing the power of imagination over rationalization, Richard Rorty (1931-2007) critiques Kantian quest for universal values through rationalization as the ultimate means. Also the implication in Rorty's argument lies in understanding the process of modernity through the process of development of imagination as reflected in arts and literature. He states:

The principal backup for historiography is not philosophy but the arts, which serves to develop and modify a group's self-image by, for example, apotheosizing its heroes, diabolizing its enemies, mounting dialogues among its members, and refocusing its attention. (587)

He goes against both Kant and Habermas in that he argues for the leading role of aesthetics over rationalization. In the similar line of argument, Kaus Eder claims that rationalization is not the cause but the effect of the Enlightenment. Unlike Kant who believes in rationalization as the key to modernity, he argues:

...rationalization is the cultural by-product of collective practices that construct a cultural order through learning process and symbolic struggles, both of which together establish legitimate authority and generate symbols society needs to reproduce itself as a legitimate social order. (323)

Eder agrees with Rorty in the understanding of culture as the promoter of reason. This argument stands just the opposite the understanding of the Enlightenment in that reason was put in the center of all domains of human life in the Enlightenment.

Habermas attempts to view subject from transcendental ground from which, according to Rorty, Habermas sees only the general attributes. Rorty analyzes that it causes fear in him towards the lack of unifying narrative (34). Habermas attempts to connect ideology which for Foucault is the product of power and theory. On the contrary, theory for Habermas is the representation of reality, leading to achieve his unifying complete picture of truth. Unlike Habermas, Rorty valorizes inductive mode of reasoning over the deductive one because the former helps analyze and go for the understanding of the specificities at a time, thus valuing the ground of hermeneutics and agency. Hence, he contends, “It would be better to be frankly ethnocentric” (35). In fact, even by denying the agency power of hermeneutic practice and formulating own understanding about the relations holding social institutions together, Habermas proposes to understand the role of human subject as the one who strives towards achieving Hegelian state of *Zeitgeist*.

Like Foucault and Rorty, Jean-François Lyotard also focuses on the aesthetics in analyzing modernity which is a self creating process for him. Furthermore, he associates the idea of invention with modernity when he argues, “Modernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without discovery of the ‘lack of reality’ of reality, together with the invention of other realities” (77). In spite of achieving predetermined state of subjectivity, modernity refers to an attempt to bring up a genealogical investigation of present institutions and subjectivity as originated in past for Lyotard. Hence, he states, “Modernity writes itself, inscribes itself on itself as a perpetual re-writing” (5). Though Kant and Habermas ardently argue for rationalization and homogeneity as the sole marker of modernity in the West, Foucault, Rorty, and Lyotard move away from

it. Instead, self-creation of social rearrangement becomes more important for the latter group of thinkers.

The eighteenth century stands as the point of departure for the Western society in their journey of modernity. It was when Kant defined state as the source of modernity for the Western society. Peter Wagner thus analyzes the European scene in the initial stage: “European revolutionary societies between 1750 and 1850 were marked by continuities, and the most important continuity was the centrality of the state apparatus” (*Sociology of Modernity* 7). For Wagner, the idea of autonomy and self-determination resides at the core of the Western modernity as it promotes the promise of “increase of individualism and individuality” (7). Individual autonomy and social outcomes in the process of social change need to be put in equilibrium in quest for modernity. Ron Eyerman writes that modernity also demands balance between freedom and duty (41). As a nexus of political, economic, and cultural development, the Western modernity assumes that rationalization as the ultimate process brings about homogeneity in social development and as evident in Kantian and Habermasian discourses, aspires to prescribe a route for non-Western societies to where the Western social arrangements have already reached.

2.2 Multiple Modernities: An Approach to One’s Own Modernity

Various approaches have been devised to examine modernity, ranging from singular modernity to postmodernity, to alternative modernities, to varieties of modernity, to liquid modernity, to reflexive modernity, and to multiple modernities. A brief survey to all of these key forms reveals that each of the approaches except multiple modernities exclusively entails certain type of fascination towards the West as the center and the Other as the progeny (Phuyal 63). Primarily, the notion of

postmodernity assumes that modernity as such is over in the 1970s and a new phase has begun. For one thing, this approach develops a sense of guilt for becoming late in achieving modernity for one's society; for the other, its epistemology is deeply rooted in Eurocentric perspective as the measure of every dimension of modernity. Enrique Dussel also states that such dictation of singularist approach to modernity victimizes the peripheral societies (9), thereby affirming Eurocentrism on the one hand and creating a shadow of darker psyche of Europe on the other. The singularist modernity both epistemologically and methodologically fails to address the concerns of the modernities that have emerged outside Europe in particular and the West in general.

Alternative modernity as a paradigm also presupposes that Europe functions as the yardstick of modern development though it is a step ahead in thinking about modernity. This approach assumes that other societies beyond Europe can also be modern with some sort of difference from the original claims made in Hegel-Kant-Habermas school of thought. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar also builds his argument on the premise that modernity produces homogeneous culture despite his focus on historical situatedness of every society. He says, "Different starting points ensure that new differences will emerge in response to relatively similar changes" (15). The underlying argument in this line of thinking accepts the prejudices of singularist approach in that both singular modernity and alternative modernity posit the Western form as the model for every society to follow. Similarly, John D. Kelly also writes, "...contemporary cultural initiatives, local and global, be situated in their relations with and against a grotesque actuality, the American plan for the postwar world, not with, against, post, or alternative to 'modernity'" (276). Kelly focuses on a specific context to see the mode of development in modernity. What Gaonkar seeks to

establish for alternative modernity can be approached and assessed through comparative approach. In the similar vein, Volker H. Schmidt opts to employ a relatively new term, 'varieties of modernity'. Still, Schmidt fails to break free the epistemology of modernity from the chains of singularist approach when he argues about the need to equate it with the approach seen in the development of capitalism. As he states, "... there are several western countries whose peculiar setup of *economic* institutions makes them more similar *in this respect* to an important Asian country, or civilization, than to several of their western counterparts"(emphasis original 82). Furthermore, his division of modern/pre-modern category does not acknowledge the possibility of continuity in modernity as a process. The temporal dimension of modernity remains largely ignored in Schmidt's concept of 'varieties of modernity' as in Gaonkar's 'alternative modernity'. Similarly, both approaches rely on the West as both source and inspiration for the non-Western societies to develop their modernities.

Both liquid modernity and reflexive modernity as method heavily rely on the conceptualization of modernity as the process to create homogeneous structure in society. The uniform principles of social regulations are found in the core of their objectives. Also, they enhance the rationalization as the key to attain the ultimate form of organization in both personal and social life. In this regard, Raymond L. M. Lee states that liquid modernity results in suffering and injustice (357), implying the emergence of postmodernity in the form of revolt against the unifying attempts of modernity. Also, he observes that the force of modernity liquidates all the traditionally holding ties (362). Thus, tradition is pictured negatively in this perspective modernity. Likewise, reflexive modernity appears in the revised version of neo-liberalism of Europe. Therefore, Lee also argues:

... reflexive modernization as a theory of modernity in the 1990s reflects to a certain extent the political agenda of that period. As such, it is a theory that is pragmatically oriented to questions of reconstruction rather than deconstruction as in postmodernism. (356)

A context-specific theory of modernity, reflexive modernity, like liquid modernity, appears inadequate to address the issues of divergent cultures and various subjectivities that go together into making modernity. In fact, both these approaches focus on Europe's historical achievement of modernity and socio-historical development, for they fail to acknowledge the cultural differences that are irreconcilable in a homogeneous frame.

On the whole, variety of modernity devised by Volker H. Schmidt gains momentum that is a step forward in understanding of modernity since it points out 'appropriation' as one of the properties where modernity can vary in both temporal and spatial dimension. However, the basic line of disagreement in this approach lies in its claim that modernity is basically one, converging, and homogeneous: thus, the West becomes a model for the non-Western societies to follow and perform to achieve their own modernity. Varieties of modernity approach still denies the inner potential of the non-western societies to develop organizing social principles as it believes the modernity as a project was begun with the Enlightenment which was necessarily a European intellectual movement, and the non-Western societies partially perform European history as the former is without history making potential. On the contrary, multiple modernities as a paradigm adds a new light by asserting that every society can transform themselves into a modern one in their own unique ways. The heterogeneity in understanding of modernity is the basis of this paradigm. S. N.

Eisenstadt (1923-2010) who proposes multiple modernities as a paradigm to examine modernity as a phenomenon in every society analyzes and evaluates the Eurocentric tendency of interpretation of cultural program of modernity, and argues that understanding of modernity needs genuine grounding in common good of society from which the principles of social configuration emerge. For him, these principles that develop within society play the most significant role in paving road for modernity of one's own to emerge. However, he does not deny the need of European modernity in understanding other modernities, for the former can function as the point of departure in developing a modernity of one's own.

As approach, multiple modernities is founded on the premise of the analysis of civilizational and cultural differences. Eisenstadt points out that singularist approach to modernity fallaciously assumes that the cultural program of modernity was developed only in Europe ("Multiple Modernities" 1). Rereading the journey of European modernity as such, Enrique Dussel traces the advancement in Egypt and Turkey before Europe could learn anything about it (465). In fact, Dussel attempts to show the flow of structural models from the non-Western societies to Europe into making it modernity. Although Peter Wagner observes that advocates of multiple modernities "overestimate historical continuities and provide some culturalist explanation of 'civilizational' differences" ("Multiple Trajectories of Modernity" 55), such inclusion of these differences becomes inevitable in understanding modernity as a conceptual category. The points of divergence turn into a site in/from which to observe and identify the uniqueness of modernity in every society.

The convergence claims of singularist approach are rejected in quest of uniqueness in formation of principles of social configuration when multiple

modernities is employed as an approach, for it seeks particularities and the points of divergences. The transformation of structural principles does not take place in a linear way in that socio-politico-historical situatedness lead to formation of social expectations which also vary along with the differences in any of the forces. Thus, the subjectivity which cannot be reproduced in the same mould in all the societies shapes different kind of collective aspiration for its realization in social quest for relating to the ethos of contemporary times. Also, Richard L. M. Lee acknowledges, “Multiple modernities exist as cultural entities because they are concerned with the creation of unique identities arising from the intersection of tradition, innovation and the quest for world-mastery” (365). Volker M. Schmidt also agrees with Lee when the former sees that multiple modernities as an approach safeguards the cultural differences of different societies (81). Besides, both of them base their argument in the formation of modernity on the foundation of cultural values. The variation of cultural values for Lee results in multiplicity in experience of modernity in various locations. The possibility of multiplicity in formation of divergent societies is implied in this type of interpretation.

Interpretation of modernity occupies the central role social analysis, for interpretation of social structuring provides the mode of development in every society. In other words, the way of understanding the organization and advancement of society relates to perception towards such phenomenon. As experience and interpretation of social organization, modernity means differently when the cultural lenses to view it considerably vary from a place to the other. In this regard, Ibrahim Kaya argues that the variation in experience of modernity emanates from the multiplicity of interpretation. Also, he argues, “... modernity is an open-ended horizon in which

there are spaces for multiple interpretations” (37). Besides, “the cultural programme of modernity,” he further elaborates, “includes multiplicity” (41). These multiple interpretations emerge from epistemological and methodological variations in each society. Eisenstadt sees differences in major dimensions of modernity in every society. For him, self-construction, liberty, autonomy, social visions, socio-political arrangement/order are the key dimensions of modernity (“Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization” 286) that vary in their form and interpretation from historical situatedness of one location to the next. The social agency that perceives these issues under a particular spatio-temporality also emerges in the same backdrop. Hence, the differences appear from society to society.

Eisenstadt focuses on subjectivity in modernity. In fact, he emphasizes on the agents of change in the process of emergence of modernity in society. The collective call for social transformation emanates from the subjectivity which is shaped in a particular form through the agents struggling to bring about the new state. He maintains that every society is based on the difference of the agents of change: thus, there appear the differences in the mode of their being modern. Focusing on the nature of social movements and the agents involved in them, he states:

The major actors in such processes of reinterpretation and of formation of new institutional patterns were various political activists, intellectuals, in conjunction above all with distinctive social movements. Such activists, intellectuals and leaders of movements which have been developing in all these societies promulgated and reinterpreted the major symbols and components of the cultural programs of modernity, and addressed themselves to the antinomies

and contradictions within these programs and between them and institutional realities. (“Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization” 291)

The formation of agents under specific cultural context defies the logic of high rationality present in Kantian-Habermasian nexus regarding modernity. Similarly, Kaya maintains, “Modernity, in other words, could be imagined and projected in different versions based on the elements which define the views of modernizing agents” (42). The agency that gets born in a specific spatio-temporal coordinates formulates its own logic of social configuration, and its interpretation and understanding. So, Eisenstadt also emphasizes on cultural form of the reality in formation of modernity. He argues that the nature of problems and ways of coping them greatly vary from society to society; hence, the way of projecting the notion of common good and collective identity cannot be same for all societies (“Some Observations on Multiple Modernities” 34). Thus, he goes against Habermasian universalistic claim of convergence thesis regarding modernity.

The convergence, universalistic claims made in the discourse of singular approach to modernity fail to respect the non-Western societies and their innate capability to form their own models. Dominic Sachsenmaier points out serious consequences of singular modernity as a paradigm to judge modernity of the non-Western world. Singularity in understanding modernity leads to “a sense of radical loss: of personal dignity, of faith and social order, of history, and of values” (46). In fact, the need for multiple modernities emerges out of desire of non-Western societies to do away with ambivalence in theorizing the present outside European history and geography. Besides, Kaya argues, “... the idea of multiple modernities undoubtedly

needs to consider relations between modernity and civilization so as to see whether civilizational characteristics may be peculiar dynamics that shape modernities” (53). The inability of singularist approach to acknowledge the differences governing various societies and their uniqueness in developing own modernity rooted in social agency and cultural dynamics puts Eisenstadt, Sachsenmaier, and Kaya in a position to seek multiplicity in formation and comprehension of modernity.

Multiple modernities as a paradigm to examine and understand modernity of one’s own basically focuses on twin phenomenon of formation of social agency and cultural principles. Societies are regulated by certain cultural visions that emanate from the people who act as agents of change. Moreover, the cultural ground ever remains for the subjectivities to emerge in form of agency and then drive society with their vision. In the globalized world, the cultural interaction and appropriation surely take place because of interdependence of societies on each other. However, it does not necessarily mean that the non-Western societies reproduce and perform the Western history as the grammar for their societies to be modern. Sachsenmaier argues that “modernity can be understood to express a wider range of possibilities for institutional settings, sociopolitical orders, and value-systems” (43). Furthermore, he analyzes the strength of making claims about singular modernity that is basically rooted in the ground of economic success and power in the West. Therefore, he states, “The conceptual equation of modernization with Westernization certainly grew with Europe’s and latter the United States’ (*sic*) dominant position in the world” (45). Thus, only the economic success and domination cannot be taken as the measure of modernity. Hence, multiple modernities approach is all directed towards understanding twin process of formation agency and cultural reconfiguration that

paves road for multiplicity of understanding to manifest on surface.

2.3 Modernity: Nature and Function

Modernity relies on both making and being for its analysis and understanding. The experience emerges out of interpretation, a way of attaching meaning to the experience in a certain way. The lexical comprehension is superseded by stipulative formation of understanding of modernity. In other words, arbitrariness of every attempt to reinterpret modernity puts it in constant state of flux, thus resulting in shift in meaning that gets attached to it. In a broad sense, modernity functions as a way of relating being of observer and fellow participants to the changing spirit of time; similarly, the changing spirit of time is also synchronically taken into a slot of being for the purpose of redefinition. Hence, modernity essentially lies between being and interpretation in which the latter comes directly under the control of human agency. Human agents of interpretation guide, shape, and mould the comprehension of broader meaning as the time passes by and ethos of age changes. However, certain categories are functionally proposed to outline the frame of interpretation of modernity in mediated context of art, culture, and history. The ethos of an age is itself built on the premises of sustenance and emergence of novel values from supra-structural social cognition which refers to the underlying structural entity of society, and hence gives life and dynamism to itself. The spiritedness of society evolves out of this deep structural layer where there lies the ability of every society to produce not only the remedial mindset but also the guiding vision for general well being of all of the members specified by the social category.

The structure develops and sustains certain attributes, leading to denial of presence of certain traits in the members and practices in the society. Allowing

desired traits to evolve in social structure demands transformation of the structure that genuinely expects to alter certain underlying principles holding the deeper core and this process modifies all the vertexes of triangular relation in the mindset of social structure: they are personhood (the understanding of self), public good (the possible ways for betterment of public life in general), and social vision (the projection of selfhood). Significant to note at this point is: if there is affirmative dynamics in each of these vertexes of the triangle after change at the structural layer, forward movement is perceived in society. To scrutinize affirmative or negative movement that can also be termed 'progress' or 'regression', the picture before and after the alteration needs to be put together; and the differences, examined. The enlargement of magnitude of each of the categories located in each vertex signifies positive growth leading to more modern state whereas the reverse denotes going narrowing the magnitude and thus prospect for members of the category to broaden their social and spiritual horizon. It implies that every alternation in social structure does not necessarily bring about desired state of being for all the members.

The underlying structural entity perceives two things in general: *lack* and *presence*. The exploration of lack results in its proposing ways to fulfill in the social entity. Artistic and cultural texts can be an effective means to point out lack in the spirit of time. Lack results from two major resources of the underlying layers: firstly structural inequalities (in the form of denial), and secondly ignorance (because certain attribute was never expected as necessary for social life in general). The articulation of lack that can also be termed *absence* as opposed to *presence*, expects certain conditions be met, for it points out the missing but the desired (Phuyal 170). In this sense, its articulation sets its objective in fulfillment of the attribute in social being.

As in rational calculation and laboratory situation, even the alterations of certain attributes do not necessarily yield the desired results, thereby continuing the lack. The response to such situation produces a play of values in artistic, cultural, and historical discourses. Such response rooted in unique vantage point shows the mismatch between the objectives before and the achievement after the alteration in deep structure, with its ultimate aim to bring about the desired state in the linearity of social development.

The actors who attempt to address lack and who address the presence get united in a more general layer. To put it in more simple and precise term, both the agents (although they appear to be addressing divergent phenomena of social life) are in agreement in that both want to transform the situation into a more desired one by adding and moving certain traits in the deep layers. The calculation of addition and subtraction of such attributes does not all the time go as logically as it is desired: social actors have variety in their beliefs and possess multiple ways to approach challenges prevailing at the structural domain. The plurality in perception of cases is generally seen in artistic productions that allow inspection of inner drama in social structures when analyzed in association with culture and history. The ethos of time as produced by the social agency thus is best reflected in the intersection of art, culture, and history.

Besides, the interpretation of the inner functioning through specific event/s heavily relies on distance between the observer and the events (structure). The transcendental tendency leads towards more general categories, increasing the distance between the observer and the observed. On the contrary, the decrease in such distance takes place through microscopic observation that is possible by going into the

observed and accepting immanent approach. In the latter, the observer acts like a participant of the alteration in the underlying layer and brings about realization of how the events have taken place. The specific spatio-temporal dimensions of the observer make difference in the way and outcome of observation. Thus, the interpretation through immanent perspective also yields in multiplicity.

By and large, the description and theorization of structural dimension in the form of *lack* and *presence* varies from society to society. The recognition of absent attributes, the methods of calculation in social being, the ways of expanding the magnitude of traits at each vertex of the social triangle, the interpretation of the process, and the response to this phenomenon differs with variation in one of two dimensions of space and time. Also, the mode of artistic production, cultural worldview, and historical interpretation are key factors that attract critical attention in comprehension of each of the traits on each vertex: person, social good, and projection of selfhood. However, these categories effectively put one in a position to microscopically examine the social reality whose experience and interpretation are essentially multiple by nature.

The historical development shows certain disruption in its course. The chronological linearity of history is agitated with revolts, social movements, political quest, and the like. Such historical transitions function as a site from which to observe the process of change. To begin with, a proposition is necessary at this point: societies do not and cannot sustain the underlying configuration of arrangement of their systems for ever. Similarly, the internal desires and expectations of societies, and the external circumstances are constantly at negotiations, thus subject to change. However, the central codes do not and cannot change as swiftly as they are expected

from the base of the society. The dissatisfactions that result from the inner structure in society demand and require proper address when the social pressure from the lower base is imposed on it. Consequently, social outburst occurs in order to revise and rewrite the underlying codes that contribute to promotion of contradictions and social inequalities.

For more comfortable comprehension of this model of change, a functional model comprising three layers in pyramid structure is imagined: the upper layers containing the ruling elite, the social and political codes and practices, and the legal-constitutional-bureaucratic codes and exercises; the middle layer containing middle class, mass media along with its production and consumption, civil society and non-governmental sector, market forces and transnational networks in the age of electronic mediation; and finally, the base comprising the actor of production of real commodities (basically peasants). The middle layer functions like a filter for both the upper and the base, thus paradoxically performing the role of a gap and bridge simultaneously. The upper layer where the real power of the social system is located and the base from which the power is extracted is mediated by the middle layer in any social mechanism.

The upper as the abode of real power is the establishment section of society: it is also the arbitrator of the underlying configuration of social structuring. The group well-versed in the functioning modality of the prevailing structure of the society ever attempts to adjust and sustain the same structure for two basic reasons: firstly, it is a matter of practice that makes them handle the total system very comfortably; and secondly, the totality of the social form is appropriated to suit their aptitude, serving their sole interests. The middle layer aspirations are directed towards the enjoyment of

the benefits that the apex has experiences from the system. Oscillating between the base and the apex, this layer attempts to achieve the best the social configuration at present can reward its participants with. The middle layer in this process develops the nomadic connections with the upper and the lower, and thus makes its movements in both directions possible.

The producer of grains and goods, the base aspires to change the underlying arrangement society when it encounters inequality distribution of exercise of social position, goods, and services. Impliedly, it also asserts that change results from the inherent inequality in social codes inscribed during its appropriation through earlier change/s. Sometimes, it takes a very long span of time in history to realize that such a thing as inequality in certain domain of social life exists. However, realization of this kind is correlated with the level of awareness and consciousness that develops at the base. Since the maze of society is three-layered, the aware base is forced to channel its aspirations and discontentment through the mediation of the middle layer to the upper abode. In the meantime, the voice of the base gets translated and appropriated in the vocabulary of the middle layer. If the collective voice coming from the lower does not bear stronger wavelength, quite often than not, it gets lost inside the filtering mechanism. The appropriated voice coated in the vocabulary of the middle layer generates two faction within this layer, each supporting the upper and the lower in the tussle.

The lack/absence felt in society as evidenced in the expectation and aspirations of the base is often misinterpreted through the process of translation and appropriation at the filter. The problems in the triangular relationships of person, public good, and projection are encountered, explored, and articulated in the

beginning from the base, resulting from the prevailing social arrangement that defines form of distribution of services and goods, approaches to subjectivity formation, and setting up ideal in society. Essentially speaking, the drive of the society is limited by the ideals set up in a specific form and context. As already stated, the apex layer comfortable in the trade of the social realm aspires to maintain and sustain the current composition of society, thus suppressing the voice emerging for change. This process results in the disruption where the base and the vertex come face to face at struggle for assertion of their voice. The coercive force in the ruling elite also can turn the whole struggle into a violent one.

In the social sphere, the inner that includes the political, the economic, the historical, and the cultural harbors certain leaks in the long run out of which are seen unequal relations holding the society together. The inequalities are the sources of all forms of discriminations and roots of social evils which the social disruptions in their pure form attempt to abolish. With this comprehension of theoretical modality of social disruptions, one can examine the pre- and post-situation of society in order to examine whether any progression in the expected direction has taken place. As societies are also living organism, capable of correcting their wrongs and the flaws that get generated within, every change is equally important. It implies that the moral judgment over any such change is absurd. In fact, social disruptions appear as signposts that help grope the course of social development. Besides, the judgment of such disruption needs to be based on its own tradition, for the frame of social change in a distant society cannot be employed to measure the level of achievement of another society in any way. Such investigation and examination also helps promote the inherent biases in the frame of epistemological paradigm.

2.4 Modernity in South Asia

The universal claims of modernity as propagated in the West have been put under serious scrutiny after the 1970s with the entry of cultural dimensions in the debate of modernity. The poetics of modernity in general has taken a different route with the understanding of multiplicity and heterogeneity in social development. Similarly, the postcolonial debate has also produced different ways of responding to the situations various societies have undergone as a result of imperial expansion and domination in those societies. In fact, those categories devised in the West to explain and understand socio-politico-historical situation are not adequate now.

Primarily, the spatio-temporal dimension of modernity also implies the difference in production and interpretation of social configuration, and emergence and advancement of subjectivity. Also, every society bears the power to generate their own modernity. Hence, Partha Chatterjee argues, “The forms of modernity will have to vary between different countries depending upon specific circumstances and social practices” (*Our Modernity* 8). Epistemological warrant for this claim is provided in Foucault who goes against the convergence claim of the Western modernity. For him, the economic and political structures can be reproduced throughout the world without any doubt, for industrialization in economy and democratization of political order have become the measure of all societies. The logic of late capitalism promotes the reproduction of the economic and political structures in all societies under the rubrics of globalization. However, he also sees aesthetic and cultural values that radically present distinct attributes among societies at the central position of modernity (“For an Ethics of Discomfort” 446). The notion of modernity in general turns into a feeling notion, seeking adjustment wherever it is brought under the frame of interpretation.

Largely shaped by the cultural aspects evolved out of tradition, it encompasses various issues of inner social values and cultural encounters in contemporary times.

South Asian modernity seeks to establish itself in its living tradition that refers to heterogeneous practices in the Subcontinent. The culturally rich heterogeneous region, unlike Europe, cannot and must not claim its singularity at all. David Washbrook rightly points out the weak foundation of singularist modernity when he argues against European modernity propagated in India, “Modernity now became seen . . . as an oppressive, dehumanizing discourse . . . exclusively Western” (129). The South Indian experience to modernity shows exploration of a middle path between tradition and modernity, thus equilibrium of both. Hence, South Asian modernity does not define, like Kantian form of modernity, tradition as a thing to be escaped from. Rather, South Asian modernity assumes that once, past is escaped from, both identity and history are lost. The South Asian quest for a unique form of interpreting the present vis-à-vis self and self vis-à-vis the present has emerged in modernity debate of the region.

The modes of socio-political changes in a society cannot function as the measure for other societies. The historical forces in such study have to be brought under in-depth scrutiny in order to realize the points of differences, from where to view the distinct existence of each social organization. The transcendental approach to social analysis yields similarities that produce generalization. Eisenstadt questions the authenticity of such generalization, for transcendental categorization fails to produce a detailed picture. He analyzes the framework of institutional-building in Europe and India to see the points of differences between these two societies. He says that Indian societies had clear-cut boundaries among the religious, the political, and the

primordial. Such distinct divisions are absent in European societies; hence, the conflict in their history. Thus, Eisenstadt argues for the identification of points where societies differ from each other than realizing their closeness (*Comparative Civilizations* 329). The understandings of two cultures thus differ greatly and produce their unique features. Employment of a universal yardstick to measure the diverse domains produces misleading understanding and makes victim of the measured. The differences in the epistemic grounds and traditional value systems also lead to uniqueness in production of general consciousness of a region.

The consciousness manifest in South Asia cannot be labeled reproduction of the mindset that was produced in different historico-political situation of the West for two plain reasons: firstly, the culture and secondly, the historical circumstances. Moreover, modernity appears differently from South Asian perspective: Dipesh Chakrabarty finds that the Western modernity refers to two processes, namely institution-building and reflective, judgmental thinking about them, together. In theorization of European modernity, the process of institution building is labeled 'modernization' whereas the reflective judgment about the process is termed 'modernity' ("The Muddle of Modernity" 669). The reflexive analysis of the Western in general and western European in particular is located at the foundation of the Western modernity. Europe has also developed institutions like imperialism that have, being intertwined with capitalist enterprise, brought much damage to societies outside it. Hence, critical consideration on the part of South Asian modernity is required to sift the areas where the negative impact is seen. Partha Chatterjee implies the acceptance of use of reason as a Western thing that has helped in theorizing and identifying "the forms of own particular modernity" (*Our Modernity* 9). The

understanding of oneself vis-à-vis the present significantly differs from that of the West in locations lying outside and beyond.

The colonial discourses in South Asia have played a significant role in shaping the understanding of self. Gayatri Spivak specifically studies the situation of colonial Indian woman in literature, culture, and history of the West in the philosophical tradition of Hegel-Kant-Marx. The representation of the colonial subject in these discourses is witnessed to be the major source of creating native informant for her. The transcendental approach of the West delocates the subject from the real ground and acts as the sole authority in describing them in the production of knowledge. Critiquing the production of postcolonial reason, Gayatri Spivak defines colonial subjects as native informant. She argues that native informant “is a blank, though generative of a text of cultural identity that only the West (or a Western-model discipline) could inscribe” (6). For Gayatri Spivak, the South Asian subjectivity emerges as that of native informant, a foreclosed subject in the discourses of the West. The Western observer generates data first and then formulates a certain type of understanding of this subject, thereby denying any role of agency in the making of his/her history. Implicitly, the native informant remains as perceived in the established discourses as long as novel forms of interpretation and assertions are not sought after.

The inner strength of South Asian subjectivity as reflected in critical and creative process of history making process contribute to exploration of tenets of South Asian modernity. Also, nationalism as “the most significant ideological force driving society to re-contemplate its future” (Washbrook 133) in the twentieth century marks a need to fight against the imperial powers in India. Thus, Indian modernity emerged

as unique in form and essence in that it “did not necessarily follow Western patents” (134). Hence, the deep rooted traditional and cultural values forming greater dimension of South Asian mindset are focused for the assertion of identity and meaningful position of people as agent of social organization. The unique values of the region function as the source to assert the strength underlying both the cultural setup and the composition of agency. Viewed from this line of argument, the regional modernity first of all reorganizes on its own innate strength.

The cultural form of modernity functions in two ways in comprehension of South Asia: first of all, it gives general principle regarding the development of the present in the region as a whole; and most significantly, it awards each nations and sub-cultures in the region with methodology to approach specific modernities. The South Indian experience, for instance, was very unique as they attempted to bring together modernity and tradition by merging “ideals of Modernity with dreams of Tradition in the very same constructions. They self-consciously denied that the two had to be seen as exclusive of each other, to possess antonymic meanings” (Washbrook 135). In this sense, South Asian modernity emerges both as a cultural and a nationalist endeavor to theorize the present. The South Asian imperative for modernity lies on recognizing, unlike the Western form focusing on individualism, the continuity of its traditional values of collective welfare as C. K. Lal argues, “. . . countries of South Asia should rediscover the ways of our ancestors –that functioning cooperatives which placed more emphasis on group identities than on individualism” (259). In other words, the innate potential of relating to the region’s present resides within itself. The central values that organize the society and the subjects are in themselves the unique products of the region. The technology of identifying those

values and interpreting them along the cultural milieu helps assert the originality of the social configuration.

Power, history, and cultural aspects play crucial role in formation of subjectivity that is located in spatio-temporal ground with some specific cultural values that everybody under those circumstances happens to share. The traditional forces shaping subjectivity and cultural encounter with various peoples result in promotion of certain type of representation. For one thing, the representation of the people in the discourses of others matters as much as the self-perception in such situation. The colonial narratives in a way of containing finality of understanding have propagated certain image by foreclosing South Asian subjectivity as Spivak locates in native informant. While relating to the regional present, it is required that the historical facts be brought under scrutiny of reason. The critical inquiries into the issues of representation also lead to understand the forms of resistance –a site where assertion of subjectivity appears distinctly. Simultaneously, resistance is also seen in terms of rejection, rewriting, and appropriation. In the South Asian context, the forces at work formulate a unique mindset leading to different course of history.

Every society develops own social organization grounded in their value system. The way to this organization is also specific to their historico-political setup. Also, the aim of each society under question/examination is fundamentally divergent in themselves. In other words, the way and approach to becoming modern varies from society to society: the individual attributes of each society are deeply rooted in the individual actors playing role and contributing to the social change of that society. For South Asian modernity to prosper, C. K. Lal points out the need for sub-cultures to open up dialogues in the region (260) through literature, art, history, and other

possible domains of knowledge in the region. For Lal, the aesthetic-cultural domains in the region appear more prominent than economic and political ones, for the challenge lies in addressing the issues of distinct configuration of both cultural landscape and subjective composition. Hence, the subjectivity of agent of change matters in analyzing and developing a model of modernity in each society. Thus, the historiography that deals with such modernity have to provide due respect to the locales and people inhabiting them in the like manner.

The self as mediated in such situation differs with change in one of the dimensions. The self constituted through power (as practiced in society), history (as observed as an outcome of collective action), and culture (as developed as the common platform to address multiple needs of life) possesses double layer to formulate itself: the first layer lies at personal level and the second turns to be the social or collective one. As a matter of fact, the collective self emerges as the agent of social change that affects every personal self. The formulation of social agency is rooted in the deeply held cultural and social practices that differ from one location to the other. Unless the differences in production are paid due attention to, the real study is limited within parochialism of the singular modernity with fundamental emphasis on universalism. Eistendat values the significance of each culture in shaping the social agency in its own unique ways, thereby simultaneously making multiple modernities approach a valid claim and methodology at the same time. Partha Chatterjee sums up the totality of South Asian response thus: “. . . we need to have courage at times to reject the modernities established by others” (*Our Modernity* 20). He implies the need to develop a methodological procedure to understand and relate to South Asian present and society in such a way that basically can address the

concerns and issues of the region.

2.5 Nepali Modernity

Nepali modernity presents itself through influence and initiation as observed in the selected documents in this research. Since this study is based on literary and historical readings, I have found that Nepali modernity in literature and culture manifests through the social, political, and ideological impetuses contributing to formation of subjectivity in its historical shift in various times. The jolts of history that are displayed in/through the aspiration of people to shape and modify the prevailing socio-politico-historical structures, to reorganize the way society is structured, and to relate the society to the spirit of contemporary times go into the making of modernity, for the shifts function as the most visible points in examining the nature of change that the society has undergone. In this sense, the process of social change that Nepali society in its making and remaking turns into the major issue in approaching the nature of subjectivity formation for two things: firstly, the people and the society have unique double-binding in that each shapes the other in their quest to relate to the spirit of the present age; and, then, the society on the whole relies on the people as the agents of change in its quest for freedom and the form of critical rationality that put the body of collective in a position to better understand itself in relation to the present and the present in relation to itself.

As evident in tradition, the temporal dimension of modernity presents specific critical questions related to modernity in Nepal. For one thing, unlike the Western conceptualization that views tradition as a negative category in comprehending modernity in general, it functions as the source in society's conscious attempt to transform itself. For the other, it also resists the process of formation of critical

rationality in subjects while attempting to transform the time and bring it to suit the spirit of the present age. The tussle of formation of values in modernity in Nepal produces various jolts in history. This study brings into consideration two basic institutions slavery and sati, focusing on the former, as reflected through literary and historical documents in order to examine the nature of change and formation of subjectivity in Nepal.

Specifically speaking, the change in structure and attitude of people consciously takes place in the process of modernization of society. Kanchanmoy Mojumdar states that a new pattern of values regarding family, community, religion, and nation as the collective body of the social emerges in this process. Furthermore, he argues, “In South Asia, modernization has been the result of both historical evolution and policy formulations consciously adopted in a specific time-frame” (3). Implicitly, the subjectivity formed in the changed situation explores the approaches to address the reality in a specific direction, firmly holding onto the traditional and cultural aspects in the modernity of South Asia. Despite the resistance from tradition to change, the flexibility implied in the social structure yields into revision and rewriting of the social configuration. Sanjeev Uprety argues that modernity keeps on reshaping itself when he claims, “One of the major characteristics of modernity is that it keeps on revising and rewriting itself, keeps on challenging the legitimacy of its own ‘truth’ and conclusions” (237). The homogeneity claim of singular modernity is thus refuted, allowing multiplicity of forms of modernity to find their own way in Uprety’s argument. Also, the argument implies the role of social agency that revises and rewrites the incongruent aspects of social order to bring them to the ethos of contemporariness.

Modernity provides prospects for its participants to attain liberty in such a way that the socially ascribed privileges gradually lose sway in the changed situation. On the one hand, it empowers people with the prospects to realize the inner potential to the utmost; on the other, the mobility generating as the outcome of the attainment of self-realization brings about change in perception of self, society, and their relationship with each other. Thus, modernity develops a new set of values through the conceptual attainment of liberty in a specific way. Discussing the concept of liberty, Kanchanmoy Mojumdar observes that the ultimate goal of modernity refers “to fully develop their innate creative potentialities to the utmost. Both horizontal and vertical mobility characterize status in a modern society, the status being achieved not ascribed” (5). The role of agency in this line of argument emerges as the very prominent issue in comprehending modernity. As a matter of fact, the question of personal autonomy appears seriously in formation of Nepali modernity as C. K. Lal argues:

Modernity implies being a sovereign individual, with all its duties and responsibilities. Rights are by-products of leading a life of nobility where obligations towards the weak grow as one surges ahead.

Empathy, not patronising sympathy, is the way of modernity. (258)

The ideals of autonomy in quest of modernity evolve out of tradition and give way to formation of new understanding of itself. The notion of agency is also rooted in autonomy and quest for freedom in Nepali modernity.

However, devaluing the role of agency in shaping and formulating a unique experience of modernity, the prescriptive approach to Nepali modernity attempts to seek the similar patterns in historical developments of the West and the rest. The basic

assumption in such study rests on the understanding that the West is the progeny of modernity in general. Lal also looks at the historical origins of modernity in the West and Nepal's connection to the West. In fact, the social aspirations and social imagination that take a particular direction towards achieving modernity on its own are left outside the frame of interpretation, thereby assimilating the assumption of singular modernity and its convergence claims. Lal entraps his position in epistemic and transcendental allure of modernity present in the Western metaphysics of Hegel-Kant-Habermas when he seeks for the connection of Nepal with Britain through Jung Bahadur's visit. Lal argues that the visit turned instrumental in shaping modernity in Nepal when he states, "The visit impelled him to modernise his army. He was also emboldened enough to introduce a civil code, the *Muluki Ain*, for the first time in the country" (250). The contradictory claims surface from Lal's argument when he finds his argument to illustrate the conceptualization of quest for personal autonomy that leads to formation of the collective freedom on the convergence claims of singular modernity. This line of argument aspires to locate Nepali modernity in the backdrop of imperialism and see the broader similarities obtained through the comparison.

The heterogeneity in social structure marks the fundamental aspect of multiple modernities that methodologically addresses modernity as typical Nepali experience. While observing it in Nepali socio-political landscape, the negotiation of the preceding and the succeeding ages provides vantage point from/through which to examine and scrutinize the process of social change, resulting in formation of new subjectivity. When approached through literary and historical texts, modernity in Nepal attempts to keep itself immune from the process of prefixing. The possibility of

‘pre-’ and ‘post-’ in Nepali quest for modernity finds no space, for the continuity of tradition, and rewriting and revision in social order emerge as the key features of Nepali modernity. For instance, Sanjeev Uprety’s position about rewriting and revising as the mark of modernity assumes that the collective possesses in itself the ability to revise the social misconfiguration during the historical transformation. Similarly, Madan Mani Dixit’s *Mādhavi* (2039 B. S.), a novel based on the theme of slavery and social change, brings forth dialogue of two ages in identifying the issues that suit the contemporary society best. *Mādhavi*’s self-sacrifice in producing the new age (96) and the dialogue of two ages also implicitly claims about relating to the contemporary reality in typical ways. The historical juncture that is caught in literary writing shows the inner strength of Nepali modernity.

Furthermore, the key issue of freedom from the repressive social institution forms another dimension of modernity in Nepal, for agency is formed and realized through the quest for freedom. Besides, Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan argues that the role of agency stands as the ultimate source to transform society from one state to the next (251). The inability of a society in identifying the errors in social structure that produce values and in bringing them under the scrutiny of critical rationality happens to continue the tension within further, thereby prolonging crisis and failing in social vision for the change. The issues of women also form an interesting part of the debate in the experience of modernity when the questions regarding agency are focused. For instance, the aunt to the inner narrator in Krishna Dharabasi’s popular short fiction “Jholā” [The Bag] resists the social norm to burn the widow with the dead husband on pyre. She says, “If you can, break this system to burn own mother. How I wish they stopped burning own mothers in your age, son!” (Translation mine 6). Undeniably,

the existing social, structural limitations put check in the ultimate realization of an agent for social change for this woman; yet, her rage and anger finds due position in Nepali social imagination. The positioning of gender issues through portrayal of the role of agent in bringing about change marks the typical feature in Nepali quest for transformation.

However, some interpretations of modernity in Nepal underrate the typical dimensions of this kind of experience in relation to gender. Offering a sociological interpretation of contemporary understanding of freedom as a value that develops in the post- 1990s situation in Nepal, Mark Liechty argues that freedom in relation to women is largely constrained by traditional values and beliefs regarding women's role in patriarchal-bourgeoisie society ("Paying for Modernity" 202). He also claims that certain contradictions resulting from the change rule women's life and they have to pay for modernity. He misses the point when he actually does not take into account that the structural limitations for women like Mādhavi put them in the role of herald of change in society. Also, the notions of freedom and responsibilities as explicitly presented in Lal's argument move simultaneously in Nepal.

The issue of gender in modernity is presented in Liechty within the frame of liberal-democratic structure when he argues that it is "an impossibility for woman" to enjoy what they enjoy in the west as "society confines legitimate femininity only within a dependent relationship with a dominant male" (216). Portraying women in the form of humans who are helpless and devoid of any power of resistance and thus agency, Liechty aspires to understand the whole process of social change in Nepal in relation to the structural configuration of the Western societies. He establishes the West as a measure to evaluate the modernity and/or its experience in Nepal.

Interestingly, the gender question in modernity is more tilted towards women in Liechty because he frames women in the system of bourgeoisie capitalism and market economy. Discussing that the position of women in such frame naturally yields the picture of women as helpless being, he claims:

In essence women must pay for modernity, both as producer/consumers, and as moral scapegoats. Women are trapped between an imagined ‘tradition,’ and a patriarchal modernity that threatens to freeze them out of newly emerging middle-class public spheres. (209)

However, he fails to take into account the women like Mādhavi who take up the burden of whole society to change the structural inequality. As a matter of fact, the question of gender in Nepali modernity is also duly addressed when creative geniuses like Gopal Prasad Rimal present women identifying the evils of society and inspiring their sons to fight against evil, saying, “It was my youthful dream/That that was you” (“Mother’s Dream” 17-18). Dixit’s Mādhavi and Rimal’s Mother as typical Nepali characters of social imagination never fit in the frame of interpretation that Liechty comes up with.

The issues of personal autonomy in relation to social change and quest for freedom result in jolts of history that function as the points from which to examine the role of agency in formation of Nepali experience of modernity. The revival of memories about personhood, relating its notion in relation to contemporary times, and its projection for the basic frame of understanding an evolved subjectivity after change help establish major dynamics of subjectivity and agency. Similarly, the emergent values and their association with the historical trajectory and value system

also call in further issues of both influence and transformation of classical/traditional values in contemporary subjectivity. Thus, Nepali experience of modernity and its frame of production of meaning therein depend on the comprehension of the nature of social change in relation to retention and/or transformation of values, and formation of subjectivity and its projection in relation to basic tenets of both past and present.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Modernity is a contested field of heterogeneity that brings in multiple conceptions to understand a variety of its dimensions. Surveying the general debate in modernity and scholarly contestations, multiplicity in experiencing modernity is brought into the focus in that typical experience and process of generating meaning for/of modernity cannot remain constant for all societies. The convergence claim of singular modernity in the West implies that homogeneous structures of societies are brought into existence when societies achieve this state. On the contrary to this, the multiple modernities assumes that since cultural tenets and the process of reality that agency is founded on vary from one to next society, the uniqueness of each society is duly paid attention to through the approach of multiple modernities. The epistemological and methodological frame of analysis of multiple modernities allow for such inclusion of multifarious elements in analyzing a particular modernity.

South Asian and Nepali experience of modernity as reflected in literary and historical texts put themselves in a unique position to analyze the difference and similarities in the regional and national modernities. The differences and similarities that one witnesses through the analysis of texts help functionally determine the nature of social change and the process of subjectivity formation in each of them. Hence, the divergence claim to study modernity assumes that heterogeneity of social structure in

every society emerges as valid measures and rational vantage points to observe and understand societies.

CHAPTER 3. SOUTH ASIAN MODERNITY

This study centers on influence and initiation as the key attributes of Nepali modernity and examines Nepal in the backdrop of South Asia. Since the research aims at showing both the similarities and differences between Nepal and South Asia in terms of modernity in each case, this chapter analyzes mode of South Asian modernity as reflected in historical and critical texts. This chapter prepares the background for the analysis of Nepali modernity in the broad cultural milieu of South Asia as this section focuses on four major dimension of the second part of the proposition that refers to the regional modernity: the four dimensions include tradition and culture, representation, resistance, and social imagination.

Modernity as the spirit of fleeting time has developed and sustained its uniqueness in South Asia. This zone full of cultural, traditional, and geographical heterogeneity bears its own way to reconfigure the social structure. Various dimensions of this reconfiguration and its advancement in the social sphere appear while examining the terrain of South Asia. Rabindranath Tagore views this heterogeneity and diversity in a very remarkable way when he states, “It is many countries packed in one geographical receptacle. It is just the opposite of what Europe truly is, namely one country made into many” (136). The shared cultural domain in South Asian geography finds utmost significance in Tagore. However, the diversity resides within the shared landscape of culture for the distinct approaches to ordering societies have evolved in multiple locations of the region. Despite divergence in practices of culture, the various peoples in this region also share the tradition that supplies them with values.

The loss resulting from colonial intrusion in this region seeks high attention in

attempting to understand its modernity. The cultural encounter with the imperial forces has led to loss, modification, and production of some of its features. Arguing that various habitations of modernity can be witnessed in history, Dipesh Chakrabarty explores the underlying question regarding South Asian modernity thus, “How does a modern intellectual think about the way a culture may have elaborated a series of values for itself from practices of cruelty and violence?” (*Habitations of Modernity* 45). The cruelty and violence imposed upon South Asia as pointed out by Chakrabarty cannot be carried on by the established categories of episteme developed around modernity. Still, the cultural negotiations during this process shape the resultant values in that the configuration of the region is affected in the meantime. The understanding and interpretation of the relationship of the society to its present reality cannot remain immune from cultural encounter. Hence, the cruelty and violence turn into a site for observation and interpretation of modernity.

South Asian modernity maintains tradition and its cultural practices by seeking ways to represent itself and correct the misrepresentation made in past through resistance and enhancement of social imagination in general. Traditional values of this region have remained instrumental in shaping the cultural practices and developing novelty in social adjustment and enhancement. The issues of representing oneself through one’s own value system and correcting the traditional misrepresentation through various domains of knowledge systems have drawn attention from center in South Asian modernity. Most significantly, the social representation manifest during the colonial period has made every attempt possible to justify the reform programs of the rulers in a ‘foreign land’ with different value-system. Simultaneously, the resistance made by people prepares a significant site in its history to observe and

analyze the nature of conflict, and explore the course of social change. For the purpose of present study, three themes, namely, rejection, rewriting, and appropriation, have categorically devised to discuss the form of resistance in the region. On top of it, social imagination, through promotion of traditional values in literature, arts, music, and the like pushes the society ahead by projecting the lapses in contemporary subjectivity and pointing out the required attributes therein to cope up with the time. The social imagination also allows self-critique through promotion of self-perception.

3.1 Tradition and Culture

As a fundamental dimension in modernity, tradition appears as a significant category that causes difference in understanding about nature of social arrangement. South Asian modernity evolves out of living tradition that assumes the foundation in the classical times and practices of the people in the Subcontinent. The values inherited in the contemporary times are sustained in the tradition. Unlike the conception of 'tradition' in the discourses of the Western modernity –which refers to the singular paradigm of modernity, advocating linearity in development of modern state of society –the heterogeneity of the Subcontinent in terms of its geography and cultural practices posits itself at the core of diversity of traditional values. Furthermore, the colonial encounter in the region also results in certain traditional values because of the attempts of the colonizer/imperial ruling elite to reform the society in their mould. This loss is often valorized and respected in modern discourses regarding the socio-political development of the region on the whole.

The diversity of the region is marked by the heterogeneous traditions prevalent in the Subcontinent. The temporal dimension of modernity gets special attention to

comprehend the modernity in the region. Ashis Nandy calls this position is called critical traditionalism in which one begins to critically assess the past and its influence upon contemporary life through scrutiny of historical development with due reverence paid to the past and its development. For him, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Gandhi hold this position. Evaluating Ashis Nandy, Dipesh Chakrabarty states, “Nandy’s position, by contrast, is respectful of the past without being bound by it. It uses tradition but in a way that is guided by the critique of the present that it has developed” (*Habitations of Modernity* 39). Critical traditionalism as a critical vocabulary assumes that present is the outcome of past: the understanding of past is the necessary precondition to approach the present. Analyzing some selected movies by Satyajit Ray, Veena Das pictures the connection between the past and present as the theme of modernity. She writes, “The theme of the present as having been born of the past and the corruption of the present as a temporary ‘forgetting’ of origins is widespread in the representations of modernity” (184). Modernity as a matter of perception in India is founded on the connection of present with past. The connectedness of temporality is seen in South Asian modernity. In other words, the present is rooted in and guided by the past in South Asian modernity.

Viewing from the vantage point of tradition as a categorical attribute of modernity, some of the key differences in modernity of South Asia and the West –that refers to European modernity in specific –are observed in that they are rooted in different value-system. S. N. Eisenstadt sees striking differences between India and Europe when he analyzes the structural and institutional aspects of two societies. He argues against convergence theory and states that the differences are the factors of prime importance to assert the distinctive nature of each society. In this sense, he

critically observes:

...the greatly different civilizational dynamics of these two civilizations are indeed very striking. This applies to the overall political and economic dynamics, the structure and construction of the centres and of their activities, the nature of the protest movements, their articulation into political conflicts as well as to the modes of the incorporation of such movements and of their demands into the centre. (*Comparative Civilizations* 329-30)

The prime differences of two different modernities as Eisenstadt analyzes emanate from the difference in tradition on whose background they are constructed. In fact, he also sees European monotheistic and South Asian polytheistic values at the core of modernity in every society (333). Thus, 'tradition' as a category and attribute helps define modernity with reference to the historical development it has undergone and historical forces that have contributed a unique form to it.

The understanding of tradition also varies in the West and South Asia. For the West, 'tradition' is a negative feature, almost equivalent to immature state of mind. Thus, 'escape' from this is desired. South Asian modernity does not define, like Kantian form of modernity, tradition as a thing to be escaped from. Viewed from alternative point of view, this escape also results in loss of one's link with cultural situatedness in history, thereby implying denial of ground for identity formation. On the contrary, South Asian modernity seeks to link itself with tradition to draw and sustain the classically held human values of self-sacrifice and transcendence from the mundane reality. The cultural features shaped by tradition and the inspiration drawn from it play very significant role in shaping Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandash

Karamchand Gandhi in the Subcontinent. In fact, both of them treat tradition very meaningfully in order to draw reference to build their arguments that serve the present reality. Thus, life and past come together, forming a symbiotic relationship in tradition. In South Asian modernity, the perception, cultural practices and treatment of temporality bring about understanding of tradition as an impetus for life.

Tradition connotes very negatively in the discourses of Western modernity. The prejudice evolves from the epistemological bias of singularist approach to modernity. For one thing, the convergence claim is promoted as the goal of modernity; for the other, the homogenization of cultural practices and creation of universal structure in social development are assumed in its methodological foundation. Hence, Dipesh Chakrabarty questions this mode of intellectual practice. He does not think that both the convergence claims and homogeneity as the goal are valid propositions to understand modernity. As he argues,

If modernization has had a global history, there is no reason why reflections on that history should have to depend only on the intellectual resources provided by traditions of thought generally regarded as ‘European’ or ‘Western’. (“The Muddle of Modernity” 674)

Implicitly, tradition functions as the measure in any kind of modernity –whether Western or non-Western. The shift of society is measured against the backdrop of its own historical achievement and the attainment at present.

Furthermore, the western periodization of modernity aims at producing homogeneous categories, thus leading to single result everywhere on the globe. It does not respect the distinctive attributes, for it is grounded in the singular vision that

makes best of its attempts to homogenize the societies to produce single culture throughout the world. Regarding divergent nature of temporal advancement in different parts of the globe, Harry Harootunian thus claims:

...the strategy possessed no aptitude to see modernity as a temporal category authorizing specific social formations, demanded by the recognition of a pervasive immanence which obscured the appearance of those historical moments testifying to arrhythmic and heterogeneous temporalities throughout the different parts of the world. (371)

The unique cultural and temporal realities are paid no attention at all. In other words, the tradition as the measure to examine the social progress fails to work due to the arrogance of the enlightenment transcendentalism as the final approach to modernity.

No modernity can remain immune from the past practices that function as the ground for founding value-system. The comparison of the institutional practices of past and present, and the alteration in the social reality are employed to measure progress of a society. In this sense, social advancement is measured against the very temporality witnessed in society. For instance, the discussion centered on Sati as event and system of practice leads Dipesh Chakrabarty to explore the measure in social development. Likewise, Ashis Nandy respects Sati and relates it critically to tradition; this dualism is at the heart of critical traditionalism as exemplified in Gandhi as well (Chakrabarty 675). To add a point more, one cannot be free from past that possesses the power to haunt forever. Hence, one has to respectfully and critically relate it to the tradition. Nandy's dualistic attitude which gets expressed through 'critical traditionalism' resides at the center of relating to the ethos of present in South Asian modernity.

Western modernity provides ample space for general doubt to its claims for its dissociating propositions regarding tradition. On the one hand, it carries the promise of general human emancipation and optimum use of liberty on the part of mass. On the other, the historical practices fail to verify them. Partha Chatterjee argues that the prevalence of universal reason should have taken place so far in the last two hundred years (after the Enlightenment) and homogeneity in cultural practices should have already taken place, provided the proposition made about modernity are sound and valid (*Our Modernity* 13). The failure to respect the past as immaturity and ignorance has formed the whole gamut of complex of Western modernity to depict 'others' as premodern. Regarding the bias and perception of singular modernity from South Asia, he argues, "Today our doubts about the claims of modernity are out in the open" (14). Thus, perception of Western modernity about 'tradition' do not hold true for South Asian modernity.

The tension between the singularist approach to modernity and tradition in general lies in the attempt of the former to establish its claims of universality. The variation in temporal dimension occurs with change in spatial positions. Once, this variation is methodologically acknowledged in the epistemic frame, the attainment of universality and homogeneity in social configuration turns logical impossibility. Two tools of enlightenment, namely rationalism and transcendental approach, are responsible for this kind of bias: time means nothing in the formation of modernity in a society. Consequently, it is implied that modernity has to emerge the way it did in Western Europe in specific. As Harootunian observes, "The enlightenment project, upholding the powers of humans as historical subjects capable of making their own history and founding an historical knowledge dedicated to it, collapsed into the

‘meaningless nature’ it had sought to overcome” (368). Thus, time and tradition are methodologically outside the frame of modernity in the West. However, South Asian modernity approaches it differently since it acknowledges the time it responds to and the arrangement that is brought into existence to cope up with the fleeting spirit of the age.

Past is perceived with prejudice through the frame of the Western modernity that denies it any role, for this is the site of ignorance. “Modernism, of course, wanted to conceal the very unevenness, claims Harootunian, “that marked its own moment of formation and which constituted the very history it was determined to overcome” (367). On the other hand, South Asian modernity finds it difficult to accept the idea of ‘escape from the past’, for past provides resources to draw inspiration and guiding values so as to serve and form contemporary life. Analyzing the distinction between the Western and South Asian perception of past, Chatterjee draws the line of demarcation thus:

... whereas Kant, speaking at the founding moment of Western modernity, looks at the present as the site of one’s escape from the past, for us it is precisely the present from which we feel we must escape. This makes the very modality of our coping with modernity radically different from the historically evolved modes of Western modernity. (*Our Modernity* 20)

South Asian modernity locates resources in the past in order to explore the means with which to overcome the lapses present in the contemporary social reality. Also, the cruelties and violence of history sustained in the contemporary time require proper address while analyzing the present. Hence, the mode of understanding of past greatly

varies in these two modernities.

While the past in the Western form of modernity is taken as the site of immaturity and ignorance, colonial experience in history in South Asian societies informs that the principle of domination and hegemony was all directed with economic goal. The cultural agendas of modernity are thus pushed to farther corners in singularist approach. Hence, cultural forms guided and shaped by the past practices require it that they be taken into understanding the social sphere lying outside the domain of European form. As Washbrook argues,

Indeed, the post-colonial situation now, marked by the emergence of China and India as global powers in their own right, has started to raise the issue of whether there is a singular Modernity at all, based on the Western pattern, or whether there might not be many different modernities, expressing the concept in very distinctive social and cultural ways? (125)

The poststructuralist response to the grand narrative of modernity leads to the emergence of multiple modernities approach that respects every culture and people by acknowledging their inner potential to come up with their own modernity (Bhabra 653). Implicitly, the divergent model of modernity allows, thus, perception of the distinct attributes in regional modernity of South Asia.

As a matter of fact, the Western—European variety for that matter—modernity focuses more on material transformation of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth century as the outcome of industrialization or institutionalization of capitalism. So, the previous form of social organization is ‘pre-modern’ for this discourse. When certain similarities between pre-industrial society in Europe and the

non-western societies are found, the Western form of modernity instantly argues that those non-western societies are 'pre-modern'. In this sense as well, modernity takes a nationalist turn that focuses on cultural aspects outside Europe. Hence, Chatterjee argues, "...there is no general rule that determines which should be the element of modernity and which the emblems of difference" (18). On the other hand, the West also contradictorily believes that the pre-industrial period in their society was not fully pre-modern. On the whole, industrialization through the institutionalization of capitalism and formation of democratic polity through social change are the fundamental yardstick for the west to measure the modernity. When South Asian context does not fit the paradigm, it appears to be 'pre-modern' society (if and/or when observed through the epistemic lenses established in the Western discourses of modernity). Hence, it is required to understand the inner changes that appear in the aspiration of agency to struggle against the factors associated to resistance. The collective aspiration for social transformation needs to be paid due attention to at the regional level. However, Bhabra argues that the colonial encounter in the non-Western society is instrumental in the formation of multiple modernities paradigm after the 1960s (654). The cultural encounter results in major issues of representation, rejection, resistance, appropriation, and formation of social agency. At every dynamics of modernity, the colonial encounter poses certain challenges which seek through examination and analysis before properly addressing.

South Asian modernity has remained culturally resistant to the scientific rationality promoted during the colonial rule. The import of colonial rationality assumed in South India that secularization leads to formation of social structure which is scientifically valid and rationally sound. Washbrook brings in an interesting case of

South India where the people resisted this conceptualization of rationality by seeking it to appropriate in their cultural context. The South Indian experience, for instance, was very unique, for they attempted to bring together modernity and tradition by merging “ideals of Modernity with dreams of Tradition in the very same constructions. They self –consciously denied that the two had to be seen as exclusive of each other, to possess antonymic meanings” (135). He further evaluates:

... certain aspects of southern society have been resistant to moving in the directions that are associated with, at least, ‘*Western*’ *Modernity*... The turn to scientific rationality ... has not proved to be *at the expense of religion*. (Emphasis added 126)

Despite the Western claims of secularization that emerge as impetus to realizing rationality, South Indian society appropriates rationality while preserving their traditional religious values. This appropriation of Western rationality to suit the socio-political context implies that the cultural tenets of society still persist in adopting the Western forms, thereby forming a novel kind of social structure. This new space requires that the frame incorporate cultural dimension with nationalistic goals rooted in the local tradition for comprehension of a different form of modernity.

Nationalistic drive in South Asian societies results from colonial encounter: before the intrusion of colonial forces in the Subcontinent, it was purely a cultural zone with its own heterogeneity. The homogenizing tendency of the imperial rule attempted to annihilate the cultural uniqueness of societies that had long sustained their individual practices. Nationalism as “the most significant ideological force driving society to re-contemplate its future” (Washbrook 133) in the twentieth century marks a need to fight against the imperial powers in India. Thus, Indian modernity

emerged as unique in form and essence in that it “did not necessarily follow Western patents” (134). Tagore and Gandhi emerge as typical voices seeking to establish the culturally unique values as the frame of viewing the contemporary social need.

Tagore argues that a society that does not develop inner potential, and just borrows values and ideals from other society is a bogus one and such society perishes in the long run. Hence, for sustenance of society and its cultural mores, it has to develop its own ideals and values. He asserts, “We, in India, must make up our minds that we cannot borrow other people's history, and that if we stifle our own we are committing suicide” (“Nationalism in India” 128). For him, every social evil must find the solution within own culture. Also, the imperial attempt to create homogeneous structure refers to an evil practice, for the existing differences sole give peoples their unique identity. Hence, he relies on the sages for the solution of the problem like caste system in India. For him, these are not political problems; rather, they are composed of social elements. He argues, “This basis has come through our saints, like Nanak, Kabir, Chaitnaya and others, preaching one God to all races of India” (119). The living repository of tradition is a source for him to draw the historical resources to address the lacks in society.

Likewise, Gandhi had been influenced by the teaching of the Gita right from his childhood. Later in his life, he developed social philosophy based on the ideas of Hindu scriptures. In other words, the social and the religious are intricately related to each other in India's response to imperial/colonial movement. The social philosophy of Gandhi's resistance is derived from the classical texts of Hinduism. Hence, Gauri Vishwanathan states, “... he ... contrasts instinctive religious devotionism, as derived from his mother, with rational critical reflection, which western commentaries

on Hinduism helped him to develop” (28). Also, Gandhi’s treatise *Indian Home Rule* (1909) explores the philosophical roots for rationale behind Indian demand for home rule in the treatise.

Gandhi raises the fundamental questions regarding civilizational structure in the West and the East. He argues that Indian civilization is a living tradition whereas the West has seen rise and fall of many civilizations. Indian traditions teach one to see the difference between the worldly and the spiritual. The strength has to be re-realized by people to achieve ‘home rule’ which for him refers to learning to rule themselves. In fact, like Tagore, Gandhi also sees tradition as a living entity that harbors the knowledge of past which relates to the problems of contemporary times. Thus, South Asian modernity brings past and present together. The tradition and the advancement are not exclusive to each other; rather, advancement in South Asia evolves out of traditional sphere of human understanding and philosophical outcomes of tradition. Thus, South Asian mindset seeks complementary relationship between tradition and advancement.

The diachronicity of modernity in South Asia allows tradition to be incorporated and thus results in further advancement. Singular modernity envisions no further change at all. The universal feature of modernity that got devised in the Enlightenment discourse did not allow independent modernities to be theorized, for the sense of time was robbed away from it. Thus, *other* societies –societies outside Europe or the West –were victimized by the Western form of modernity as a canon and discourse. Harootunian recognizes the failure of Western model in identifying the cultural aspects and historical forces at play because of “its association with rationalization and its claims of universalism” (369). Also, Eisenstadt contends that

the continual conflict in European history is rooted in failure of European society to distinguish and draw boundaries among the primordial, political, and religious. The smooth social development resides in managing these categories individually (*Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities* 341). For one thing, South Asian perception of tradition as source of inspiration in achieving a better social space enables to respect the past; for the other, it allows to accept the possible multiple forms to emerge in attaining own modernity.

Tradition and modernity move simultaneously since they are content and form respectively. Unlike the Western form, South Asian modernity does not place tradition and modernity in the opposite positions; rather, they are the inner and the outer. Analyzing time relations, Veena Das concludes that tradition is the inner space from which modernity evolves (168). In this respect also, Subcontinental modernity differs from other modernities like those of Europe and America. Methodologically, the incorporation of historical forces in modernity implies the need to multiplicity in its form and uniqueness in its appearance. Thus, Chakrabarty's claim about multiple modernities as an approach that is required to value "different histories equally" and reject the claim about "the West to be the center of the World" (672) appears pertinent. The issue of representation that postcolonial historiography brings into debate gets more forcefully asserted when the points of differences that are evident in the coordination of tradition and modernity finds due position.

In a study of colonial Bengal, Chakrabarty shows the persistence of traditional values in modernization of society. He maintains that the internal structure of every value embodies the prototype of Bengali tradition in itself. Opposing the linear nature of history, he claims that the origin of modernity in Bengal is not singular: multiple

forces have their role to play in its formation. He argues, “There cannot therefore be any one, unitary history of its becoming... Questions of this history/ modernity have to be situated within a recognition of its 'not-one-ness'” (“Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity” 25). Chakrabarty basically surveys the private in the Bengali subjectivity in order to move to the public sphere. The values inculcated and sustained in the private sphere reveal the inner side of the development of modernity in Bengal.

Hence, he says that any absolutist claim about modernity in general is inadequate and thus a failed statement to carry the overall socio-political structuring of the society.

South Asian contemporaneity emerges out of tradition and sustains it as the undercurrent. On the one hand, tradition continues to shape the values of South Asian societies even after colonial presence; on the other, it maintains itself as the depot of classically held ideas to interpret the contemporary social reality. The past does hold life for the present to draw its development from and find the remedy of the evils faced. The higher impulses of past are filtered to the present through tradition in India. Hence, Tagore says that India as a cultural category has higher impulses of civilization whereas the West (imperial power) is guided by the lower passions of greed and hatred (Nationalism 140). Saranindranth Tagore argues that Rabindranath Tagore’s cosmopolitanism differs significantly from that of Kantian kind as the former incorporates the cultural dimensions and traditional forces in it (1073). Kantian cosmopolitanism valorizes the transcendental reasoning, thereby turning it into an abstract category. On the contrary, Rabindranath Tagore sets tradition as the locale out of which rational self realizes its form. In fact, tradition remains a valued source of resources to relate to and respond to the contemporary reality in South Asian modernity.

The dialectics with two categories of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ in relation to tradition help define the nature of modernity in South Asia and the West. The temporality remains an essential component of South Asian modernity while universal claims and homogeneity in social configuration that are rooted in capitalistic notions do not allow modernity in the West to pay due reverence to tradition as a category in understanding modernity. Saranindranth Tagore argues that Rabindranth Tagore views reason as a part of everyday life. In this sense, Tagore sees reason is integrated in both present and past. The detached view of reason which is found in Kantian discourses of transcendence from reality to seek for the governing principles of quotidian life finds no space in Tagore’s philosophy. Hence, Saranindranath Tagore states, “Amartya Sen has claimed that, for Tagore, reason is sovereign...it is a mistake to think that the Tagorean cosmopolitan vision flows from a detached account of reason” (1082). Implicitly, the prefixed categories like ‘premodern’ and ‘postmodern’ emerge out of the advent of use of reason at a particular point in the Western history. Also, such categories promote detached view of reason, assuming disjointed nature of history. On the contrary, South Asian rationality is deeply rooted in the attempts of past to reorganize the way the intellectual life and wellbeing are shaped in a particular ways. The living nature of tradition in the region does not allow any prospect of such prefixed categories in examination of nature of modernity as such.

The heterogeneity in South Asia is founded on the continuity of traditional practices that is implied in the nature of tradition and modernity simultaneously moving forward. Besides, the issue of gender role is also differently maintained as integral component of this diversity through tradition. Veena Das finds her argument in Eistendat’s conceptualization of multiple modernities and brings in some

of the selected Indian films to discuss the construction of masculinity and femininity in India. Most importantly, she argues that multiple interpretations reveal different themes and motifs hidden therein (166). From the perspective of gender relations depicted in Indian cinema, she argues that the domestic world, the abode of women preserves the traditional aspects of Indian life and value system than the outside world that is accessed by men. The domain of social life which is uncontaminated by the imperial forces lies in the control of women. Inherently, this space also points towards the most authentic and pure space in the quest for nationalist awakening. Hence, the awakening of Indian social life is largely shaped by the active role of women who largely contribute to the formation of social agency.

In fact, historical practice and its understanding to relate to and respond to contemporary reality of South Asia provide people with ways to formation of novel social systems at heart. Like the understanding of gender roles and their depiction in the underlying structure of society, South Asian modernity carries continuity at its heart, building assumption about tradition as its backbone because the tradition in itself is living one, founded in the ancient times and maintained through textualized practice. Gandhi compares Indian tradition with European ones thus:

The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory. In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome. Such is their pitiable condition. In the midst of all this, India remains immovable, and that is her glory. It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilised, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes.

(66)

The discontinuities observed in the Western civilization also bear certain connection in their attempt to obtain homogeneity and universal pattern in social advancement. Methodologically, transcendental reasoning is employed to attain this goal.

The cosmopolitanism of the West and South Asia varies greatly, for the latter one carries cultural dimensions that are implied in the values drawn from tradition. Identifying the role of tradition and cultural dimensions in development of rationality and formation of rational self, Saranindranth Tagore argues that development of rationality is also shaped by inheritance and tradition, “backing the position that life of reason detached from tradition is unintelligible” (1073). Transcendental rationality in the West builds on the propositions submitted through inductive generalization without diachronic facet in that the ultimate goal hidden therein is to construct valid and universal generalities. However, South Asian practice of rationality seeks to establish itself in the ground of tradition, recognizing the practices of past as the basic driving forces in shaping the contemporary reality. Thus, the practice of reason shows its uniqueness in South Asia.

Tradition is categorically required in defining South Asian modernity. The role of past in determining the shape of contemporary times cannot be overlooked in the locations outside the West. The postcolonial debate on the wrongs committed during the cultural encounters of *others* with the imperial forces also attempts to explore the areas across colonial history and aims at bringing them into critical scrutiny. Ashish Nandy’s coinage ‘critical traditionalism’ as a critical vocabulary point towards this direction and also identifies the need to revere past in understanding the fleeting time at present. In this regard, there appear fundamental

differences between the Western and South Asian claims about modernity. In the former, past is portrayed negatively as the period of ‘immaturity’ and ‘ignorance’ whose necessary avoidance is the precondition for society to achievement enlightened state. On the other hand, South Asia perceives modernity –Dipesh Chakrabarty’s proposition about modernity as a process that has multiple habitations across space and time is a valid argument in this context –as a process built in the backdrop of tradition. The use of rationality avoiding such temporal facet turns unintelligible in dealing with the contemporary reality.

In South Asian milieu, tradition functions as a living force that shapes both cultural practices and reality of the contemporary times. The perception of self, history, and production of social imagination in general are deeply rooted in tradition as the ultimate source of inspiration and repository of classical values about person, social welfare, and perception of the relationship between person and society as such. The deep core of social structure is founded on this nature of tradition that generates its own propositions to sustain and further enhance itself. Thus, South Asian modernity that grounds itself on the principle of continuity from past to present necessarily includes tradition as a category that distinguishes itself from other modernities.

3.2 Representation

South Asian modernity possesses ‘representation’ as its major dynamics. Colonial representation of the colonized world is founded on creation and circulation of certain images of the society through political and social discourses. The distortion of the *other* in this process ends up resulting in such a picture that it does not have corresponding reality. However, the power structure promotes and employs these

images as the most authorized one to view and interpret the colonial world. In this connection, Amartya Sen states that the internal images of/ about India are extremely affected by the colonial rule. The principle in Guha's formulation is the principle of domination and subordination that was applied by/through the colonial power (Sen 168). Hence, the imperial power dynamics must be taken into account while dealing with Indian context in specific or any colonial context in general. The issue of representation brings into consideration the whole tension resulting from the imperial intrusion and rereading of colonial history after independence.

The colonial representation of the *other world* presents the ruled space as a location of lack. The principle of this kind of presentation is founded on the premise that it is more comfortable to implement reform programs when the people are epistemologically indoctrinated that their society is devoid of certain fundamental attributes, necessary to cope up with the pace of modern advancement. Sen finds this representation of colonial discourses about India a misleading and hyperreal construction. Hence, he argues that the approaches adopted by the British Raj to describe and understand India are hallowed out (180). For Sen, the colonial history produced during the Raj needs rereading in order to find the cruelties of power in representing the ruled.

Representation also functions as twin phenomena in South Asian society. In other words, the perceptions of others about South Asia find its space in the distortion of its image in colonial annals of history whereas the simultaneous reconstruction of its image manifests in the aspiration of the local subjects. For one thing, the representation of social form and structure demands very critical attention in the postcolonial society. For the other, the ways of self-representation forms another

dimension of such societies. The role of social agency that fights against the external forces in forming native history and social structure heavily relies on the issue of self-representation and its sustenance. The critique of representation bears double binds: firstly, the methodological implication of singular modernity to represent any society at all; and secondly, the critique of representation of colonized society through distortion. Likewise, attempts and ways to bring in self-representation form still another aspect of South Asian modernity.

Singular modernity that was promoted through the colonial expansion in the eighteenth through the twentieth century provides various instances and location to doubt in its ability to authentically represent other societies. Most importantly, the development of this approach is rooted in the value-system of Europe that fails to address the frame of social organization outside the location it is produced in. As a result, it appears contradictory to view singular modernity and its values from outside locations. For instance, critiquing Kant, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak observes that Kant believes that subjects should not be given total and ultimate possibility to use reason: once, limit is not set, morality for him is dismantled. Thus, the question of freedom in Kant assumes the limit to it at the same time. She writes:

The human being is moral only insofar as he cannot cognize himself. Kant does not give cognitive power to the subject of reason, and indeed he makes his own text susceptible to the system of determined yet sometimes wholesome illusions he seeks to expose. This may be called a tropological deconstruction of freedom. (22-23)

Spivak's analysis reveals contradictory nature of Kantian understanding of modernity. Kant argues for freedom, implying that limit be set on its achievement. In this sense,

modernity as such in the West is founded on those values that form an unintelligible frame of understanding for societies outside its native location.

The grievances of postcolonial societies regarding distortion produced in history cannot also be methodologically addressed through the singular modernity as such. For Dipesh Chakrabarty, modern European frame of understanding fails to address colonial society: different epistemic frame set to assess the Western intellectual development fails to address the non-Western societies that need to develop certain categories of their own. As he argues, “Capital and power can be treated as analytically separable categories. Traditional European-Marxist political thought that fuses the two is therefore always relevant but inadequate for theorizing power in colonial-modern histories” (*Habitations of Modernity* 13). Since traditional European frame does not recognize capital and power as separate attributes, it fails to address fundamental issues of the societies that find them separable ones. In fact, European societies founding power on the principle of capitalistic growth do not see any distinction between these two categories. On the one hand, this frame induces methodological inadequacies; on the other, it provides ample space to doubt the interpretation produced. Thus, representation of the ruled in colonial history gains prominence.

Critiquing the methodological implications of singular modernity, Dipesh Chakrabarty problematizes representation of Indians in colonial history. His basic argument is that imperial forces have done much damage to the development of Indian personhood. The real India is never defined as it is, for both ‘India’ and ‘Europe’ are hyperreal construction of the Empire (“Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” 1). For understanding of India, one has to sift the biases injected in the

imperial constructions very carefully and advance the study, taking into account the presence of imperial forces that impose the attributes like ‘lack,’ ‘absence,’ ‘inadequate,’ and ‘failure’ to Indian subject. Thus, he concludes that through exploration of inner strands of singular modernity as such, provincializing Europe (26) is pertinent from the postcolonial societies, provided that they explore new categories to define and understand their own modernities. Chakrabarty’s proposal implies the inadequate nature of singular modernity in representing other societies.

Knowledge about the rule in colonial era was formed to justify the principle of domination. Historical production of knowledge suffers from this challenge in colonial society. For instance, the peasants were presented as if they did not have any ability to bring about change in their socio-political positioning. Partha Chatterjee discusses a case to exemplify this inadequacy. He analyzes the mode of domination in colonial rule. He states that the ruling elite produces knowledge about the ruled in order to justify every mode of domination enforced therein. Hence, he writes:

The process of domination produces its own requirements for knowledge about the dominated... this knowledge about the social conditions of the dominated locates the fact of their subjugation within a framework of *causality* where the ‘limitations’ of subaltern consciousness, its ‘archaic’ and ‘pre-modern’ character, its very emptiness - the ‘lack’ of consciousness becomes the *explanation* for their subjugation. (Emphasis in original, “Peasants, Politics and Historiography” 62)

The colonial bias towards the ruled thus necessarily emanates from the episteme of the narrative of modernity, resulting in negative portrayal of people and society under

their rule. Simultaneously, the economic agenda of political expansion of imperial power is served by turning the colonized space as a market where every political program is justified by claiming it necessary to uplift the 'devoid sensibility' of the ruled.

The negative portrayal of the ruled serves the rulers by promoting their positive image. The distortion methodologically carries political agenda and aspires to dehumanize the colonized. As a rule, the assertion of superiority is a relative phenomenon in that it presumes the presence of an inferior existence. In fact, the distorted image of the colonized serves both ends in colonial rule. Gauri Viswanathan makes use of historical analysis by associating various social issues to construction of Hinduism in British India. She states that multiple, heterogeneous practices of people in India were "termed Hinduism during the colonial period" (33). The only reason for bringing them together was the commonality they shared: polytheism. In order to spread Christianity and its monotheistic values, the colonial forces began to seek for the weak areas in Hindu practice where they found Sati (widow burning), caste-system and the like, and promoted them as the integral features of Hinduism. The European scholarship was more focused on the issues of gender and caste in India than on any other things as the evil ones, implying that Christianity can easily handle them. She critically observes that the negative portrayal of Indian practice had political end embedded in itself.

The disfiguration of colonial society in history is rooted in its homogenizing tendency. The universal claims about social development aspire to create symmetrical configuration underlying every society. In other words, the imperial forces in colonial societies find in their history the measure to achieve certain type of form in the

colonized society. Amartya Sen sees heterogeneity in Indian culture that is often absent when interpreted from singularist perspective of Western rationality as the Western rationality opts for homogeneity (168). The differences among societies are specific to their tradition that is continually shaped by time, space, and social practices emerging in new circumstances of history, thus producing unique modernities. Partha Chatterjee argues that modernities vary from one place to the other as there are differences in the social circumstances (*Our Modernity* 8). The representation that develops from convergence claims of singular modernity, hence, ends up forming distorted understanding of colonial societies.

Similarly, biopower appears as another fundamental aspect in the Western arrogance about representing others through their frame of interpretation. The forms of colonial governmentality scribe certain codes in the body and consciousness of the colonized mass so as to formulate the site of rule therein. “Indeed, colonial governmentality was founded on the notion that the body in India was a peculiarly complex effect of the environment, habits, beliefs, and knowledges” (Prakash 206). Furthermore, Gyan Prakash argues that the colonized societies were asserted as the disabled agents that could only produce “pale copies of their metropolitan original” (191). The rule that is based on the principle of domination seeks to assert its superiority. The body of the subjects provides the ruler with a site to scribe the negative attributes which result in production of weak self-image. For one thing, it justifies the foreign power; for the other, it helps to rob away from the people under colonial rule the power of agency. Thus, the colonial subject is imprisoned in the labyrinth of imperial power structure.

Denial of agency through biopower also serves the colonial rule by foreclosing

the colonial subject. The rule seeks to legitimize itself through denial. Besides, Spivak's argument about native informant as the foreclosed subject in the discourses of the West stands as a powerful critique of representation. In fact, the representation of the colonial subject in these discourses is witnessed to be the major source of creating native informant for her. The transcendental approach of the West delocates the subject from the real ground and acts as the sole authority in describing them in the production of knowledge. The description of the native informant is in itself a double binding activity for her in that the west creates itself vis-à-vis the colonial subject (Prakash 4). The creation of native informant also signifies the issue of representation for Spivak in that the colonial subject is epistemologically nullified in the production of knowledge. As a matter of fact, the colonial subject is merely a passive native informant who provides all the data for the production of knowledge and finds itself misrepresented in the discourse created by the colonial master, the technology of colonial governance employs biopower to regulate production of power.

The problematiqués of history and approach to redefine it appear in the forefront since the colonial encounter had structurally impacted Indian society. On the one hand, Indian people were viewed as anthropological objects representing European past –the epistemic victim of European nostalgia and sense of loss emerging from the mercantile capitalism. On the other, European representation of those people in annals of history is void of any role of agency in them. Contemporary understanding of subjectivity and culture in formation of social structure paves road for the development of those ideals. As a matter of fact, representation of India in history displays colonial bias towards peasants and lower class people in India in

specific and the whole of South Asia in general. In this sense, whole South Asian project of modernity is centered on the debate of rewriting history and developing historiography that can truly represent the people. The Marxist paradigm that gets manifest in the subaltern studies attempts to put the marginal group in the center of social interaction, and development of social norms. Similarly, the endeavors of the people and quest for a just society, for it is reflected in peasant movements also imply the role of native agency (even during the British Raj) to change their contemporary reality.

The representation of women in colonial discourses carries this distortion. Spivak observes that woman is the native informant in colonial discourses of India. However, studying colonial history of Bengal, Chakrabarty analyzes the question of representation of gender and colonial reform programs to empower women with autonomy. He rewrites the colonial bias, implying that women in Bengal had enjoyed autonomy much before. He argues, “. . . there is evidence to suggest the existence of relatively autonomous domains for women which the coming of a print-culture may have significantly eroded” (“Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity” 3). However, the colonial discourses show the misrepresentation as the knowledge system is politically dominated to justify the programs of colonial masters. Thus, Prakash sees violation in the heart of colonial modernity. In the process of reinscribing its subject, the imperial forces used violation as a tool to impart their own ideology in the ruled. For Prakash, “Colonial modernity was never simply a ‘tropicalization’ of the Western form but its fundamental displacement, its essential violation” (190). The wrong description of Indian subject which is present in colonial modernity arises from the desire of imperial governmentality to represent in the way they would like to see them.

Coercion appears in representation of the ruled and objectifies the subjects. The real social agency is denied to them in such kind of depiction in order to justify their rule upon them. In fact, a maze begins to form in this process of representing the *other* from which it becomes almost impossible to escape. Prakash calls it biopolitics that attacks the physical sphere of body to explore reasons to justify the intellectual deficiency in the ruled. Also, such process relies on inculcating a particular type of image in the ruled so that the inferiorization succeeds later on. The approach to self-knowledge and recreation of social systems maintained through traditional values are never paid any attention to in this process. Hence, the dire need to form one's understanding in a different light emerges. Self-representation through knowledge system of one's own lead to creating a purified image that holds resemblances with reality.

The major concern of representation lies at exploring distinction between industrial and pre-industrial social order. It takes place in the nineteenth century when sociology gets instituted as a discipline in academia. The emergence of sociology coincides with the high time of imperialism: sociology in this sense propagates modernity as fundamentally a European thing. However, the rise of poststructural reading of modernity has stopped valuing modernity with its grand narrative character. The 1960s and 1970s have appeared as a break in the understanding of modernity from the Eurocentric point of view. Hence, Bhabra states:

Since the 1960s and 1970s, knowledge claims in the social sciences and humanities have been under pressure from the rise of subaltern positions and an explicitly recognized politics of knowledge production that has questioned the possibility of objective knowledge.

This pressure has been expressed in terms of suspicion toward positivist explanatory paradigms and their presumed associations with power, with a shift from causal explanation to reflexivity, deconstruction, and interpretation, and with arguments for the necessary demise of grand narratives. (653-4)

The issue of self-representation and possibility of multiple representations thus directly pose challenge to homogenizing claims and convergence propositions of singular modernity. Also, the new positions in critical theories enable underrepresented societies to come up with novel understanding about themselves through recreating and rewriting.

Literature provides the best location for recreation of complex value system. In South Asian context, colonial rule has played a pivotal role in producing this complex social system. Satya P. Mohanty sees the complexity within modernity as a social phenomenon since many values get generated in this process. In Indian context, the interaction of society with imperial powers led to formation of complex value-system which is accessible through literature. He observes:

Instead of identifying modernity with what colonial rule brought with it—and choosing to either accept it in its entirety or reject it outright—many in the colonized world defined modernity for their times through their complexly mediated critiques of their own social traditions, both the old and the newly invented ones. (3)

Thorough assessment of the system and values produced in the tradition and the need of the fleeting time are also made available through other cultural productions like movies.

The deep sense of loss is expressed through nostalgia that also refers to deep reverence for past. In South Asian cultural productions, the purity of past that was free of any contamination from colonial encounter implies the idea of recreating the taste of history to suite the taste of the contemporary times. Besides, the valorization of past and tradition as a part of continuity in attaining modernity is restated through recreation. Critiquing Satyajit Ray's movies, Veena Das analyzes, "Geeta Kapur has critiqued Ray's position as characteristic of a subjectivity that is suffused with romantic nostalgia in which value is only in the past, while it resides in the present only as private sensibility" (186). In this sense, the loss of purity in past gets expressed in an attempt to valorization of the time left behind, thereby seeking to establish lost connection with the tradition.

Similarly, rewriting of history also focuses on the groups pushed outside the colonial discourses representing the colonized space. In fact, the subaltern class forms one of such groups that is completely ignored in the colonial discourse. The subaltern historiography develops a methodology to recover the position they had in society during the colonial period. Chatterjee argues for locating an autonomous domain for subaltern in rewriting Indian history. In analyzing the power relation during colonial era, the principle of subjection must not be left outside the frame of interpretation. Therefore, he asserts, "To deny autonomy in this sense and simply to assert that the subaltern classes are 'deeply subjugated' is to deny that they represent a distinct form of social existence; it is to merge their life into the life-history of the dominant classes" ("Peasants, Politics and Historiography" 59). Thus, this shift in developing a different historiography of people or the subaltern class implies the attempt of academia in rewriting history that acknowledges the representation of ignored and

marginalized people, and their role in creation of the national history.

Representation in the postcolonial context leaves a heavy impact as a category in understanding South Asian modernity as such. On the one hand, it seeks to see the (in)ability of singular modernity to represent a heterogeneous region like South Asia, thereby raising some fundamental methodological questions. On the other, the inadequacies inherently lying therein are sifted through recreation in literature and rewriting in history. The questions related to gender and subaltern groups appear as the subjects of debate: the colonial rule frames them in a certain way to serve their purpose and justify their responsibility to rule the people. In fact, in this process, the whole society is pictured as a location that is devoid of certain fundamental attributes of Western/European society. Implicitly, the argument is built on the premise that every colonial society can attain the state of modernity, provided they follow the path that Europe/the Western metropolitan societies had taken in path. Thus, the convergence claims about modernity have epistemologically violated upon the *other* so as to justify their representation of society as *lack*. Hence, representation as a category seeks to identify the ways in which the society is portrayed and also the ways in which it attempts to present itself through recreation and rewriting.

3.3 Resistance

Resistance forms yet another categorical attribute of South Asian modernity, for the inner potential to identify the role of agency towards shaping the history is realized through it. As a field of tension, it displays the active role of the colonized in quest for transformation on their own. Most importantly, it presents the functioning of the subject in the role of agent. In postcolonial situation, resistance implies the power of the native to assert themselves and fight against cultural invasion. The newer

values that get imparted in the changed situation do not swiftly find their way to assimilate in colonized society. Rather, rejection, rewriting, and adopting them in a form which is modified in the native shape and taste take place. The unique mode of resistance appears in India in Gandhi who opposes the British Raj in a quite distinct manner, rooting his quest for *Swaraj* (home rule) in the native tradition.

The colonial encounter in Indian societies spoils the social structuring by process of signification and distancing. The cognition of the people (the ruled) is shaped and reframed through the reform programs like education, health and the like. Actually, a significant degree of connection with the past is lost in the location of colonial encounters through acceptance of what the imperial administration promoted as the idea of progress. Similarly, the screening of the subject who are capable of desiring, bringing about modes and approaches to attain the goals set in the beginning, and enacting the movement leaves a significant amount of impact in writing of history. The colonial history could not provide this group with due place in its annals. The aspiration of the colonized and quest for order of their own is never allowed with a respectable space in history. In fact, colonial history further screened the marginal groups by focusing and highlighting the issues associated with gender (as it is reflected in the question of Sati) and caste (basically discussed with the issue of untouchability as the prime evil of the Subcontinent).

The colonial subject appears to be functioning in the role of a mere native informant in the discourses of the colonized. Spivak analyzes the case in great detail, critiquing the production of postcolonial reason, when she defines colonial subjects as native informant (6). However, modernity emerges and sustains in such location in the form of resistance, since the question of agency on the whole lies on asserting self

and acting on one's own. For instance, Gandhi's movement inspires the foreclosed subjects to find their voice and bring it in the public domain. Assessing Gandhi's social philosophy in relation to gender question, Tanika Sarkar states that Gandhi helped women change their role. In fact, Gandhi's movement transformed their position in society, making them "valued political subject" (185). Resistance that refers to the mode of asserting self in quest of social transformation has addressed the critical issues in a balanced way in South Asian modernity.

Resistance begins in its first move from rejection of the newer values that get circulated in the colonial context in South Asia. The strength to combat against those values is sought after in the repository of tradition. In fact, the social imagination is enhanced through traditional values and their preservation. Studying the form of resistance in Bengal, Chakrabarty finds the role of traditional values significant in shaping the destiny and course of social advancement. He argues that genesis of every construction of the social is rooted in Bengali tradition. He observes, "The expression *grihalakshmi* shares in ideas of personhood that do not owe their existence to the bourgeois projects that European imperialism brought to India" ("Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity" 26). The real nature of rejection finds space in defining the traditional virtues as the measure in changed situation, implying that the colonial subject was not a mere recipient of the ideology in circulation during the foreign rule.

Rejection moves South Asian modernity to look back into tradition and reexamine the historical development for resources to fight against the burgeoning foreign values. Similarly, the collective identity is built on the premise of distinct contrast with the colonizer in the heterogeneous situation of South Asia. For instance, the Indians began to identify themselves as Indians only in the first half of the

nineteenth century when they realized the need to fight against the foreign forces.

Dermont Killingley states, “With the consolidation of British India as a political entity in the first half of the nineteenth century, the term ‘Indian’ ... came to mean the indigenous inhabitants” (509). The realization rests on the identification of differences between the self and the other as viewed from Indian perspective. The heterogeneous situation in the Subcontinent acquires collective identity through rejection of those attributes that were primarily associated with the British Raj.

The common values of all the groups living in the region are taken as the unifying themes. Again going back to tradition to seek for means to bring the diverse groups of people together, Rabindranath Tagore explores ways to reject the colonizer’s means and methods. He puts forward ‘tolerance’ and ‘self-sacrifice’ to assert native position and thus presents the essential attributes of the Subcontinental subjectivity. He gives a general theory for the world to develop these qualities to be the most fitting human beings. As he observes,

I have no hesitation in saying that those who are gifted with the moral power of love and vision of spiritual unity, who have the least feeling of enmity against aliens, and the sympathetic insight to place themselves in the position of others will be the fittest to take their permanent place in the age that is lying before us, and those who are constantly developing their instinct of fight and intolerance of aliens will be eliminated. (121)

Tagore seeks to assert self through native values commonly shared and practiced in the region. The moral power of love and vision of spiritual unity lie at the core of the Subcontinental values in general for him.

Likewise, Gandhi also treats tradition as the source of inspiration to reject and fight against the values that are put forward by the colonizing agents in India. Rejection leading to resistance comes to him through promotion of traditional values. Gyan Prakash notes that Gandhi associated the idea of self-control with freedom. Analyzing the body politic in colonial India, Prakash argues the spiritual elements were of primary importance in the matter of self-control over body, which was assumed to lead to real freedom (first freedom from the sensory pleasure). He observes, “This set up a normative and regulatory bodily discipline that excluded all but procreative sex as ideal” (214). Gandhi rejects the British Rule as groundless and devoid of any moral agenda: regarding the objective of the British Raj, he critiques, “They wish to convert the whole world into a vast market for their goods” (41). Through market expansion of the British Raj, Indians are further pushed to the corners of poverty, thereby denying them the prospect of standing on their own. The expansion of market as economic policy on the part of the colonizer also implies the idea of growing consumerist social organization where such situation provides a favorable condition to inculcate newer values through European goods. Hence, Gandhi realizes it necessary to resist the forces through non-cooperation.

For Gandhi, resistance results in independence. He is thoroughly rooted in tradition and his resistance is clear as resistance is all directed towards the British Raj/ Imperial Forces, with clear objective to achieve freedom and independence. Through resistance, Chakrabarty believes that the national quest for modernity turns into the means and ends for people to attain long cherished collective dream of attaining liberty and self-rule (“Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” 26). On the whole, the way of understanding society that is developed as approach in the discourses of

singular modernity turns dysfunctional in understanding national culture. Since rejection also implies the idea of nationalism as the essential component of modernity as such, modernity becomes a nationalist project rooted in tradition. As part of complete rejection of such approach, Chatterjee advocates in favor of developing own, unique, and distinctive modernity by rejecting the models established from outside (*Our Modernity* 20). He implies that such modernities established in different spatio-temporal dimension with their own cultural practices cannot adequately address the nationalistic drive inherent in other societies under consideration. During colonial period, resistance directly aimed at independence which is manifest in Gandhi. After independence, the society requires to develop ground for affirming distinctive nature of its own as a nation. Thus, modernity resists imperial rule and its models as such.

The major tool to resist already established categories about modernity is made possible through rewriting. It serves the native interests in that it resists the colonial ways of reading the colonized society. Specifically talking about Indian history, charges of lack, failure, inadequacy that are made against it are the attributes imposed by and/or through the imperial forces. In the imperial historiography, such features emerge in making and interpreting Indian history, for the object of such enterprise is to establish domination and subordination for the longevity of colonial rule. Hence, Chakrabarty discusses on the themes with special reference to the insurgent peasants of colonial India (“Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” 8). The focus on such movements from the margin in examining the modern quest refers to rewriting the officially produced history, giving due space to the ignored groups. The major agenda of nationalism in reinterpretation of history is also reasserted

in/through this revisionary project. South Asian modernity normatively explores the areas through rereading of history and attempts to correct the wrongs and violence inflicted therein.

European imperialism has employed coercion to propagate its values. This violence has played the pivotal role in establishment of meaning of those values in colonized society. By and large, South Asian modernity suffers from this coercion and thus takes retrospective move to examine and correct the wrongs of history. As Chakrabarty argues, “These struggles include coercion ... often dispensed with dreamy-eyed idealism-and it is this violence that plays a decisive role in the establishment of meaning...” (“Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” 20). Sifting the impact of coercion in creation and circulation of ‘truth’ of a certain kind also falls into the nationalist project in South Asia. In other words, attention to historical consequences is taken into account in examining history through rewriting. Chatterjee states that historical meaning is seen from the consequences that the events bring after them. The events in themselves do not carry any sort of transformative meaning at all. In this sense, he opts for all the events that have historical magnitude as those that need to be recounted in the writing of history. Also, he sees many such events in the peasant politics of India during colonial rule. Hence, he critically remarks, “Intrinsically the acts do not mean anything at all...It is only in terms of their ‘historical consequences’ that they acquire a meaning” (“Peasants, Politics and Historiography” 60). Thus, the points that allow the observation of coercion in historical narrative are essential to adequately discuss the functioning of imperial forces and the harms inflicted therein.

Rewriting the history in new light after independence seeks to update the

process of knowledge formation with the spirit of time. Now that India has won its independence, the epistemological course of interpretation needs revisitation.

Chakrabarty argues that one has to show the repressive forces of history in the interior and exterior life of people in order to realize modernity. The realization of the harms done in history can drive people to find and construct a better society where modernity is better achieved and comprehended. He argues:

I ask for a history that deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices, the part it plays in collusion with the narratives of citizenships in assimilating to the projects of the modern state all other possibilities of human solidarity. (“Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” 23)

The inability of such kind of history lies in the epistemic biases of the Western approach to narrative to produce it. Eisenstadt explores those biases in measuring one civilization with the yardstick of the other. So, he provides for rewriting to found itself on the proposition that “it is much more fruitful to assume that each civilization developed distinct institutional formations and dynamics” (*Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities* 330). The differently constructed dynamics referring to unique social organization cannot be brought together in order to privilege one over the other, for the obvious reason that they are grounded in uneven premises.

Indian awakening is basically rooted in the reinterpretation of past where the sources for the unity of the heterogeneous culture lies. As an outcome of the struggle, the term ‘Hinduism’ was coined in the nineteenth century to fight against the imperial expansion in India. According to Killingley, the Indian reformation in the beginning

was centered on the question of caste and gender, in which the role of women was also minimal because of the value system that assumed women to hold inferior position in society (510). However, Prakash analyzes the colonial form of governmentality that basically circulated distortion in society. He argues, “Distortion and displacement, revision and reinscription were central to the political technology of the body because it was obliged to operate in and rearticulate the colonial divide” (215). Multifarious domains of life from religion to body were affected during colonial rule. The awakening rests on realizing the functioning of imperial forces at these domains. Implicitly, the rationale behind resistance through rewriting gets reasserted when the impact of imperial forces appear visible in historical trajectories.

Along with historical agendas, resistance through rewriting also has economic and literary space to employ in nationalist endeavor. For instance, Gandhi observes that the expansion of empire possesses a pure economic objective. In search for market, the British approached India where they saw growing number of consumers. According to Gandhi, the greedy people of the society welcomed them, for they realized a possibility of enmeshing wealth. Very critically he argues, “The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them” (39). Contrary to the native values of social wellbeing, the imperial expansion functions on the capitalist bases, thereby denying the Subcontinent any prospect of upholding its moral justification of the ideals of justice and virtue. Indeed, the classical South Asian ideals are rooted in moral and spiritual wellbeing rather than material and physical ones. Only through revival of the old, own values, the struggle to supplant the novel values gains momentum.

In literature, the need to reorganize the aesthetic principles and

communicating them to the ruling forces arises. Illustrating a case from E. M. Forster's *The Hill of Devi*, Gauri Vishwanathan states that the Western principles of aesthetics are put into practice to evaluate the Eastern conceptualizations like 'Hinduism'. It shows the intensity and effect colonial rule in India had in all major domains of life. In this sense, the major portion of social life had impact of the newer force that had appeared in society. She analyzes the situation in the following words:

That so sympathetic a figure as Fielding should resort to western aesthetic standards to evaluate Hinduism is a measure of how corrosive was the colonial experience even for those more favorably disposed in India. The western framework was never far from being a point of reference, even when the object was to critique the doctrinaire aspects of Christianity and uphold the east as spiritual model for the materialistic west. (25)

The native frame of interpretation allows exploring distinct points of dissimilarities between two modernities. Thus, literature turns into a space from which to interrogate colonial modernity and develop own parameters to observe native themes.

Creative space shows microhistory of the subject observing world through individualized perspective. The intersection of time specific to creator finds its due space from which to assert itself in literary pieces. For a creative genius to be born, Rabindranath Tagore thinks that one had to alone perceive the things: only solo witness of certain moments of life can create things with unmatched quality. As Tagore also presents, "Even now I remember that day. But in the history of that day there was no one other than myself who saw those clouds in quite the same way as I did or was similarly thrilled. Rabindranath happened to be all by himself in that

instance” (97). The microhistory that can remain untouched by powers of official annals gets recorded in literature. Thus, effective and pure narrative of social life is made available in the creative space of writing. Specifically, Indian creative writing questions the modernity that colonialism brought into India, implying that a viable modernity that was destroyed by colonialism existed in India (Mohanty 2). Hence, literature together addressing the question of historicity also builds a ground for observation of resistance through rewriting.

Appropriation as the third dimension of South Asian modernity seeks to localize even the Western forms to suit the interest of society. Like rejection and rewriting that enable the subject to assert agency, appropriation moves one step ahead to show the creative ability to transform the product of cultural encounters in one’s own taste. Even achievement of the science of the West has been appropriated in India through hybridization. Prakash argues that Indian Science is “informed by local cultures and priorities even while accommodating itself to Western methodologies and standards of ‘proof’” (qtd. in Washbrook 128). The rationality which is vigorously claimed in discourses on modernity as the sole product of Western intellectual achievement also had to undergo the process of resifting to form coalition with the native mode of reasoning when it reaches a different cultural landscape. In this sense, South Asian modernity presents resistance in the form of appropriation.

Besides, the form of modernity shows various shifts with the change in time. The shifts are both political and social in that the historical transformation attempts to update the society with the ethos of contemporaneity through appropriation of the collective social voice. Deep in such voice resides the aspiration of change that is both required and desired to overcome the obstacles which limit the exercise of liberty and

freedom for agent. In fact, the agency gets limited in such situation. For instance, India had the dream of independence and self-rule during the colonial rule. Later on, self-strengthening emerges as the objective of Indian modernity during nationalist period. Chatterjee states, “Modernity is the first social philosophy which conjures up in the minds of the most ordinary people dreams of independence and self-rule” (*Our Modernity* 18). The immediate goal that could leave substantial impact towards overall transformation of state of the then contemporary socio-political reality is projected in Chatterjee’s analysis of historical experience in India. The creative collective mindset identifies the demand of new historical circumstances, thereby adjusting itself through modification in the trajectories of history. This kind of shifts also implies the ability of the collective body to explore the ways to cope up with changing ethos of time.

Even during the colonial presence, history shows that the colonial reform programs were not accepted as they were by the natives in their original forms. Even at the high time of colonialism, the ruling elite had to negotiate such programs with the people at the base. Appropriation is supported by various filters of tradition and contemporary native social structure. The colonial and anti-colonial response during awakening period in India both were directed towards the reforms relating to caste and gender. In this regard, both nationalist and imperialist forces were making best of the attempts to appropriate the reform in their own ways, imbibing them with own values from each side (Killingley 519). The social filters begin to function on each side to develop perspectives specific to each group. The passage of the natives through the filters set by the ruler results in hegemony whereas the sifting of foreign values through native filters is referred to as appropriation. On the question of the

British people in India, Gandhi argues that they need to go through the process of Indianization for them to remain in the country. He critically observes the situation thus:

Now you will have seen that it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English become Indianised, we can accommodate them. If they wish to remain in India along with their civilisation, there is no room for them. It lies with us to bring about such a state of things. (73)

Appropriation as opposed to hegemony cuts both ways: firstly, on the part of native to re-contextualize the change to serve their purpose; secondly, as Gandhi states, on the part of the ruling group in acceptance of native culture to be part of the collective body.

The inability to appropriate certain aspects even after change produces gaps in regional modernities. The non-Western societies have a chasm between the ruling elite and the citizens, resulting from the legal-bureaucratic apparatus inherited from the colonial times. Chatterjee implies that the values and ideals inherent in such colonial system (later inherited after independence) have not still been appropriated in the changed situation. He states:

This hiatus is extremely significant because it is the mark of non-Western modernity as an always incomplete project of 'modernization' and of the role of an enlightened elite engaged in a pedagogical mission in relation to the rest of society. ("Beyond the Nation? Or within?" 61)

The failure to appropriate the product of cultural products in the changed atmosphere

also raises serious questions regarding modernity in general. Chatterjee also points out the significant power relations while discussing the formation of modernity inside particular form of power structure. “Hence, one cannot be for or against modernity; one can only devise strategies for coping with it” (*Our Modernity* 19). The whole question for Chatterjee lies in coping up with the fleeting nature of present reality. The postcolonial societies feel the intensity of this problem because the cultural gaps after independence remarkably appear in the national scene and point towards the loss in history. Such possible fissures are seen in the postcolonial societies where the national power fails to address them properly in bring them into nationalist culture.

Like socio-historical development, literature functions as a site of appropriation that nativizes English language. Basically employed as a language of power and coercion in South Asia, English now has turned into a location through which to transfer the images of the region on the whole. Paul Brians surveys the colonial context of South Asia and moves on to discuss literature in English as produced from the specific location. Taking into his study pre-independence India and Sri Lanka, he analyzes the situation thus:

When the English brought their language to India and Sri Lanka, it was used as a tool to make the population easier to govern. English language literature was taught in Indian schools before it was taught in British ones, to inculcate respect for the imperial power. People who speak primarily English in South Asia have often been criticized as rootless, inauthentic, and generally unfit to represent their cultures. (4)

On the contrary to colonial expectations, the language has now been heavily appropriated in that the region articulates its aspirations and images created at home

through this means. The process in general removes the coercive power of the language and begins to use it in creative sphere to recreate oneself and communicate collective imagination.

Resistance in South Asian modernity appears in three ways: rejection, rewriting, and appropriation. Complete rejection of the foreign values results in direct tussle and there also lies the danger of ending up in physical violence as well. However, the prospect of escaping hegemony is implied in the ideas of rejection. For instance, Chakrabarty's study of Bengali history shows the ways adopted to reject the values circulated through power network in colonial society. On the other hand, rewriting and appropriation help attain objective of resistance in a more comfortable ways. Rewriting seeks historical jolts that screen the role of the native in its formation. Similarly, the colonial subject as native informant can be rescued through rewriting and critiquing the role in asserting agency. Both history and literature function as interesting sites for examination and employment of resistance through rewriting. Simultaneously, resistance through appropriation aspires to nativize the cultural products that appear in cross-cultural situation. The collective imagination also plays a crucial role in appropriation in that it provides the historical agents with novel insights and resources through tradition to frames the new products in local taste.

3.4 Social Imagination

With the change in time, the collective aspiration of society greatly varies from one dimension to the other while evolving aspiration of the collective. The distinction of various modernities lies on this dimension. South Asian modernity depicts social imagination as yet another category that appears as the integral

component while examining and interpreting it. Collective aspiration of society relies on three other defining features: subjectivity and its formation, projection of subjectivity in setting the ideals of society for everyone to attain, and finally the self-perception of the people. Setting them along the diachronic dimension, the first apparently appears more oriented towards examining the development in past; the second aspires to guide the participants of modernity towards producing certain type of personhood in future; and finally, the third brings about the picture of contemporaneity.

The particular form of modernity that chooses to seek the points of distinction in multiplicity rejects the universal claims based on transcendental generalization. Eistendat's line of argument gets reasserted when Chatterjee states that the paradigm of multiple modernities appropriates the methods of the Western form to uniquely address own peculiarities. He argues, "...that by teaching us to employ the methods of reason, universal modernity enables us to identify the forms of own particular modernity" (*Our Modernity* 9). The collective aspiration readily appropriates any forms that infiltrate the social system from outside in that it develops itself in the ground of practices from the past. In fact, tradition and cultural practices function in a specific way to society that produces them. The imagination of society forms particular aspects of subjectivity, projects the lacks in the desired state of personhood, and thus finally shapes self-perception in order to attain the expected goals in the order of social imagination.

The understanding about society in the West and South Asia also greatly varies because there are distinct ways, fundamentally different from each other in each society. Besides, social imagination also helps forms the body of collective that

founds the idea of society on the whole. For Rabindranath Tagore, “Society is the expression of moral and spiritual aspirations of man which belong to his higher nature” (142-3). Two key categories ‘moral’ and ‘spiritual’ to qualify the general notion of ‘aspiration’ that Tagore uses do not hold enough ground and validity for the Western society. For them, the quest is rooted in material growth that in turn gets assisted through mercantile ambition of modern capitalist form of development.

Tagore views the development of social imagination in the Subcontinent very differently: creativity and self-sacrifice are the ultimate impulses of Indian societies. His text *Nationalism in India* (1917) talks about India as a cultural zone and projects that India should remain the same. Succinctly presenting his argument that India cannot thrive ahead as long as it does not produce its own inner values and ideals, he claims that the borrowed ideals of the West cannot work in a completely different context of the Subcontinent. Similarly, a society devoid of its own values cannot achieve high potential of growth. Creativity and self-sacrifice are the impulse of Indian civilization on the whole for Tagore; therefore, he emphasizes that these ideals must function as the inner core of Indian/South Asian subjectivity; and every human being should be able to live by these ideals (121). Besides, he maintains that social evils prevalent in the society (for instance castism) and other dead habits must be thrown off for India to move along the lines of inner prosperity and spiritual well-being (118). The idea of nation over society or cultural zone deprives people their aspiration towards the higher values and ideals of life like self-sacrifice and creativity. Hence, Tagore opposes the idea of 'nation' in general.

At present, the globalized context has resulted in crisis of pure Western social imagination which is more visible in South Asian societies. The singularist claims

about modernity fail to uphold the notion of collective imagination as pure their social life. Arjun Appadurai also states that electronic mediation and mass migration have resulted in crisis of the general notion of 'nation-state' (qtd. in Chatterjee "Beyond the Nation? Or within?" 58). Like Tagorean vision produced in 1917 on nation, the cultural sphere has grown in such a way that the collective body of aspirations fails to identify the political categories established in the Enlightenment discourses on modernity and nation in general. The political and cultural have crisscrossed their respective boundaries, assisted by the invention of digital space and promoted by the information technology. Thus, the notion of building the political has failed in a changed context of the contemporaneity. Hence, Appadurai sees cultural space encompassing participants in contemporary context far beyond the reach of political space.

The crisis in the political also enhances the general notion of the cultural in that the latter begins to function as the site of formation and articulation of the ethos of time that people perceive at a specific point in time. The cultural values appropriate the political values when the latter are imported in a new setting. In fact, the culture provides the lens of mythical and historical structures to observe and relate the contemporary reality to oneself and one's self to such reality. The very perception shapes the way agency is shaped in formulating the course of history. In the similar ways, the projection of the social ideal also heavily depends on grounds that the contemporary subjectivity holds in general. Meanwhile, the self-perception of people about themselves develops as the outcome of society in enhancing the projection. On the whole, the vision of personhood at present is largely affected by the past aspiration and route taken to formulate the image of oneself, leading to formation of

social ideals to emerge in future and guide the people in attaining their inner capabilities in a particular way.

Modernity in South Asia builds on the understanding of liberty promoted through tradition. Furthermore, social imagination retains tradition as a force to fight against the newer values imparted through colonial state apparatuses. The colonial forces in the meantime attempt to shape the total process of subjectivity formation in society through change in social imagination. For instance, Chakrabarty encounters such change in work ethics in Bengal. The change in work ethics was a direct challenge to *dharmic* arrangement of the society in Bengal after the introduction of British work ethics. After this, the people were time bound and they could not follow the previous pattern of life (“Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity” 24). Dharma becomes the source of inspiration to raise voice against the changes imposed into the social imagination from power structure of colonial rule. In order to retain self-perception that was promoted in religious scriptures, the people employed the traditional practice as a weapon against foreign values. This also led to the change in their self-perception: the new subjectivity born was the result of overwhelming presence of new codes of life styles as opposed to the old one.

The social imagination cannot still distantiate itself far off from the traditional forces in embracing the colonial values induced through reform programs. For instance, Rabindranath Tagore focuses on native attributes of social life for modernity to realize in public social life. Therefore, Tagore argues that there are a variety of possible ways to attaining prosperity and realizing the inner potential. So, choosing an absolute way refers to the most harmful of the things for any society and people. As he evaluates, “The mistake that we make is in thinking that man's channel of greatness

is only one the one which has made itself painfully evident for the time being by its depth of insolence” (130). Implicitly, the roots of cultural milieu help measure the progress made in composing self. Thus, social imagination defends the native social order against cultural products, resulting from colonial encounters.

Only the marks of material transformation cannot add novelty to the inner content of personhood as such. Rather, the evolution of overall attributes of self paves road to such state of life. Chakrabarty concludes that if modernity is treated as a notion referring to the infrastructural and institutional changes only as the term ‘modernization’ in the Western discourses implies, it makes no sense in studying the multiple facets of modernity in other locales than the western Europe and America. For every society is capable developing its own social organization grounded in its value system, the way to this organization finds distinctive route in its history. Also, every society under consideration sets its goal of attainment its inner potential through fundamentally different ways. However, the Western parameters are still relevant since they act as the point of departure to initiate the discussion. Hence, he argues, “European ‘early modernity’ matters in part because seventeenth- and eighteenth-century debates in political philosophy are relevant to all discussions of modernity or postmodernity today” (“The Muddle of Modernity” 669). In other words, the way and approach to becoming modern varies from society to society: the individual uniqueness of each society is deeply rooted in the individual actors playing role and contributing to the transformation of that society. Hence, the subjectivity of agent of change matters in analyzing and developing a model of modernity in each society. Thus, the historiography dealing with such modernity has to provide due respect to the locales and people inhabiting them in the like manner.

Gyan Prakash textually analyzes the development of subjectivity in colonial India through the perspective of body. He sees a deep chasm in the Indian way of perceiving body and the ways of colonial governmentality that defines subject-body. Basically, he argues that out of this chasm develops the disjunctive nature of colonial modernity in India where the technologies of governance fail to bring the Indian subjects under the domination and control of Western medicine. As he observes, “The middle class debated the status and relevance of Western medicine, homeopathy, ayurveda, and yunani in its search to define what was appropriate for India” (209). The role of agency in its interrogative behavior and its ability to critique the Western form of science and rationality appears in Prakash’s study. It also implies the power of subjects to choose for themselves and develop into a critiquing being, thereby enhancing the critical rationality and ability to action.

The study of microhistory through literature and peasant movement also reveals the ways in which subjectivity is formed with its own particularities. Besides, such attempts also reveal the power inherent in subjects to shape their own reality. Literature narrates the private impressions and perceptions realized in a lonely state of mind. Hence, Rabindranth Tagore observes, “...the self is the agent...For the creator works all alone in his studio” (98). The most unique perception of creator emerges from being the only witness to history. For Tagore it contains originality of creator. The peasant movements are yet another site to study microhistory and the process of subjectivity formation in colonial India. As a response to Javeed Alam relating to the issue of subaltern as conceptual and methodological category, Chatterjee also clarifies some key notions associated with the subaltern studies that emphasizes on the dynamics of microhistory. He basically attempts to locate the attempts of subaltern

people (peasants) in formation of microhistory (“Peasants, Politics and Historiography” 58). Building argument on the premise of subaltern autonomy, he seeks to clarify the relationship among peasants, their politics, and current attempt to rewrite history. Thus, microhistory provides grounds to observe the subjectivity formation.

Focusing on the role of agency in Indian subjects, Gandhi observes that certain structural changes always emerge in society as the outcome of desire from the collective imagination. For him, human ability to determine the fate of social system and dictate the course of history on one’s own is part of subjectivity. Hence, he argues, “To believe that what has not occurred in history will not occur at all is to argue disbelief in the dignity of man” (74). Besides, the choice is also checked through moral responsibilities towards the collective body of society. In South Asian societies, the notion of freedom necessarily implies the idea of discipline as well. As an instance, the idea of freedom is completely different from that of the West: Bengali notion of freedom necessarily implies the idea of discipline. Chakrabarty thus observes the differences, “‘Freedom’ in the West, several authors argued, meant *jathechhachar*, to do as one pleased, to be self-indulgent and selfish. In India, it was said, ‘freedom’ meant freedom from the ego...” (“Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity” 11). Tradition appropriates the conceptualization of freedom and presents it as it suits the new context. In the whole process of such modification, tradition supplies with the essential attributes that help new value adjust in a different context. The moral attributes that are supplied by the tradition in the backdrop of social imagination thus set limit to the unbound quest of structural changes.

The colonial encounter also contributes towards forming social unity through

circulation of social imagination in a comparatively wider range, thereby enhancing role of tradition in functioning as the source of classically held values. Asiatic Society founded in 1872 in Kolkata had positive impact in bringing out the ideas hitherto remaining in the possession of few trained pundits in the traditions. After this, these ideas were made available for study through translation, printed editions, and historical accounts. Furthermore, Killingley states, “For Hindus, such study led to a new view of the past. Ideas which had hitherto been the preserve of pundits trained in particular traditions of thought, could now be studied through printed editions, translations, and historical accounts” (512). Though the Society was founded to serve the colonial interests in India, it equally benefited the native interests by bringing out the traditionally held repository of knowledge into public domain. The wide circulation of the values preserved thus were helped make available the mass the repository of past for analysis and understanding. In this sense, colonial institutions impacted positively in strengthening the native sense in the colonized.

The formation of subjectivity in South Asian modernity displays the role of agency in structuring the social configuration and changing the course of history. The projection of vision about human beings sets the ideals for people to direct their aspiration toward achieving a state of social order. In other words, social imagination also provides society with certain guiding principles regarding the vision of ideals for future as well. Setting the category in temporal dimension of social imagination, projection of personhood is located in the vision of society about future as manifest in the imagination about human beings. The subjectivity in the Subcontinent is shaped through traditional values from all sections of society. Studying Indian movies as part of cultural production, Veena Das explores the connection of femininity and the

tradition. In fact, she observes that femininity lies in the spirit of Indian tradition so as to check the growth of hypermasculinity (170). Similarly, the study of microhistory through literary world depicts the multiple layers in which a typical personhood grows. Hence, Mohanty argues that literature embodies “the values of all the layers of society” (4). For the social values generated from the lower strata remained ignored in the social documentation, literature provides a platform from which to produce social critique, inclusive of such values. Hence, literary analysis in Indian situation provides a space to see the tussle and conflict of values in development of its modernity.

South Asian modernity brings forward the moral ideals from the past to shape the aspiration of people. The cultural lenses help in two ways: firstly, they provide with a structure to diachronically locate the people; and secondly, such lenses function as the medium through which to look into the nature of reality in past and at present. Such ideals deeply reside in the cultural landscape and continuously support contemporary need to relate the present reality with historical backdrop. Spivak assesses that the subjectivity as manifest in the West and that in the East are radically different as the former is guided by the materialist principles whereas the latter, by the spiritual:

In fact, as Indian nationalists in the late 19th century argued, not only was it not desirable to imitate the West in anything other than the material aspects of life, it was not even necessary to do so, because in the spiritual domain the East was superior to the West. What was necessary was to cultivate the material techniques of modern Western civilization while retaining and strengthening the distinctive spiritual essence of the national culture. (60)

The distinction in aspiration of the East and the West appear in the dichotomy of the spiritual and the material. The material quest of the West focuses on the transformation of social reality in the physical domain while the South Asian quest results in the spiritual awakening in the individual, broadening the horizons of inner reality. Simply put, South Asian quest is rooted in the quest of the inner prosperity and spiritual wellbeing.

South Asian modernity is built on opposite aspiration than that of the West. Social imagination regarding the personhood is all directed towards spiritual fulfillment in the Subcontinent whereas material prosperity through capitalistic entrepreneurship is asserted through projection of personhood in the West. Gandhi views the British expansion as the commercial enterprise. As he observes, “Napoleon is said to have described the English as a nation of shopkeepers. It is a fitting description. They hold whatever dominions they have for the sake of their commerce. Their army and their navy are intended to protect it” (41). The South Asian perception and the Western quest for material prosperity are also reflected in what Gandhi says about them and how he feels about their endeavor in the world. The basic drive of colonialism is also expressed through this statement by Gandhi. The distinction between the West and the Subcontinent provides a ground from which to observe the different in achieving the state of modernity in two locales.

Furthermore, the imagination about family, personhood, and the domestic world also shape the course that modernity takes in determining the projection of subjectivity. The byproduct of cultural encounter and residues remaining in after independence have led to failure in the realization of the collective imagination to a significant degree. Chakrabarty sees it as problem of Indian modernity to attain

socialistic state through either Gandhian or Marxist approach. For example, Gandhi's dream of Ram-rajya and the vision of the Left for complete socialist revolution were not complete ("Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History" 5). Thus, the aspiration set during the nationalist struggle in India remains unrealized. On the other side, social imagination does not make it mandatory to achieve the vision, for the change in the course of historical development is always desired and welcomed.

Like history, literature also provides with guidelines to attain a particular personhood. The projection envision through literature is built on the principle of poetic creation for Tagore. He says that poetic creation happens when the creator is the only witness to history that lies beyond the capture of history in common sense. In other words, the poetic genius perceives certain happenings in such a way that he is the only witness to it and articulates it to highlight certain aspects of it. For the history present in literature, Tagore assigns a special status in that it is the perception of the world witnessed solely by the creator only (97). It is the private history (interiorized perception of the world) that matters for poetic mind. The public history is the part of social happenings and political domain. Tagore says that he was not part of anything other than the private happenings and scenes! In this sense, the interiorized world of the active agent presents itself through literature.

Furthermore, Rabindranath Tagore implies that the wrongs committed in the colonial history can be explored through literature, for it refers to the private domain and brings out the inner world/microhistory. Poetic genius expresses the history that lies beyond the grasp of history in general sense. Hence, he states, "Try and highlight only the history which is piloted by man-as-creator towards the Magnum that lies beyond history and is at the very center of the human soul" (99). The perceptions that

are very close to human souls are expressed in poetic creativity. Thus, for Tagore, the question of historicity in literature also equals to the approach to perceiving the world in such a way that no one has ever seen and highlighted a particular aspect of the world. The agenthood remains particular to the creator in literature, thereby implying the idea that the projection of personhood through literature and its creative process relies on individual observation of the private world. Such projection also attempts to contribute to the formation of self-perception in contemporary times.

Like subjectivity formation and projection of vision about personhood, social imagination presents self-perception as the final attribute that is built on the analysis of representation of self in other discourses and the desire to represent oneself in a particular way. In postcolonial societies, the issue gains high critical significance in that the images communicating about the people are infused with political bias to justify colonial rule. Chakrabarty's study of Bengali history explores that colonial representation was all directed towards enforcing the need for reformation programs in Bengal through negative portrayal. The positive perception of self was turned into negative one in order to justify the need for reform in Bengali imagination. Bengali imagination could not refute the force of British colonial mindset, thereby allowing British images into their imagination for a better life. For him, it marks the beginning of colonial modernity ("Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity" 22). It shows that imperial forces downplay native imagination of self so as to pave the way for foreign constructs into the mindset of native people.

In quest for redrawing the image about the position of ignored people in historical narrative, subaltern historiography emerges in Indian history. The colonial history attempts to erase the contribution of peasants and other social actors by

screening them through various layers of power. In effect, they are merely presented in the form of native informants. The European narratives about India ever attempt to show the native as ‘lack’, ‘failure’, and ‘inadequacy’. Chakrabarty argues:

Within this narrative shared between imperialist and nationalist imaginations, the ‘Indian’ was always a figure of lack. There was always, in other words, room in this story for characters who embodied, on behalf of the native, the theme of ‘inadequacy’ or ‘failure.’ (“Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” 6)

This European bias towards the native victimizes South Asian subjectivity and forces it to seek for the points where the agency of people has played vital role to bring about transformation in society. The Subaltern Studies finds the agency in the marginal people like peasants: hence, the need to develop subaltern historiography to understand the damages done in history through imperial state machinery and the attributes of active people in developing the personhood they envisioned during their struggle for independence emerges.

Subaltern historiography as such also attempts to produce self-perception of the native in the annals of history. As a matter of fact, perception about oneself forms a large portion of subjectivity and impetus to drive the subjects. So too, the technology of governance during colonial era in India attempts to produce and produces subjectivity of people by reorganizing the inner composition. The self-perceptions of people change with these technological aspects in their life. Hence, Prakash observes, “Insofar as the body was produced as an effect of knowledges and tactics, attempts to reinscribe colonial therapeutics were efforts to intervene in the relationship between the state and the population” (210). Opposing the colonial

technology of governance that distorted the perception of people about themselves, Bengali history shows the emergence of “idea of the Hindu origin of the nation” (210). In other words, the self-perception critically explores the lapses in contemporary reality in social organization and endeavors to devise means to cope up with them.

Gandhi further presents cultural claims in order to model self in the contemporary times. He defines civilization as part of duty and moral development. In fact, civilization is another name for modernity for him. He states:

Civilisation is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. (67)

For him, the identification of inner strength helps frame self-perception and attain the projection present in classical thought. Observation of duty towards the collective lies at the core of modernity for Gandhi.

Gandhi states that the responsibility of civilizing Indians lies on Indians alone. If there are tribal groups with some sort of evil practices, Indian civilization has the strength to overcome those aspects. Hence, he claims:

I should prefer to be killed by the arrow of a Bhil than to seek unmanly protection. India without such protection was an India full of valour. Macaulay betrayed gross ignorance when he libelled Indians as being practically cowards. (44)

Thus, the social imagination explores the inner strands of (mis)representation of self and the lapses in contemporary reality to frame perception about oneself. For Gandhi,

the classical values inherent in practices of the Subcontinent significantly play their role in shaping the perspective to view oneself. Again, tradition, culture, representation, and resistance get unified in forming views about oneself.

South Asian quest for modernity attempts to rescue the native informant from the multilayered screening of the Western discourses in the postcolonial situation. The social imagination about oneself finds its argument on the formation of subjectivity as manifest in the microhistory and colonial annals. Besides, the peasant movements and depiction of private world in literary writings reflect the ways in which the role of agency in the colonized in determining the course of history can be observed in a comfortable fashion. Furthermore, the modeling of perspective about South Asian subject is rooted in classically held value system, for the vision about self contributes to formation of particular social structure in future. Thus, social imagination brings about the picture of subject along the temporal dimension of modernity.

3.5 Chapter Summary

Historically speaking, the colonial expansion brought about different values of social organization, developing insights from the socio-political development of European history in general and British development in specific. The foremost factor is seen in religion: Europe promoted monotheistic Christianity as opposed to polytheistic religions of Indian practices (named 'Hinduism' in the middle of the nineteenth century). For this reason as well, Christianity and Islam did not come into direct tussle, for both of them shared similar structural values of monotheism. The play of religious values in colonial India reveals a beautiful tension in social organization. The Western discourses lacked fundamental boundaries between the political and the religious. The centers of Christianity in Europe and America after the

seventeenth century were also the locations of political (state) power. However, the visible boundaries drawn to demarcate the various domains of the social/political and the religious, and the social and the spiritual also supported the hierarchization of people that emerged as caste system that is reflected through analysis of Indian societies.

Both Gandhi and Tagore view the development of consciousness as the prime significant factor in achieving a state of social organization. For them, social reconfiguration is essential and desirable so long as the objective behind it serves to do away with the evil forces. Unlike Kant who views past as essentially evil and hence subject to escape its hold for better attainment of life and prosperity in society, Gandhi and Tagore ground the development of logic of social advancement in past, thereby giving life to tradition. In this sense, South Asian form of development gets rooted in living tradition. Thus, Dipesh Chakrabarty finds it complicated to prefix modernity with 'pre-.' The living tradition is derived from the dialectic relation between the mundane and the spiritual. Grasping the logic of social organization, South Asia as a conceptual category moves ahead with all heterogeneity, refusing to perform the European history as the grammar of social development.

South Asian modernity as such is accessible through four major categories: tradition and culture, representation, resistance, and social imagination. The first category is built on the premise that there are fundamental distinctions regarding the perception of past in South Asia and the West. Similarly, the cultural aspects and the continuity as the nature of tradition in South Asia function to highlight other two aspect of South Asian modernity. Furthermore, the issue of representation in postcolonial situation emerges with the examination of colonial impacts inflicted in

native society and its representation in historical narrative. Most significantly, the misrepresentation of South Asian society results from the methodological limitations of singularist modernity that bases its argument on transcendental generalization as approach and convergence claims as the destination for every society in attaining modernity.

The third category, resistance implies that colonial encounters lead to three possibilities: rejection, rewriting, and appropriation. South Asian modernity in general rejects the colonial values circulated through reform programs. However, resistance through rewriting and appropriation shows that the native tradition functions as the most significant factor in promoting the role of social agency in framing the course of history. For one thing, the assertion of agency appears through resistance; for the other, appropriation protects the social order from being hegemonized. In addition to resistance, the fourth category, social imagination largely focuses on the development of subjectivity, its projection to set up ideals, and creating and promoting self-perception. South Asian subjectivity formation takes place largely in colonial context, guided by the value-system generated and sustained in precolonial context. The projection of personhood still framed within the ideals set by tradition and cultural practices. Thus, tradition and culture, representation, resistance, and social imagination materialize in self-perception and projection of personhood in South Asian modernity.

Chapter 4. Nepali Modernity

This study presents that Nepali modernity can be accessed through influence and initiation as its major features and examines it in the backdrop of South Asia. Even when Nepali modernity crisscrosses certain features with the regional modernity, it can be distinctly located in South Asian cultural milieu. This chapter focuses on the first categorical division of the proposition which refers to modernity in Nepal. Building argument through the historical and literary analysis in order to get into the social consciousness of time and society, the historical crisscrossing of the literary and the social are equally important so as to analyze the course of social development in Nepal. The experience of modernity in Nepal possesses temporal continuity from the past that shows the shift in history through the development of new sense of the collectivity and subjectivity. The temporality in modernity refers to the way time is viewed in particular modernity. In Nepal, the living nature of tradition seeks to locate modernity in its own particular time frame, assuming that modernity and tradition are not exclusive categories. While relating to the ethos of present, the past turns into a repository of classical values and mythical sources of knowledge to understand the nature of change and reality at present. However, it is not to claim at this point that tradition is immune from all kinds of contradictory elements: the novel perceptions emerging to challenge the traditionally held beliefs do not aim at breaking away from totality of the tradition in itself. Rather, certain elements underlying the social structures and assisting in promoting the inequalities therein are revised and rewritten and given new way out by bringing them into the frame of critical reasoning in quest of further freedom.

The interaction of the preceding and the succeeding ages in the making of the

sense of the collective and new subjectivity in society presents an avenue for historical analysis in that dialogue of the preceding and succeeding ages displays the power and nature of change in Nepal. The visibility of such dialogue occurs when historical shifts take place in society. The society attempting to maintain the pace of contemporary times has to act against certain contradictory and illogical society structures and institutions that limit the quest for freedom, equality, and justice at both personal and collective level. The individuals seeking for freedom cannot continue tolerating the dictation of social structure as the society begins to form subjectivity that is unable to assert agency under normal circumstances in society. In Nepal, social institutions like the slavery and the sati were abolished in the historical transformation because they acted in a very repressive way, excluding a particular section of society from the bliss of freedom, equality, and justice. When the social agency realizes the problematic issues in ethical domain of such institution and identifies the repressive nature, individuals personally and collectively seek for change, for they aspire to correct the course of ethical domain in social configuration through critical reasoning.

The call for social change that questions ethical domain in the repressive social context results in emergence of new voice that gets derived from both the personal and collective quest for freedom, equality, and justice in society. Also, every voice for change –outside or inside –also dialectically produces a resisting force in general. The conflict between the new and the old leads to modern state of development in society, provided that the subjects under new circumstances achieve greater degree of freedom, equality, and justice than in past. The degree of enhancement in each of the three domains refers to the state of progress. In South Asian societies in general and Nepali society in particular, self-sacrifice in the

formation of collectivity and collective welfare guides the formation of new voice for change and resides in the reorganization of emergent subjectivity. The social imagination that enhances contemporary understanding, the perception of humans as humans, and projection of ideal form of human beings as the realization of ultimate source of agency forms a new body of investigation in comprehending subjectivity in trajectory of history and literature. In quest of a just society, Madan Mani Dixit's 1982 novel *Mādhavi* presents historical trajectory in which the society takes a shift from mode of production based on slavery to agricultural society. For Dixit, the central issue in challenging the total order of society resides in birth of 'art of doubt' in Gālav who is a resident scholar at Vishwāmitra's *āshram*. The quest for maintaining equilibrium through abolition of slavery in society and doing away with the injustices resulting from it are the key concerns in Gālav who functions as a force in bringing about the shift in the mode of social organization in his world. Thus, the interaction of ages, and formation of new collectivity and subjectivity implying unique understanding of temporality as continuity are the key dimension of Nepali modernity. Hence, the following section of the study discusses each of them in detail.

4.1 Temporality

The temporal dimension of modernity carries a crucial significance in the process of social change and the way a society relates itself to the ethos of contemporary times. Nepali experience of modernity as prevalent in South Asian landscape of modernity assumes that tradition formulates a living force, founded on the conceptualization of 'continuity' in the core of history. The total understanding of modernity as a matter of experience and the way of meaning generation process lies on the evolution of the sense of time. Unlike the singular modernity of the West

which believes in ruptures and break from the ignorant past, modernity in Nepal redefines itself and revises its course. As a matter of fact, Nepali modernity does accept that tradition carries some of the contradictions and unjust social institutions that do not fit in the frames of critical reasoning. Also, the attributes that go against the real nature of human potential are prevalent in the making of history. However, the self-corrective nature of history which believes in social, collective agency of human beings leaves its impact during the encounter of two ages that begin to negotiate and abandon the contradictory values, and formulate new ones in the meantime.

Both tradition and culture form the major dynamics of modernity in South Asia that shows the living nature of tradition. In other words, tradition in both Nepal and South Asia is not founded on the conception of 'break', but is maintained in the key notion of 'continuity'. Surveying the South Asian landscape of modernity, Kanchanmoy Mojumdar finds religious forces working in Pakistan and Bangladesh as the central unifying force. The social imagination of such non-secular countries is largely mediated along the lines set by their religion, thereby forming the major gamut of modernity. Maojumdar further argues, "Religious orthodoxy in the two states [Pakistan and Bangladesh] is not only compatible with modernisation, but is even viewed as essential to the preservation of their socio-cultural heritage" (7). The continuity in temporality as dimension of modernity in this regard carries both the propensity to change and resistance to change in Nepali scene.

In Nepal, modern and antimodern forces can be witnessed, journeying together. In other words, Nepali modernity displays that because of the living nature of tradition, two opposite polarities also find due position in its making. For instance,

C. K. Lal observes that the propensity to change and resistance to change are rooted in the way tradition is perceived in the milieu of Nepali socio-historical development.

Discussing the attempt to resist the change and the extremity resulting in antimodernity in Nepal, Lal points out:

The reaction of the traditionalist forces was swift and strong. In a step that Jawahar Lal Nehru termed 'putting the clock back', King Mahendra staged a coup backed by the military, and put almost all leading political figure of the day behind bars in the winter of 1960.
(251)

The strength that is enhanced during the transformation of society functions in an instrumental way to shape the course of history in Nepal. As soon as the society experiences some slackening period in its development, such propensities gain their primacy over the aspiration of people for complete transformation in their quest for freedom and equality.

The singularist version of modernity, as opposed to multiple modernities approach, sees tradition and modernity as exclusive categories. In this approach, the presence of one necessarily expels the possibility of the emergence of the other. Critics like Mark Liechty who follow the former paradigm in analyzing society and comprehending modernity argue that tradition carries only local appeal whereas the appeal of modernity is global one. For instance, he writes:

...perhaps especially those of Third World women who must confront the most contentious configurations of 'modernity' and 'tradition' embedded in development discourse. For these women the experience of modernity is precisely about the clash between the particular and the

universal, the local and the global ... (207)

What he assumes in such argument is implied in the epistemological frame of perceiving modernity as break from tradition. On the contrary, South Asian modernity does not take tradition and cultural dynamics as the opposite of modernity. As Mojumdar concludes, South Asian societies

... find no inverse relationship between modernity and tradition but, a close inter-dependence between them, for the course and the content of the change they desire have to be in conformity with what they consider to be the paramount need for fostering and projecting the national image. (11)

He explores that continuation of traditional values at the core of South Asian modernity. The complementary relationship between tradition and modernity further helps attain a society to turn into its own past to seek for the absences and contradictions for its transformation.

The transformation in tradition and self-revising tendency of Nepali modernity provide with a unique perception of temporal sense in that it complicates the process of prefixing the phenomenon of social change. The markers before modernity in Nepal do not yield any meaning as such. For instance, Michael Hutt's proposition of 'early' Nepali modernity falls into the trap of temporal complexity as he writes, "Despite this repressive atmosphere, Nepali literature grew to maturity in the decades leading up to 1950 in the poetry of Lekhnath Paudyal and Lakshmi Prasad Devkota, fiction by Bishveshvar Prasad Koirala, Guruprasad Mainali and Lainsingh Bangel and the dramas of Balkrishna Sama" (138). For Hutt, this phase falls into 'early modern' period in the history of literature, for he sees the repressive social institution of the

Rana Oligarchy in Nepal. However, the simultaneous journey of propensity to change and resistance to change adds to the complexity of Nepali modernity when he also finds maturity being developed in Nepali society and social imagination. Hence, the argument of this kind unfolds its contradiction when he further writes, “It illustrated a society which was in a state of transition from age-old traditionalism to a new spirit of social progressivism” (138). What Hutt sees as transition from one phase to the next is emergence of modern spirit for Abhi Subedi who already sees the growth of quest of modern times in modern poetry in specific and literature in general.

The difference in perception regarding the traditional aspect in the evolution of Nepali societies results in variation in conclusions. Subedi differs from Hutt when the former encounters past as the living impetus in development of social imagination in Nepal. Focusing on the response of the poetry to address the urgency of contemporary time, he critiques the situation thus:

The sense of urgency appears to be the dominant theme in many poems of contemporary times. The lines are conspicuous, the concerns are immediate, the awareness is an experience that is present in unmixed fresh colours. The imageries are obvious. Communication is the goal. The living history is the impulse. Language does not represent the disjuncted (*sic*) experience, because there is no need for it to do so.

Such is the new mode of painting in contemporary Nepali poems. (12)

The immanent perspective implied in Subedi’s argument shows the ways Nepali modernity relates itself to the notion of history and history to present reality. The social urgency and the source of inspiration to understand contemporaneity as witnessed in the history making process of Nepali poetry allow Subedi to examine the

past and present as interconnected phenomena.

For Nepali modernity to prosperously establish itself, it is required to seek itself and evolve itself from its own heritage. The dissociation from the roots leads its course to the unknown direction and ends up dissolving the quest for freedom and equality. The social imagination for a just society in Nepali poetry also appears quite differently in that Dharanidhar Koirala attempts to awaken people to seek the virtues of the past that they have lost, forgetting the achievement of their ancestors. He calls on people to identify their inner strength and develop a sense of respect in “Jāga, Jāga.” He raises the critical issue of tradition: the glory of the past needs to be maintained and reasserted while achieving modernity in Nepal. In the meantime, the society has to think about the future of the society. He asks, "What will happen to the glory of Ārya?/ What will befall on the posterity?" (“Jāga, Jāga” 29-30). In fact, he seeks to attain continuity in Nepali modernity by achieving equilibrium from the point of present between the past and future. The temporality of modernity in Nepal thus asserts the conception of continuity, rather than break, from the past.

In the similar line of argument, Lal raises the issue of seeking ‘own modernity’ in Nepali past. Koirala's poem “Jāga, Jāga” carries the theme of national awakening paving path for the socio-political shift in the 1950s. He asks the people to wake up and rise against their own ignorance and work for the cause of collective progress, pointing out the failure of people to relate themselves to the spirit of the age. On the contrary, Lal’s argument fails to clearly demarcate the line between the past and the present. He argues that in the context of Chinese advancement in the global arena, “...Nepali culture will continue to grow as Himalayas (*sic*) have been doing for ages. It also means that the roots of tradition would need to remain deep and strong to

withstand the pressure from both sides” (259). While analyzing the case before 1950, Lal presents tradition as blockage in modernity whereas he sees the need to revive tradition to give unique meaning to modernity in Nepal in a changed context after 2000. Thus, Lal makes self-defeating claim about role of tradition in modernity in Nepal.

The self-reflectivity also helps understand the historical experience in a new light. In this context, C. K. Lal's appears to be fascinated with the idea of history and achievement of the past; yet, he ends up bringing together the opposite categories about Nepali perception of history. In fact, he assumes that tradition and modernity are exclusively related to each other as antagonistic forces. He fails to understand that it is through certain modification and interpretation of the materials lying in tradition that a society achieves its modernity that later turns into a kind of tradition in itself. Hence, he argues, "...the Ranas used power at their command to give continuity to traditions” (250), attempting to portray the Ranas as the anti-modernist force. On the other hand, the past and history functions as the source of guidance for present in that the present is continuously supplied with classical values from tradition. In a way, it is a depot of classical values for literature; hence, Manfred Treu rightly points out that tradition plays the role of the repository of classical values as “manifest in Nepali literature” (191). However, Lal also agrees that modernity can be redefined in the light of tradition (259). On the whole, tradition and modernity complement each other in forming a society, capable of relating itself to the ethos of present and developing own mode of comprehension regarding freedom and justice as key notions of social organization.

The perception towards history from Nepali debate to modernity also pays due

critical attention in understanding the contemporary world. For instance, Mahesh Raj Panta is critical about Nepal's attitude to history as the source of lesson from the past. As it is absent, it causes a great harm on Nepal's part in the war (49). He develops a very critical observation regarding the defeat of Nepal in the war and makes best of his attempts to escape from the self-valorizing tendency so that the posterity does not fall into the historical pitfall. As a matter of fact, he wants tradition to serve the contemporary purpose of life, making it more prosperous. Still, Panta's argument reemphasizes on 'continuity' in the process of making of history. Similarly, Sanjeev Uprety analyzes the making of modernity and postmodernity in a very different light as he observes that the latter evolves out of the former. He also argues, "... I contend that just like romanticism, realism and modernism, postmodernism, too, is a still 'newer' form, a revision of modernity" (229). He opposes the notion of 'break' or 'rupture' of the singularist Western modernity that force to accept societies like Nepal that they possess prefixed modernity with the sense of 'belatedness' in global modern competition.

Pant and Uprety stand close to Prayag Raj Sharma who scrutinizes synthesis as the feature of Nepali society. The process of synthesizing requires that continuity be established. In other words, the internal structuration of society and social imagination about Nepali modernity are founded on the principle of synthesis as feature of Nepali modernity. Sharma's analysis of the internal structuration of Buddhism in Nepal shows strength of Nepali culture to appropriate the changes that appear in society. He critically assesses the growth and dissemination of the Buddhist philosophy in Nepali societies that "acquired a totally different character from its older monastic form in the subsequent periods" (2). Through this analysis of the case

of the Buddhist philosophy in Nepali society, he examines two powerful features of society: synthesis and assimilation. Analyzing the roots of harmony in Nepali context, he argues:

Another distinctive trait of Nepali culture is its power of synthesis and assimilation. It has blended and harmonised even the most opposing philosophies and dogmas reaching its territorial shores. Buddhism and Hinduism have been fused in Nepal quite often, thereby obscuring their sectarian distinctiveness. (2)

Thus, the present also makes best of its attempts to assimilate the past values and the contemporaneity in Nepal gets shaped with synthesis in the backdrop by the history in the making. The temporal dimension of modernity in Nepal reveals that the continuity rooted in its core, forming new direction and shaping social imagination that appears in the cross-sections of history and literature that move simultaneously towards achieving social reconfiguration that can adequately address the quest of the present in general.

The creative texts also address the issue of temporality along the similar lines observed in the critical debate. The critical attitude in Nepali literature towards the past is explored when authors like Diamond Shumsher Rana begin to evaluate the weaknesses implied in tradition. Despite the fact that traditional and contradictory forces are prevalent, the same functions as the basis for common people to assert their agency. In such state, the totality of the system is governed by these drives derived from the conception rooted in the then society. The people under influence of traditional forces like caste system begin to question the authority as well. Jung Bahadur's journey to Europe was the first step towards modernity in that it was also

the symptom that the society was gradually opening up for the outside experience. However, the people begin to raise the issue of caste. Diamond Shumsher Rana describes the people responding to this issue differently. He writes, “Religious fundamentalists began the rumor, ‘Since Jung Bahadur crossed the Brahmaputra to go to Britain, he lost his caste. He must not be accepted as the prime minister’” (*Seto Bāgh* 8). The assertion of agency through the employment of such understanding forms the basic frame for such representation in literary writing.

On the other hand, Dharanidhar Koirala identifies that the contemporary life is outgrown with certain irrational and/or contradictory attributes from whose grip the society must free in order to attain freedom and justice. He wants people to awaken themselves because “Now it's time you work for progress, /Abandoning the deep, deep slumber./Awake! You have slept for too long” (“*Jāga, Jāga*” 2-3). He sees “deep slumber” (3), “fear” (8), lack of “love for the land” (19), “Division, treachery, and lust” (25), “malice” at the heart of people (26), “selfishness” (33), “anger and jealousy” (38), and ignorance (52) are the attributes that everyone in Nepal has to fight against to establish “progress” (2). As collective spirit, the love for the land develops only after everybody is awakened and gets “united” (35) for the cause of society. Despite enhancement of these features in the 1930s and the 1940s, he does not portray the past with the negative attributes. Rather, his quest is directed towards attaining freedom in present.

For Koirala, feeling for the collective is required in everyone. The progress needed for everyone is possible only through identification of need of society (“*Jāga, Jāga*” 21-24). Since he realizes that it is too late for national awakening, it is essential that everybody abandon “the deep, deep slumber” (15) now and “We need to find

progress for us now” (42). The poet makes a basic point that the failure in asserting the agency at the collective level at present prolongs the delay in achieving modernity. In other words, social agency able to intervene the social ills and dark spots which promote inequality and enhance the limitations upon the exercise of freedom functions as instrumental force in attaining modernity which in new subjectivity gives birth to attributes like “civility” (“Jāga, Jāga” 58), “progress” (60), and dedication for freedom (“Swatantratā” 4). He very revoltingly asks people not to “endure torture, suppressing truth” (“Swatantratā” 1) because the grip of fear does not allow birth of agency in them. Instead, he urges them to revolt against this, and fight for truth and freedom (4). For him, freedom is the only mantra:

Freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom:

Reciting this mantra, be happy for ever.

To tell apart good from the bad,

You go on repeating this mantra forever. (“Swatantratā” 5-8)

Even though he seeks break in his poems, it does not refer to the temporal break from the past; on the contrary, the contemporary practice requires complete transformation that needs to meet the standard of the past in the matters of exercising freedom and righteousness in society. Therefore, he wants people to devote their life for the cause of freedom to “promote freedom in this human society” (10) because he deeply holds this true that it brings about blessings of life in the nation (12). Thus, Koirala sees that social transformation can achieve revision through rewriting in the ethical domain.

The progress that Koirala seeks to attain after awakening is also deeply rooted in tradition. In fact, he believes that the measure of contemporary achievement lies in the attainment in past. By paying no attention to socio-politico advancement in

history, the diachronic balance of development is disturbed and thus the understanding turns to be lopsided. Like him, Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan elaborates the notion of progress founded in historical value system. Deeply rooted in the living tradition of South Asia, he wants the society to revive the classical values of sacrifice and social welfare. On the significance of distant reality in history, he thus highlights:

Perhaps the development which considers sympathies and donations as achievements could not take root, even a whiff of air is enough to terrorize it. The speed is indeed low, it is just a push. What a distant dream did I happen to dream constructing a fragile house! (250)

The awakening with historical sense of achievement assumes that tradition and modernity are complementary categories and thus go simultaneously. Pradhan's progress and updating the mores of society as per the aspiration of society stand very close to Dev Shumsher who was influenced by Japanese model of development that evolves out of their own traditional strength. However, his vision does not get due space in the Rana rule for familial reasons (*Seto Bāgh* 91). In the palace, he is made a laughing stuff when he talks about social change: abolition of untouchability and parliamentary form of democracy as practiced in Japan are beyond the understanding of the other Ranas (122). Thus, Dharanidhar Koirala, Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan, and Diamond Shumsher Rana collectively assert Nepali perception of progress that is deeply rooted in the history of society.

Progress resulting from collective aspiration for freedom and equality brings in disenchantment in temporal dimension of Nepali modernity. The employment of critical reasoning for social organization and regulation of social practices implies that

everything is built on the logical necessity. The unfathomable in social space is made measurable when reason that is compatible with the spirit of contemporaneity is brought in practice. Rana raises critical point when he puts the questions: “Who can fathom God’s and King’s mind?” (7). A society devoid of use of critical faculty of mind enforces the idea of enchantment in a variety of issues. In such stage of social development, the invisible forces gain prominence over the physical and begin to act as though they are real. The secret mind-set needs complete transformation in modernity in that rational transformation of such state of practice undergoes a process of disenchantment by unfolding the concealed functioning. Through rationalist replacement, God finds no place, and rules and regulations become so strong that even King’s personal domain comes under debate in public. The transformation takes place when the collective checks the unbound freedom for the ruler in the public affairs. In this sense, the ethical progress marks one of the fundamental issues in temporality of Nepali modernity.

Similarly, the logic of scientific technology carries a great significance in this direction of ethical development. For one thing, the manual labor of social agents is reduced when science and technology begin to serve human beings; for the other, they are rewarded with adequate time to contemplate on the notion of society as the collective entity which can award all the participants with ultimate possible realization of human agency. Hence, B. P. Koirala realizes that physical labor is a burden in development of social imagination, for it denies exercise of intellectual power possible through art and literature towards forming a canon of culture. For him, the hope for modernity comes through science that helps replace physical labor, thereby leading to attainment of human freedom/liberty (30). Only after this

realization, the society can free itself from the presence of the supernatural. Depicting the picture of the then society during the Rana rule, Diamond Shumsher Rana critically makes evaluation that the society had its belief in supernatural forces like ‘black magic’. The witchcraft could even frighten the most powerful young mind of the time like Jagat Jung, the eldest son to Jung Bahadur (*Seto Bāgh* 31, 35). The logic of technology can thus repel the haunting ghost of the supernatural and the enchanted forces from human agents.

In ethical progress, the force of critical rationality begins to percolate and break all parallel regulatory codes, once a code is broken. The rigidity of temporality loses its grip when one of the regulatory structures is imposed the power of critical reasoning. For instance, the notion of ‘sin’ in the beginning leads to dilemma and doubt about the course of action for Jagat Jung in *Seto Bāgh*. Competing youths are seen in the Rana family, emerging out of the traditional notion of ‘sin’. Rajatnayā, the Princess is supposed to marry Bir Shumsher as decided by the King Surendra and the Queen. Now that she is to become his cousin’s bride, Jagat Jung cannot accept her as his love for fear of ‘sin.’ Later, he changes his mind: he wants the Princess as his wife since he is physically aroused and psychologically attracted to the Princess after consummating his physical passion with Ishakpari (*Seto Bāgh* 45). In fact, Jagat Jung questions the underlying structural forces and realizes that the traditional notion of ‘sin’ is rooted in enhancement of fear in human mind. Similarly, the fear can emerge from *anything* as Krishna Dharabashi in the outer narrative layer associates it with the unidentified bag in “Jholā.” He, then, relates the bag to the object of suspicion, and finally to the object with fate when he finds it at home left by a stranger (2). To put it simply, the fear that propagates itself from the key structural issues vanishes when it

is brought in to the frame of critical investigation. The social collective holds enough power to transform itself into a creative drive that begins to formulate new understanding of life and society when one example is set as a point of departure.

The proclivity towards resistance is well-rooted in the temporality itself. The local form of arrogance functions in traditional drive to check the break from the social structural impetus in the meantime. In other words, temporality also forms the resisting force while producing the social drive for change. For instance, even though Jung Bahadur is said to have been influenced by the British ideology at large, Diamond Shumsher Rana depicts him as the one who resists the political ideology, saying “we know” how to run the state (*Seto Bāgh* 168). Jung Bahadur’s seemingly arrogant statement also assumes that temporal dimension of Nepali modernity –in both cases, while formulating new codes and resisting the formulation of new codes in the structural domain of social organization –asserts the agency of people. The creative drive that brings about enchantment and disenchantment is produced from the collective aspiration of people in their quest for freedom and equality.

The intersection of literature and history serves in the capacity of a vantage point to observe and examine the ethical progress in the underlying social structure. The agency witnessed in history is officially manipulated whereas the same which is presented through literature largely reflects the possibility of human life. B. P. Koirala accepts that his literary writings are part of his autobiographical narrative. He says, “My stories in a way are like pieces of my autobiography in which I attempt to defend myself” (29). The equilibrium is maintained when both of them are brought together, whereby freeing the biases of power and making possible creative speculation. Thus, each can balance the other and produce an impartial perception of temporal frame of

enhancement of agency in modernity.

The official narrative of history with prejudices resulting from institutions holding power often performs repressive function in that such institutions largely aim at continuing the prevalent social structure. Implicit contradictions are also sustained through such practice. In fact, the people who resist the change have their interest heavily served from the totality of social configuration. For this reason, B. P. Koirala argues that it is necessary to question official history and analyze literary writings to understand the aspiration and quest of people in past. When he gets to know that King Mahendra has asked some of the intellectuals write a book on him, he begins to doubt the officially produced history about Nepal. Such history carries lies and falsity for him. Instead of analyzing such documents, historians should be able to analyze literary documents to establish valid historical facts. Hence, he writes, “It is not easy to establish the history through the study of literature and arts and Nepali historians have not paid due attention towards it” (101). Koirala realizes need for scholars to make use of literary text to establish historical facts and produce a convincing account of the past endeavors in transformation of society. Social history that transcends the repressive forces of official history emerges from the study of creative productions in society.

Revolting against the dictatorial rule in the Panchayat system in Nepal, Madan Mani Dixit sees the lack of public assembly as the hindrances in determining the course of philosophical, ethical course in society. For him, public debate values the agency of people to choose what is best for the social collective. Hence, he valorizes the use of parliament for public discussion and debate. He states, “Other smaller issues were also put before the assembly and they were duly brought to conclusion”

(95). It implies the demand for a participatory mode of social-political system that guarantees liberty for people. Likewise, B. P. Koirala also understands that the Panchayat system as a model is devoid of any philosophical foundation. As a statesman and philosopher, he seeks for ethical foundation for any political system and concluded that the Panchayat does not have any such foundation. Instead, democracy possesses such basis for its rule in the country (*Jail Journal* 7). Thus, the problematic of Koirala's nationalism emerges in a complicated form. For Ganesh Raj Sharma, there is no better nationalism compared to B. P. Koirala's (16). Sharma states, "Although B. P. Koirala's feelings for nation and nationalism appears to be perplexing, historical literature shows that there is no other nationalist of his stature" (16). In essence, Sharma's argument meets the central core of Dixit in accepting the will of the body polity in formulating the course for social reconfiguration.

The basic mode of perceiving and relating the social quest of the East differs from that of the West, for their approaches are diverse in nature. Koirala analyzes the philosophical base of the East and the West. Eastern philosophy is born out of necessity to synthesize the reality whereas the Western philosophy is born out of curiosity. Hence, the Western approach is different: the former follows the deductive approach while the latter relies on inductive inferences about life and reality (*Jail Journal* 105-6). However, the inability on the part of nationalist leaders to understand the strengths emanating from tradition helps to postpone the native models based on own values even after independence in postcolonial nations in South Asia. He critiques the postcolonial situation in newly independent nations like India. For him, such nations should have been able to develop their own native models, instead of enjoying the power/social structures "developed by the Empires" (Ganesh Raj Sharma

18). Koirala assesses that the past and the present require establishing connection in such a way that past serves the present as the source.

Furthermore, South Asian cultures and societies share the common heritage of the past. Koirala finds Sanskrit in the backdrop of Nepali, Hindi, or Bangla language and literatures. The consciousness in each literature is shaped by the presence of this traditional element. Thus, he posits a common tradition shared in South Asian region. He writes, “ ...There is no big difference among our language [Nepali], Hindi and Bangla. The influence of Sanskrit literature is comprehensively and equally felt in our intellectual conscience, for Sanskrit is the base for these languages” (29). Due to the shared, common tradition in the region, the key notion of social welfare and sacrifice that is located at the root of Nepali modernity also implies its regional prevalence. Dixit presents these values at the heart of *Mādhavi*. The seeker of freedom in Gālav in the novel visits Yayati assembly in Ahichchhatra where the tension emerges from the conflict of self-sacrifice and social welfare. As the most concerned for social welfare, Yayati feels that he has to provide the horses even when he does not have any to offer Gālav; yet, he believes he cannot deviate away from his duty towards the society. In essence, he thinks it his duty to give Gālav those horses (*Mādhavi* 69). The noble cause of abolishing slavery whose sole embodiment is Gālav at large draws attention of the assembly to offer Mādhavi for the cause of humanity. Thus, self-sacrifice and social welfare present in the Vedic myth are revived to relate to the contemporary reality of the society that is full of repressive social organization envisioned in Mahendra’s Panchayat as the political system.

With the historical roots common to all South Asian cultures and aspiration of people to produce own philosophical base, Nepal emerges as a form of distinct

modernity. According to Ganesh Raj Sharma, B. P. Koirala always asserted Nepal as a political category (11). Rooted in socialism, Koirala's ideas about Nepali nationalism and democracy emerge from this distinctive political category. Even though fundamental disagreements lie between the King and B. P. Koirala, the latter believed that the former is a necessary element of its distinction (11). However, the disenchantment of the monarchy resides in Koirala's vision of the political category that appears with certain uniqueness from the rest of the South Asian cultures. The ways to relate to the ethos of the present age in Nepali modernity assume that the society carries continuity in evolutionary process of making of history. On the whole, the breaks in history that is explicitly observed in the formation of singularist approach to modernity are out of question when Nepali modernity is brought into the scrutiny from the intersection of literature and history.

The living nature of history and foundation of the present in the past form the key issue in understanding the nature of temporal dimension of Nepali modernity. The formulation of aspiration for change and resistance to change from this vantage point allows examination of the nature of agency in Nepal. The local form of arrogance regarding the social organization and quest for own philosophical base to comply with people's aspiration for novelty in the mode of living and handling social structure emerge from the conception of time as 'continuous' entity leading to social evolution. Thus, temporality in Nepali modernity presents a counter-argument for singularist claim of modernity that promotes break from one mode of social configuration to the next one. Also, the making sense of time in Nepali tradition is strongly supported by synthesis and assimilation as primary virtues in internal structuration as evidenced by Prayag Raj Sharma. On the whole, the temporality in Nepali modernity is founded on

the assumption of ‘continuity’ in tradition, thereby resulting in bringing two ages at negotiation in formation of new spirit of the contemporary times.

4.2 Dialogue: Ages at Negotiation

Historical trajectories present the preceding and the succeeding ages at negotiation in their transformation from one to the next form. The crisscrossing of two ages in formation of modernity also confirms necessity of dialogue for the attainment of maturity in social modification of the internal organization of social value systems. The sufferings resulting from the shift in age emerges as an essential precondition to improve the level of sustainability of evolving structure. In other words, the debate and discussion in the transformation of society yield into stable configuration in that the use of critical reasoning and maintenance of traditional values is thoroughly analyzed and seriously taken into consideration in such cases. In this regard, Nepali modernity accepts the jolts of history and spaces of social change as the temporal locations in which two ages initiate dialogue and negotiation in that the social agency leads the transformation of the former into a new age. The shift in social transformation becomes a site in which to view the dialogue between two ages and to serve the formation and assertion of social agency.

The tension between two ages resides at the center of Nepali modernity. For one thing, such tension serves modernity to take a leap from the previously developed repressive social institution. For the other, the creative potential of the contemporary times is reasserted at such negotiation of ages. For instance, Balkrishna Sama presents the tussle of past and present in contemporary conflict and shows the victory of the present in modifying the past. Thus, the tradition gets reenergized in “Pervasion of Poetry.” He pictures a sadhu in search of poetry in woods (2) and realizes that the

land is devoid of poetic sensibility. The creative force which the seeker fails to acknowledge resides within himself when he concludes that “this is not the season of poesy” (7). The tension results in suffering that contributes to maturity of society. For Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan, modernity attains a matured state in such jolts of history. So, he argues that historical crisscrossing for social change is necessary for the maturity of a society when he writes, “A man or a country becomes weak if it never has to bear any suffering” (251). The degree of negotiation enhances the capacities to tolerate the shocks of social change, for the dialogue of two ages determines the fate of social institutions and values sustained and maintained through social organization. The conflict appears to add to the strength of Nepali modernity.

For Sama, tradition dialogues with the contemporaneity in order for it to be creative. The dialogue between the old sadhu and the romantic youth yields into realization that the world is filled with poetry. He writes, “In the entire cosmos, within the nuclei of atoms, / in a maddening, apocalyptic cry, / he found poetry roaring” (“Pervasion of Poetry” 41-43). The tradition getting transformed along the lines set by the youth also implies the nature of Nepali modernity that is rooted in the continuity of the tradition. The revolution in setting up the new structure also does not completely do away with the social structure in Nepal. Basically, Nepali modernity maintains the values of past and develops them along the lines set by the spirit of contemporary times for Sama. The sadhu’s quest also refers to contemporary crisis of creative impetus which Pradhan views in very optimistic note when he argues:

Crisis uplifts man. Which nation has progressed without going through a crisis (*sic*). Why should we always try to escape from the immanent danger? Can we solve our problems by running away from the crisis?

Will the crisis leave us alone merely because we are scared of it (*sic*).
 Can we be free from the crisis that falls on the brave? Crisis befalls a
 proud nation. Crisis befalls their lives who rise higher up. He who
 can't fight will face thousands of crises. He who wants to rise higher,
 (*sic*) fights the crisis bravely. (251)

The present in such time of crisis serves as the guide through intervention of social agency and modifies the course of history, providing the society with the vision. This vision is primarily rooted in the ability of people to cope up with the critical needs of society.

The contemporaneity seeks the historical roots to relate to the present reality in that the dialogue with the past is taken as the precondition during such crisis. For instance, Parijat attempts to go back to history by transgressing from the present and find herself united into the ultimate reality of human life as she writes:

But alas, which bird has been able
 to transgress the frontiers of the present?
 Which sigh has been able
 to settle this imbecile existence in the universal ether? (10-13)

The meaning in human existence does not lie in the contemporary ethos for her. The backward movement in longing implies the existential nostalgia for the past which she assumes was full of life and vigor. On the contrary, the failure of the sadhu (who represents the past or the tradition to see creativity in the present reality) refers to valorization of the past in Sama who effectively brings two ages to dialogue with each other and sort out the challenges in Pradhan's 'crisis' of the contemporaneity. As the change maker, the present represented by the youth – romantic wit – helps the past

realize the creative potential lying everywhere on earth. Capable of changing himself and the sadhu, the romantic wit says, “Evoke the ripples of sense, and send sprays over the forehead, / and when the eyes are rinsed by tears, look out with care” (“Pervasion of Poetry” 22-23). Thus, both the present and the past materialize a unified relationship, putting themselves in unison. The past and the present become one in the historical shift and rewrite the historical conditions for an emerging age through revision.

The ethos of contemporaneity is structured along the changing aspirations of people who are the agent seeking freedom and equality. Also, they are the ones who for the first time identify and get dissatisfied with the repressive social practices. In other words, they point out the incongruence at the social structure. The dialogue between the past and the present appears in what Dixit calls “yugasandhee” (*Mādhavi* 8) when he refers to negotiation of two ages – the passing and the emerging – in formation of ethos of age (96). This historical trajectory also refers to the point of confluence of two ages where the former crumbles away to give way to the coming one which is also heavily backed up by the social imagination produced by its participants. Dixit foresees that mandatorily, the preceding age abolishes some of the attributes and gives birth to some new features for the participants. These features result from both ‘doubt’ as a way of asserting agency and ‘self-sacrifice’ as the mode of retaining classical value.

The juncture in history shows the presence of the values which cannot tolerate each other. For instance, *Mādhavi* presents that the new mode of agricultural social organization and the dying form of slavery-based mode of production encounter each other. However, without the art of doubt that Gālav acquires as resident scholar in

Vishwāmitra's *āshram* the challenge to the prevailing form of social structure is not possible. He poses a threat that unfolds from his ability to critically view and question the contemporary reality. The two ages at negotiation are realized through Gālav and Mādhavi who are in quest of four essential attribute for the emerging age: Mādhavi's four sons represent four attributes that emerge out of critical rationality to change the ethos of an age. Hāryashwa's son Vashumanā in Ayodhyā symbolizes courage and bravery; Dibodāsha's son Pratardan in Kāshi, an organizer of great yagnas (sacrificial rites); Shivi's son Shivi in Bhojnagar, righteousness and social welfare; and Vishwāmitra's son Ashtak in Champā, a great scholar (learned one in history, poetry and other forms of knowledge) (*Mādhavi* 497). It is the realization of Mādhavi's self-sacrifice through Gālav's critical rationality that originates in the art of doubt. The attributes required for an age to emerge are produced with four sons of Mādhavi, thus uniting all the thirteen communes through motherhood of Mādhavi (Dixit Personal Interview). In fact, Mādhavi presents herself as the Great Matriarch of the subcontinent. The formation of the attributes in succeeding age also assumes that the society undergoes transformation to revise some of its tenets and add to the social structure some fundamental features that were not in existence in past.

The preceding age develops some fundamental contradictions which are implied in the social organization in the beginning. When the sensitivity towards these contradictions is developed in society through critical reasoning and doubt, the society attempts to correct them through rewriting and revision. In fact, Nepali modernity brings equilibrium between reason and emotion through the negotiation between two ages that come face to face to dialogue. As evidenced in *Mādhavi*, the transformation of mode of production based on slavery into agrarian feudal social organization

presents the path Nepali society has taken from one phase to the next one in reorganizing itself along the aspiration of people. Also, the abandonment of repressive social institutions and development of attributes that center around the conceptions of doubt and critical rationality, and social welfare and self-sacrifice lead to unification of the scattered communes through feminine virtues. The role of the present time as the guide and harbinger of change also shows the ways Nepali modernity makes sense of time in general.

4.3 Revision and Rewriting: Slavery and Sati in Nepal

The historical transformation through dialogue and negotiation in Nepali modernity presents that the intervening subjectivity in the jolts of history identifies the structural limitation imposed upon the very agency. As a result, the ultimate realization of human potential is barred from self-attainment in that it leads to formation of bonded subjectivity. Such agent is denied both freedom and equality that are derived from the equilibrium between traditional values and contemporary critical rationality. The present state in the critical comprehension of social agency which seeks transformation promotes the discrimination among human beings, resulting from the structural inequalities. Thus, society realizes the need to work towards change at the underlying ethical domain. After identifying the ethical questions, the actors of change begin to work in the direction of change that brings about the transformation in value system of society, whereby establishing novel structure in society. Nepali historical development shows the abolition of two repressive social institutions – slavery and sati – that promoted structural inequalities. The critical rationality in the contemporary society questioned the underlying ethical grounds and brought them to a complete end, helping the society attain and address the collective

aspiration for social welfare.

The dictation of social structure reaches the cognitive level of participants in that the way in which understanding is shaped in mindset of people is completely framed along the guidelines rooted in structural inequality. In other words, the social rules reside in the cognition of the participants of change and the revolt against structural aspects also implies the story of personal transformation. By opposing the inequalities manifest in the outer structure of society, the participants of social change also impart the principles of equality in themselves. For instance, Krishna Dharabasi's "Jholā" [The Bag] presents a telling case of sati system: although the inner narrator's father asks his mother not to be sati so as to take care of the narrator (the young son), she is forced to participate in the customary practice by the society ("Jholā" 3). Sati as a cultural and ritual institution assumes that burning a living widow is just as normal as burning a dry, wooden log at the pyre of dead husband. The story critiques the evil in the system and attempts to show the meaning of social change in relation to those cultural practices that get written off. Framed in two layers, the story shows the outer narrator is connected to the contemporaneity of Nepali society whereas the inner narration brings the voice from the history that celebrates Sati as the social system. Dharabasi basically critiques the evil system and shows its collapse from the order of Chandra Shumsher. The quest of the society collectively imparts the value of equality in the participants and transforms the social milieu by incorporating this principle in the ethical domain of social life from which the society maintains its order.

The nature of social change coming from the top of hierarchy is also practiced in Nepal in two cases: Sati and Slavery. The trajectory that Dharabasi presents in the story shows the quest of the common people to do away with the sati system; yet, they

find themselves unable to assert their agency to abolish the evil rules. The picture of the practice of widow burning appears thus in the story:

They took off ornaments from mother after making her go around the Devi's shrine. They poured mustard oil onto her hair. The oil began to trickle down her hair, like water after the bath. She was made naked, taking off all her clothes. I saw the grown-ups naked for the first time then. Yet, there was no shame or vulgarity in the nakedness of mother. She was respected as a well-clad person. The conch was blown. With mother walking before the dead, the crowd climbed down the hill, toward the bank of the Tamor. ("Jholā" 5)

Dharabasi fails to celebrate the basic premise of modernity that requires people to assert their agency. The narrow escape from the episode of widow-burning ritual emotionally appeals the people's heart while reading the text. Still, the escape from the society changes nothing in the inner layer of the narration. As Dharabasi comes to the outer layer to make commentary, he begins to celebrate the change that is given from the top. However, Dharabasi presents a case of the evil institution that was pervasively present in the society.

In the similar vein, slavery as an evil social institution reaches the core of cognition of the people in such a way that it is presented normal to casually ask about the people regarding organizational order of their society and slaves following the orders of the master in the regular discourse about the well-being of the close ones. Dixit in *Mādhavi* presents seven critical questions about regular, casual discourse: one of them is about slaves. In fact, the question relating to slavery is one of the seven critical questions of the society. Yayati asks Suparna Nāgjeṃyā whether the slaves

observe their duties properly (*Mādhavi* 69). In society following slavery as the mode of production and social organization, these questions are thus listed in *Mādhavi*:

Are cattle in your place ever increasing?

Do your forest and land provide profuse amount of fruits and grains?

Is there enough rain in your place?

Is your commune ever expanding?

Is there any disagreement in your assembly? Do you collectively accept all works of your communes?

Are the unanimously taken decisions duly implemented? Do they delay in carrying out their duties?

Do the slaves follow their duty in your commune? (68-9)

The last of the questions presents depth of cognitive behavior of the people shaped by slavery in the quotidian life of people in the world of *Mādhavi*. The restrictions imposed on the other human beings regarding the exercise of freedom results in absolute denial of freedom which is also evidenced in sati.

The bleak picture like that of sati ritual emerges in slave-owning societies. The denial of freedom for a certain section of society results in structural dictation of fellow beings, putting humans in a position like those of animals in cage. Gālav visits Hāryashwa's slave-prison and gets the completely inhuman picture in Ayodhyā. This disastrous picture also helps him stand more firmly against the cause of slavery. Dixit thus describes the scene:

Gālav endeavored to observe the surrounding, standing on the cold ground amid cacophonous noise and foul odor but he could see nothing. In a moment, he identified the odor –the odor came from

humans there. . . Now the voices he heard were also clearer. The voices were those of suffering and helpless appeal, hatred and refusal, and helplessness and anger. . . Gālav was deeply struck and felt like being lost in that world. Gradually, his ears got to hear the words, ‘Hāryashwa, I always knew that person like you also has to come here. So you have come today! Tell me, what’s the message that you have brought from the grain giving precious and beautiful world’. (203)

This picture of slave-house in Ayodhyā appears dismal, for the complete absence of freedom and absolute restriction over the human potential to attain the bliss of life result in frustration and anger. This strikes the freeman in Gālav who aspires to bring the evil system to an end.

The repressive mode of slavery puts the master in the position to exercise his freedom and the emancipation for the people in the chains of slavery depends on the will of other free humans. Under these circumstances, the slaves are unethically treated to further deny the freedom of other free beings. For instance, Rohitāshwa is very happy with Pichchhal’s investigation and information about the former’s wife. He abolishes through ritual the bond of slavery and thus Pichchhal comes back to be a free man. Winning freedom by pleasing his master was really a herculean task for him (*Mādhavi* 89). Thus, the tyrannical nature implied in such system cuts both the ways: firstly, it inspires people under the chains to adopt any means to obtain freedom, and secondly, it allows the free humans to make use of other human beings at disposal of the former in every way deemed appropriate.

The structural dictation upon subjectivity limits the power of agency by reducing the whole being into a size of a puppet only. Furthermore, the brutality lying

in sati and slavery also adds to robbing away the humane feeling from other people. The subjectivity in chains of structural restrictions sets boundary for what the ultimate realization can bring about in social milieu. The denial of liberty to the slaves results in their homelessness. Chandra Shumsher explains that the real bliss of life that family awards every free being is not there in slave's life. On the other hand, the family disintegration in the life of slave dehumanizes the slaves. Similarly, it also debases the moral ground of the slave-owner, for the sale of other human beings for one's survival is unbecoming of free being (104). Hence, he questions free people and the institution at the same time, “What kind of custom is this that enchains in slavery the posterity of a person simply because there was money invested on his body?” (113). He attempts to investigate the base on which the continuation of denial of freedom is established.

The inhuman system challenges the ethical domain of humanity because a section of people by force maintain their life without freedom. Dixit presents the suffering and inhuman treatment of slaves in Ahichchhatra makes Gālav more determined, for the system is itself demoralizing for both slaves and masters. Furthermore, he gets to realize Ahichchhatra believes that only punishment safeguards the moral, social obligation of people toward the societal collective. Although in Ahichchhatra, Gālav could not understand the meaning of mantra of slaves, “I am life,” it implies that the slave-revolt is on the way. Implicitly, as an institution, slavery is crumbling away (*Mādhavi* 81). For the sustenance of the system, the use of force robs away humanity, reducing everybody to inhuman status. Chandra Shumsher brings in the heart of slave-mother in public debate to discuss how she feels when her child is sold away from her (105). The inhuman practice must stop in order to give respect to the mother's heart. The interaction of two ages –the succeeding and

the preceding –assumes that the structural codes need revision and rewriting to emerge compatible to the emerging ethos of the present.

The bonded subjectivity also resists the suppression imposed upon them. In fact, suppression and resistance simultaneously move together. The quest for freedom gains even intense form during the high domination of one section of society. Dixit presents a case of resistance in *Mādhavi*: Gālav gets to see the pathetic condition of slaves in Ahichchhatra. The slaves in chain resist the external dictation imposed upon them. They recite the mantra, “I’m life” (80). Dixit interestingly tells the narrative of resistance thus:

Prabepan said that there was not end if one wanted to know the cause behind daily dispute between the slaves and the guards. In the meantime, the slave spat on the guard’s face, saying ‘Om’. The guard was very angry and he began to whip the slave. Once the slave was whipped, all the slaves were randomly whipped. The chained slaves, attempting to break free from the chains and shouting ‘I am life’, began to answer the whips back with whatever was there in their hands. In a short time, the work at the place came to a complete halt.

(80)

The means adopted to repress the dissatisfaction of the people result in revolt when the bonded subjects verbally and physically answer back the master. However, because of limited access on the part of the restrained subject, they cannot fully employ all the available means for their defense. The tension reaches the highest point in society, calling for the modification of social value system that restrains a larger section of people from enjoying freedom and equality.

The contemporary social agency begins to analyze hazards resulting from the structural contradictions and intervenes to update the internal structuration with the ethos of contemporaneity. Presenting an economic analysis of slavery prevalent in Nepal in the 1920s, Chandra Shumsher argues that the free laborers are far cheaper than slaves in the matters of agricultural activities. So, the slave –owners should employ the free laborers who are more economic (108). In the speech he made to abolish slavery, he has also included thorough calculation about the economic benefits that slavery as a system brings to the owners of slaves. On the one hand, it is amoral to keep other human beings as slaves for the benefits of a particular group of people; on the other, it carries further economic threats. Hence, with the historical reference, Chandra Shumsher builds his argument against slavery as a mode of production. He argues that after the abolition of slavery, the production of agricultural product increases (107). For him, further possibilities wait after granting equal status to every member in society for exercise of freedom. The preceding age continues as long as the mass fails to see the benefits of altered condition.

Women under slavery are commotified in such a way that they become the object to derive pleasure for the free men. The status of slave-women in society turns into the function of satiating sexual thrust. For instance, Dixit explains that a slave woman must appease the bodily desire of the master to achieve her freedom. Resistance refers to further suppression into the endless pit of inhuman treatment., Despite her beautiful body, Sārikā resists submitting herself to Rohitāshwa (*Mādhavi* 88-89). Implicitly, assertion of agency in such human beings carries further threat of being suppressed. The innate possibility of realizing oneself through human potential to self-attainment threatens the subjects. Thus, it is necessary for the society to

examine the challenges in the temporality of social development.

The scrutiny of social contradiction leads to exploration of the initial logic of such repressive institution. For instance, the origin of slavery demands that critical attention be paid to it. Discussing briefly on the origin of slavery, Chandra Shumsher states:

It is no use discussing the origin of this custom [slavery] here since it started with war in past: then the victor, seeing no other use of the vanquished for own benefit, began to keep the defeated and their posterity as their slaves. (102)

The logic that he encounters at the beginning entails a different kind of ethical organization of society. However, the society maintains the original ethical issues even after tremendous transformation at various historical crossroads. Likewise, Dixit also contemplates on the origin of such social order through Mādhavi and Gālav when they discuss how the society began to deny freedom to a particular group of people. The defeated in war lose their freedom since they are taken captives. Principally, Mādhavi accepts this form of origin of slavery. Besides, she does not find it ethical to make slaves through curse and debasement of the helpless (177). The power relations that emerge before the society attained more matured state cannot remain continued even after attaining a higher order.

The moral maturity at a certain period of social evolution does not allow people to continue what was once natural for the people. Identifying the ethical chasms in the underlying social structure, both Chandra Shumsher and Dixit present the moral degradation through the portrayal of slave market in their respective argument. Chandra Shumsher goes back to discuss about the nature of slave-markets

in the past where the farmers bought and sold slaves like goods and cattle for agricultural labor. He states, “Since they had to make people work forcefully, the farmers tortured the slaves for their labor. The slaves while working had to constantly look at their back to save their back” (106). Through the inculcation of fear, the free masters forced them to work in the field. The treatment of the slaves is almost like that of the beasts of burden in such situation. Furthermore, Dixit poignantly describes the slave-market thus:

The slaves brought to the market were given clothes of bark round their hip. The Shrethis, the members of the commune assembly and the priests were densely present in the place, close to animal market. Those wishing to buy female slaves were choosing them, physically examining their bodies. There was least attraction to mother of children and the minors had the least price. (252)

What Dixit discusses about slave market shows the loss of ethical aspects and the rule of the force alone. Both Chandra Shumsher and Dixit point at the attitude and treatment of the free master whose ethical ground crumbles away due to such social institution. The collective conscience cannot tolerate such repression that further enhances the denial of freedom through promotion of inequalities in the base. Analyzing the social threats also reveals the possibilities of loss of whole order that can be caused by complete disruption initiated by the resistance from the suppression.

The collective conscience begins to grow doubtful about its own practice in that the structural impetus encouraging the inequalities needs to be imposed critical rationality through consensus. The ethical domain is reached through the analysis of the contemporary threats present in current practice of society. In other words, the

society puts itself in a position to examine the ethical questions that support the practice, thereby promoting the inequality. While rewriting and revising the underlying codes of social organization, such practice is associated with the forces that are not compatible with the ethos of present age. For Chandra Shumsher, slavery is a mark of being uncivilized or antimodern in that the spirit of the age is not carried out through such practice. He states:

The conscious humans know that the practice of slavery is founded on the base of injustice and disrespect, for it gives human right to hold other humans the way they have right to their property like house, land, and cattle. (119)

The human sensitivity functions as the key force in judging the act of holding slaves. The slave-owners fail to locate the humane ground to allow the slaves with equal status. Likewise, Dixit argues that slavery dehumanizes both free and bonded beings equally. Slavery cuts both ways: it transforms the slaves into beasts of burden and free humans into immoral beings—for they see only the economic gains from humans like them. They forget the real essence of humanity –pain and pleasure of life. Mādhavi holds radical views against it since she sees the real differences lying between humans and animals (*Mādhavi* 179). Both the perceptions of social practice agree in a basic point that the practice serves inhuman purpose in life, implying that nobody wishes to continue the inhuman form.

Like slavery, sati –the practice of widow burning –also produces dehumanizing effects. The evil that lies in the social codes accepted by all the members of the society begins to surface and challenge their existence on the whole as long as they do not realize the implicit nature of logical necessity in it. For

example, Krishna Dharabasi examines the dehumanizing effect of Sati as a social system thus:

In the episode, a young woman was to burn her living body with an old and naturally dead husband today; yet, they were not touched. At this moment while portraying the age unable to bud compassion, sympathy and humanity, I am myself feel reverberated. (“Jholā” 4)

The inner narrator explores the tenets that critical rationality enhances the people with. Compassion, sympathy, and humanity are the key features that one develops as the new subjectivity emerges to bring about the existence of modern being. Hitting at the lack of the key components in the social milieu, the inner narration puts the narrator at a loss that pushes him into the depth of the history where the tortures of social institution devoid of any rationale produce vibration in his whole being. This narration parallels the external layer in that the outer narrator begins to compare the woman trying to run away from rituals of Sati to his own mother (13). The narrative thus relates the historical experience with the contemporary reality.

Similarly, the system is associated with other practices that have already been established as disadvantageous for moral and social wellbeing of human beings. Questioning the ethical domain of slavery and seeking its implication in immoral practices already accepted in society, Chandra Shumsher associates slavery with prostitution in order to examine the sexual exploitation of the female slaves. Relying on this premise that prostitution must not continue whereas slavery has helped prostitution grow (110-11), he argues for abolition of slavery. Furthermore, he seeks the practical utility of its abolition, for this practice has promoted migration. Hence, through abolition of such repressive practice, he hopes to stop migration from Nepal

to many parts of India through abolition of slavery (114). In the similar vein, Dixit examines the dehumanizing impacts of slavery in the ethical growth of society: it spoils the moral growth of kiths and kins as well. The first to capture a person without *gotra* are his own relatives who force the person losing *gotra* into slavery (*Mādhavi* 35). Thus, slavery dehumanizes both slaves and slave owners. The challenges that emerge in ethical domain of the social order demand due address through necessary transformation of principles governing the structure.

The aspiration towards change emerges personally and collectively as the issues relating to the underlying structural codes are required proper critical attention and address. The intervention of agency in the collective of the contemporary practice requires understanding the incongruities at the ethical domain, for such inconsistencies promote structural inequalities that restrict the ultimate realization of human potential to self-attainment. Krishna Dharabasi presents a case of structural inequality in the marriage in “Jholā.” The inner narration in the short story thus sets the scene in past while introducing the situation:

Although my father was very old, my mother was only twenty-seven. My father had married a girl (my mother) forty years younger to him after the first wife –mother to four children –passed away. As it was customary not to see the age of men, that was the time daughters suffered a hell of life from child-marriage. (2-3)

The evil form of social practice victimizes the inner narrator’s mother. Furthermore, the young woman who gets to produce only one son from her husband is to lie ready on the dead man’s pyre to be burnt alive. The structural limitations cannot sustain forever. The subjectivity of the sati is thus denied freedom to life and choice.

In the similar vein, the slaves also make best of their attempts to win freedom. The personal struggle with the society reveals telling stories of aspiration of equality and freedom. The slaves go to any extent to obtain their freedom. For instance, Rohitāswa's slave Pichchhal sees it as an opportunity to inform the master about his wife Puspikā to attain freedom (*Mādhavi* 87). In yet another case, Bhallākshya in requests Gālav to impregnate his beloved wife Girikā so as to obtain his freedom from slavery. So, the former tells the latter:

‘It’s true, my lord! The sage Aristamuni had told us about our way to freedom, ‘If any pupil from Vishwāmitra’s *āshram* impregnates you, you and your husband will be rescued from slavery’. He has also given us his coin as a proof. Girikā has the coin.’ (159)

The slaves are ready to pay any price to achieve freedom. The fall from the normal human position puts them in such station of life where their free will is completely annihilated. However, the hope as symbolized in Girikā's coin remains with them. The form of suppression invented and promoted to deny freedom and equality in slaves pushes them to any extent to obtain themselves the victory over their contemporary state.

The nature of exploitation in slave-base mode of production of society is founded on complete denial of freedom. Slaves produced grains for the free ones; yet, they did not have any human standing. On top of it, their children in the name of customary practice were put in fire as child-sacrifice in order to appease the wrath of anger of the deity of death, the Varuna. When Gālav gets to hear it from his friend Suparna Nāgjeṃyā, he feels the extreme suffocation of humanity (*Mādhavi* 21). Gālav's sensitive soul is touched when he sees the anti-human practice. Likewise, the Great

Matriarch, Mādhavi also does not find it right even though she performs the rite. In fact, she is forced to carry out the responsibility with Halimak's pressure. The dictation of the rituals in Mādhavi and its impact in Gālav show both the repressive nature of social systems and the cruelties of slavery through child-sacrifice. The practitioner of human sacrifice can comfortably accept it as part of customary practice. The social imagination that is being shaped, the new waves for freedom attempting to be born, surely do not put Gālav in a position to take the affair as simply as the participants of the rituals do.

Slavery means lack of freedom and power to assert oneself, for both the body and agency are in chain for slaves. Besides, the slave in the prison says, "I am a slave: my body and energy are in chain. Yet, my soul in the form of life is still emancipatory, knowledgeable, indomitable, indestructible and free. It is truth" (*Mādhavi* 205). Such resistance also helps assert agency in them. People like Girikā and Bhallāksha, on the other hand, regain their lost position within the repressive frame of social order. The happiness of emancipation of slavery is noteworthy in that it is almost impossible to attain a free status within the social order without any alteration in the underlying codes. Girikā is pregnant and is thus entitled to obtain emancipation from slavery. Mādhavi brings this to Gālav's notice. With the consent of the King Hāryashwa, Gālav gives Bhallāksha and Girikā emancipation from slavery (*Mādhavi* 223). The personal attempt does not bring any change of significant magnitude in their state of comprehending and perceiving the reality. For both sati and slavery, the collective social agency has to intervene in the contemporary state of social order to completely get rid of the repressive order.

Social agency that grows hope and trust on future can bring about social

change. The change in codes of social organization does not take place in a short period of time. First of all, society has to accept that change is both possible through their own acts and necessary to alter the underlying assumption of its organization. Social imagination with trust placed in hopeful tone about future can help achieve real space in struggle for B. P. Koirala. He argues, “Trust and hope for the future is a great moral power that helps tolerate the present tortures. I am ever afraid lest I turn hopeless about future” (171). The actor of change turning hopeless towards future cannot contribute to formation of collective call of society for change. Ganesh Raj Sharma states that B. P. Koirala refused to go to foreign land for his medication of lung cancer because he wanted to stay politically active even in the last moments of his life (6). Koirala wants to completely devote his energy and time to the cause of social transformation. This sort of active social agency pays no attention to the cause of the personal in order to attain higher goals of social change. Active participation in forming collective call for change is essential while providing maturity for society to abolish the institutions that restrict the exercise of freedom and equality.

In quest for equal human status, the collective voices are also produced in the society. For instance, for the first time, Gālav sees slave-revolt in the prison of King Hāryashwa of Ayodhyā and the ruthless attempt of the state to control it (*Mādhavi* 204). The violence that is employed to control the revolt further enhances the determination of Gālav to work towards its abolition. Unlike the change sought after from the bottom of the society as evidenced in Dixit’s *Mādhavi* or Koirala’s *Jail Journal*, the change imposed from the top crumbles to pieces. For example, even though Jung Bahadur attempts to bring about certain changes in social system like abolishing the ‘Sati’ system (*Seto Bāgh* 130), the change is overcome by traditional

forces. Jung Bahadur in the end asks his wife to be his ‘Sati’ (199). Without collective willingness to alter the codes governing the social milieu, change imposed turns dysfunctional.

Even the personal attempts inspired by the classical virtue of social welfare can result in contribution to change in society. Dixit illustrates one such case in *Dibodāsh*: this King of Kāshi also contributes towards abolition of slavery through donation of land. Unlike Hāryashwa’s Ayodhyā, Kāshi does not have any prison for slaves (*Mādhavi* 272). The magnitude that *Dibodāsh*’s actions carry can appear quite low on the surface observation; yet, they contribute to shaping the cognition of adjoining communes. On the other hand, change from the top like slavery abolition in Nepal in 1924 also requires historical justification: Chandra Shumsher brings reference of the world history and practice of slavery in other parts of the world to compare to our situation in the country. The dignity and respect the nation has earned as the fighter for the cause of humanity and freedom has been defamed because of slavery (102). In fact, Chandra Shumsher appears in the literary construction of Krishna Dharabasi when the external narrator brings the photograph of Chandra Shumsher and hangs it next to change-makers like Prithvi Narayan, Tribhuvan, Mahendra, and Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala in the last scene of “*Jholā*.” Because Chandra Shumsher abolished Sati-system from Nepal, Dharabashi’s narrator realizes that his mother –a widow –is still with him (13). In various instances, the historical shifts present the mode of rewriting the social practices to suit the spirit of contemporaneity through revision of the social codes. The systems promoting inequalities are washed away while still sustaining the inner attributes that bind people together and maintains the expected order.

The society formulates the ultimate realization of social agency to bring about change in order to abolish the repressive social institutions and develop new mores of relating to and perceiving reality to their life. In the process of achieving a more just state, society revises and rewrites the codes of its organization. In the negotiation between the emerging spirit and the deep-rooted frames in social structures, the succeeding age overwrites certain sources of contradictions in the deep-structure of the society in order to update the society with the ethos of the present. In fact, the new voice is implied in this process of change, for the change is realized through its employment. Thus, as tools of social change, revision and rewriting help comprehend the historical transformation of society taking leap towards more just society in attaining own modernity.

4.4 Emergence of New Voice

Revision and rewriting of codes underlying social order result in social change through new voice that emerges compatible with the aspiration of the present. Besides, the new voice is able to relate itself to the spirit of the contemporaneity. The social change that is brought about to revise and rewrite the underlying structural codes and reorganize the order of society to function compatibly with the changing spirit of time first of all is shaped by the aspiration of society in a particular juncture of history. The collective aspiration of the social imagination is articulated through literature where the new voice calling for social change emerges. However, the nature and function of social transformation through intervention of collective social agency has remained ignored in Nepali modernity. Literary and historical productions from Nepal reflect adequately the formation of collective voice aspiring for social change.

The basic problematiqués of social change in Nepal lie at the root of the

approach that leaves out historical and literary dimension of change and formation of new voice aspiring to bring prevailing social structure under the scrutiny of critical rationality. Also, the anthropological studies about the process of change in Nepal do not take into account literary texts to understand the transformation of society. Mary Des Chene argues that literary texts represent the overall social milieu that allows one to delve into the world of reality from which to analyze the aspirations and quest of common people. The social imagination in reality is best reflected in the literary productions of a society. In understanding the social practices of Nepal, anthropology leaves the literary production far behind the frame of analysis, thereby failing to understand the real questions relating to the people. In understanding society, the creative dynamics have to be taken into account to understand the social imagination. Critically assessing inadequate attention paid to the literary texts in analyzing social history, she argues, "I think it possible to bring such texts to bear on histories and social practices their authors did not conceive of and I don't (*sic*) suggest we leave them all at home and go, textually speaking, native" (217). The formation of voice to intervene the vice of contemporary reality is primarily articulated through literary texts. Ignoring this site, the analysis and comprehension of the quest of collective and the directions taken by the social imagination are hard to explore for any social historian attempting to reconstruct the process of formation of novel values in society.

Michael Hutt surveys the literary development from the 1940s to the 1980s to discuss the expression of expectation and desire of Nepali subjectivity in framing the social institutions. For him, the most significant developments in Nepali literature have taken place during the twentieth century. He largely relies on development of poetry in Nepali literature for his analysis in his study and concludes that Nepali

poetry carries both political and philosophical themes. Also, he argues that is the nature of power to carry social imagination in Nepali poetry in specific and Nepali literature in general (136). Likewise, search for new mode of experience and metaphor to bring about this mode of experience lie at the heart of modern quest of attaining creative potential in modern Nepali literature or advancement of creative potential in general. This feature of Nepali modernity contributes to remaking the discontinuous chain of experience that is encountered in the changed situation (Abhi Subedi 10). The collective call for revision and rewriting primarily manifests through creative articulation of the perspectives of people through literary forms in society.

Historical and political discussions in Nepal seem to avoid the discussion of Nepali writers and literary figures. They end up producing empty descriptions of the real social and political situations that call for genuine attention. Chene argues that it is necessary to include these writers in theorizing the emergent voice in social transformation in Nepal. She observes that Nepali literary activism for social change goes back to the struggle against the Rana Oligarchy –at a time when India was fighting for its independence from the British Raj. Besides, Nepal’s noncolonial position demands thorough examination of the social call, evident in literary production of the time. Hence, she critically observes:

Nepali writers were working against what was an equally oppressive but noncolonial Rana government. Their forging of a genealogy for the Nepali nation was deeply influenced by colonial India – both encounters there, and the availability of colonized India as a site *against which* to imagine Nepal as a place apart, unique, independent and brave. (215)

The social imagination that begins to see Nepal as a unique political category in the backdrop of nationalist movement also raises the typical issues of Nepali society, whereby founding typical collective voice in literature. For instance, Nepali poetry in Mohan Koirala finds voice of the subaltern or downtrodden people for whom the revolution of the 1950s had taken place; yet, they were disillusioned when the expectations were not met (Hutt 146). Along with the political transformation of the region, quest for independence and identification of need to assert typicality of the collective, Nepali literature also presents the self-reflection that gets enhanced in poetic production.

Through self-reflection about the social issues, the common and ordinary themes of society get due space in Nepali literature. In other words, the quotidian affairs of life –otherwise, not covered through the mainstream historical narratives of the elite historiography –verbally realize in the literary production of the age. For Sanjeev Uprety, the real change lies in this shift in Nepali writing and it depicts the direction of Nepali modernity oriented towards the issues beyond the reach of official annals of history. He argues, “The writers of plays, fiction and poetry began to use the lives of ordinary, common folk as the subject of their text thereby displacing the stories of Gods and Goddesses, and kings and courtiers...” (235). In fact, it forms the major part of driving force for literary creations in preceding phase of history. The self-reflective attitude that develops in the 1950s helps understand both self-perception of the time and also the formation of subjectivity in general. Analyzing the differences between literary and visual forms of creative productions, Abhi Subedi critiques, “This self-reflection, and a desire to portray oneself in the poems either in the form of the figure or in the form of the emotions recollected in a linguistic

structure, was not the Nepali paintings of that period” (5). The creative force exhibiting this attitude also refers to formation of modernity manifest through Nepali literature.

The contemplation of the present reality during the struggle for democracy by bringing the Rana regime to an end arouses political sensitivity in Nepali literature. Furthermore, the self-reflective tendency deepens comprehension of social reality. Most significantly, Nepali writing in the 1950s is also adequately informed by political themes. As Hutt observes, “...during the latter years of the Rana Regime a number of progressive writers came to the fore in the struggle to remove the aristocracy from power” (136). He calls it the phase of social realism in Nepali writing, for the contemplation in creative domain is directed towards the current socio-political issues. Analyzing the development of fiction in Nepal, he sees social realism as hallmark of Nepali modernity. He further states, “Authors [of the time] ... addressed topics such as rural landlessness, traditional moral and sexual values, or the status of women and widows” (139). Also, Subedi argues that modern Nepali poems and paintings share certain features in making the quest for modern body of creativity. Nepali poetry presents aware persona who knows the reality of the world and this knowledge becomes instrumental in shaping the social imagination that is being sought for. Based on reading of Vyathit’s poems, Subedi claims that the poems of the age show awareness of subjectivity regarding the change occurring in society. In fact, Subedi’s coinage of the term “twilight consciousness” (3) catches the spirit of the writing of the age in that the social agency that contemplates on contemporary social reality and the past to relate to the change which the society is seeking for appear simultaneously in this period.

Also, Nepali literature seeks for new meaning in the mythical resources to view the contemporary reality by attaching new meaning to the old narratives. The mythical worldview provides Nepali mindset a window through which to interpret and understand the contemporary reality. Manfred G. Treu states:

...Dusyanta and Shakuntala become representatives of individual experiencing life basically as loneliness, a loneliness (*sic*), however, which longs and strives for interaction, union, love. Sakunatala and Dusyanta finally become the manifestations of a natural, blissful, happy, human reunion symbolizing civilizing progress and global brotherhood. (194)

Contextualization is a means to adjust classical themes in Nepali literature. Kalidas's *Shakuntala* is just a case that illustrates the ways of appropriation in Nepali literature which is completely different from postcolonial appropriation (Treu 192). The issues regarding to the present world are viewed through the myths of classical antiquity so as to form a new way of relating to the reality and bringing about a new perspective to comprehend the world. For instance, Madhav Prasad Ghimire's rendering of *Shakuntala* shows the aspiration of Nepali people during the time. In other words, Nepali literature makes use of the mythical themes to talk about contemporary problems through the device of appropriation and/or contextualization.

The contextualization of myths balances both past and the aspiration emerging in the present times to suit the ethos of present age by redefining the social call for change. Like in rendering of Kalidash's *Sakuntala* in new form, Subedi acknowledges the issues of gender and locates women's voice in the collective call in this form of practice when he argues, "Another important feature of the modern

Nepali poetry is the voice of women. The women themselves writing about the predicament of women has given this mode of writing a new strength” (14). However, the typical emergence of modern voice is variously interpreted when Treu realizes Western values missing in such social call. Treu implies that the change in writing in the 1980s results from Nepal’s quest for modernity. This position fails to understand how the society uses appropriation to socially and politically signify the need of the time. He evaluates the contemporary presentation of myth thus: “Although placed in an almost antique, in the context of modern Nepal if not an exotic than at least a romantic setting, Dusyanta and Shakuntala have become spiritual contemporaries of the 1980s” (197). Modernization is not assimilation in a Western value system for modern Nepali literature: the way Mansfield Treu presents his argument shows his bias in that he fails to see the need of the hero that should be able to understand the contemporary situation of the 1980s in Nepal.

Still, the fascination for the technological dimension of modernity undeniably persists in Nepali mindset. Drawing the logic of techno-scientific rationality, Uprety attempts to seek for the unifying technological/capitalistic mode of modernity with the cultural/aesthetic field while the middle class rises to formulate collective call (228). However, the rise of new class and modernity needs to be paid separate critical attention to. Hutt comes up with an analysis of the social development in the 1930s giving rise to a new class that was to form an opposition with the Rana Oligarchy in Nepal. He critically observes the situation thus:

However, during the 1930s a new educated urban class began to emerge. Its most visible members were male, and in terms of their caste and ethnicity predominantly Brahmin or Newar. This class

emerged first among those who depended upon the ancestral elites, but by the 1940s it had begun to organize itself into a political opposition to the Rana government. Opposition to the Rana regime had begun to emerge inside Nepal during the 1930s but this was harshly suppressed, as were attempts to introduce social and religious reforms. (8)

The replacement of experience of high class to common people emerges as the outcome of settlement of power in common human's hand through various revolutions. Uprety, however, makes the rise of technological/capitalist space more responsible for the change in situation.

The ideal of Nepali modernity is grounded in the complete realization of human potential through equality and freedom. For B. P. Koirala, modernity as a process refers to a way of bringing about all round development and realization of total potential of human life at both individual and collective level. Hence, he examines:

It is certain that human life is perishable. The goal of life is set –be it personal or collective –in such a way that it gets complete realization of its potential. The reason behind the lack of such realization of human life lies on all-round destitution of life. (85)

This realization in Nepali modernity is intertwined with self-reflectivity that empowers the subject in developing collective call for change. The historical knowledge in the people lies in reminiscence because they lacked writing in past. Madan Mani Dixit implies the lack of theoretical framework of change in the people because of absence of the preceding age. It shows the parallel situation of Nepal in the time Dixit sets himself to write the novel (*Mādhavi* 8). He sees Nepali society through

the narrative of *Mādhavi* and asserts the nature of change as witnessed through Marxist frame of interpretation.

The intervention of social agency in the prevalent social codes that are ordered in a specific design assumes the emergence of collective voice. Implicitly, in the formative phase of such call, the goals towards self-actualization –in other words, the ultimate possible realization of human agency under the negotiated and reformed conditions –are also identified in the transformation process. Discipline and freedom together provide the idea of emancipation from the repressive forces that B. P. Koirala believes come through self-realization and realization of the circumstances prevalent in society (113). What is the ulterior motive of knowledge if viewed from the perspective of modernity in general and social change in specific? What functions does the emergent voice carry in general? In the world that Dixit's *Mādhavi* presents, human beings were divided into slave and *ārya* (free). The division was also losing its grip, for the collective imagination had already identified it as unnatural and unwanted. Vishwāmītra's school had planned a revolution beginning with horse-sacrifice (8). For Dixit, the answer emerges in the self-actualization of Gālav and Mādhavi who add to the dynamics of motor of social change through the transformation of their image into a major icon of self-sacrifice. The birth of critical rationality in Gālav through art of doubt also implies Dixit's revolt against the tyrannical Panchayat system of his time. In fact, through the mouthpiece in the text, the author revolts against the then political system.

The agency which is backed up by the collectively aspiration is based on its ability to further attract other agencies which form the cannon for change. The change in social norms and rules appears in Vishwāmītra in *Mādhavi*. He modifies the

customary practice of human-sacrifice to conclude the ritual: the incident persists in the collective memory of the people. Dixit writes, “It had not been forgotten that Vishwāmitra had successfully caught the spirit of the age by detaining human-sacrifice to the Varuna in an effort to complete the yagnas” (11). Often the spirit of the age is also reinterpreted on the basis of religion, for people are more prone to be quickly and comfortably convinced by it than anything else. In other words, religion for its virtue of being accepted for a considerable length of time in history also forms base for collective voice. Chandra Shumsher's appeal goes groping for the ground to invalidate the claim about slavery in religious practice and the imagination of its scriptures. He argues that “Our religious scriptures also do not state that the custom of slavery must continue” (103). The social agency thus formulated fails to challenge the unequal ethical codes if reasoning does not support and show hope for a just society.

As another dimension, collective call for change is founded on critical reasoning emanating from ‘art of doubt’. In fact, doubt poses challenge to the promoting of inequalities from the social order. Also, it aspires to establish new ethics. Gālav can be taken as a case from *Mādhavi*. As an outcome of Gālav’s art of doubt, a new ethics is born: he cannot accept *samāvartan* (declaration of completion of study) without paying his master (guru) for education (33). Actually, Gālav deeply believes that without any payment made for the knowledge he has achieved from his guru, he might face some hindrances in its application in his quotidian life. The ulterior motive of knowledge as self-actualization and the ultimate freedom that he aspires to attain through the practice need to be kept intact for him after completing his stay as a resident scholar in the *āshram*. Furthermore, he rejects the patronage of

the sage immediately. Hence, Gālav insists on paying his teacher Vishwāmitra for all the knowledge he has achieved in the *āshram*. Thus, agency, generally accepted form of knowledge, and critical reasoning rooted in doubt devise the foundation of collective voice and aspiration to alter the circumstances that restrict freedom and possibility of larger attainment in subjectivity.

Unlike what Koirala believes when he points out the need of contemporary Nepal, “We need philosophy to serve life, not death” (192), the power centers deny any prospect of creativity in the state that the collective voice envisions. However, Koirala critically evaluates the traditional scriptures and argues against their essence that leads to death. In fact, he critically observes the tradition. The dismal picture from the top of the society is often articulated to maintain the status quo. In the play of modern and antimodern forces, the lack of trust towards future and thus on social agency as willingness to uplift human dignity appear in society. For instance, Dixit portrays Halimak completely devoid of any trust on future. Abolishing slavery means inventing a new mode of production: people like Halimak go against it, for they fear about the future of agriculture and source of food for survival (*Mādhavi* 96). The call for change promoting social welfare has to encounter and defeat the elitist position like that of Halimak in that the materialization of the goal is just a mirage without success at it.

Despite the resistance from the top, the delay in materialization of emergent call for change causes disruption of social order. Furthermore, the possibility of armed revolt is also implied in suppressing the voice, for the collective social agency keeps itself ready to adopt every means for the sake of realizing the goal for alteration in underlying codes. For instance, Vishwāmitra needs four horses to abolish slavery: he

knows that if it is not abolished on time, there is the threat of armed struggle. The bondage without any rationale behind it is enough for violent struggle to take shape in social collective/collective imagination (*Mādhavi* 34). The change in ethos takes place and gets reflected in the aspiration of people to restore human dignity in society. In modern societies, like Dixit's Vishwāmitra in *Mādhavi*, Koirala assigns intellectuals with the role of restoring morality and justice. He asserts that if they lack the sense of morality, 'justice' vanishes and the society remains in the dark (100). Both Dixit and Koirala believe in evolution as the typical feature of Nepali modernity and hence seek for ways to avoid disruption of social order. Rather, they prefer to channelize the social call through intellectuals in order to avoid the hazards of collapse of society.

The act of abolition of slavery illustrates the ways Nepali modernity provides an indirect channelization of social call and new voice from the base. Thinking it need of time to change the social structure over a period in history, Chandra Shumsher had gathered data of 51,519 slaves throughout the country through a national census. In his rule of twenty-nine years, he had brought about many changes in Nepal. Because he held it necessary to abolish slavery from society to cope up with the changing spirit of time, he organized a gathering of people at Tundikhel and delivered the speech on 28 November 1924. Stating the general nature of change, Chandra Shumsher argues for abolition of slavery on religious, humanistic, social, economical, and ethical ground. He also says that continuation of slavery has adverse effect in both economy/agriculture and moral wellbeing of society.

He proposes a generalization of social change: the tone in the beginning of the document also states that he is afraid of, despite the immense power at his disposition, interfering the social structure of the contemporary society. Still, because the change

is the principle of nature, he attempts to modify the social organization. For him, change constantly takes place in various social institutions. In a serious tone, he begins his speech thus:

Today, this assembly has gathered to discuss an uncomfortable issue. Time and again many types of changes have also taken in the world that is constantly moving towards progress. This applies to customary practices, our behavior to neighbors, structural organization of society and politics, and even to household affairs. (102)

Contemplating on nature of change, he further argues, “Customs are based on the practices of a people . . . As the time changes, contemporary practices that are useful emerge by wearing away or eliminating old and useless practices” (103). Unless collective aspiration is not properly appropriated and synthesized into the social system, the threat of complete disruption through struggle is implied in the emergence of new voice demanding for social change.

The birth of critical rationality begins to explore the structural codes that fail to function as projected in the beginning. The social inequalities in their most repressive forms ever attempt to suppress the call for change that is not able to assert itself in an acceptable way. Now the social agency gathers the foundations of the inequality and raises the issues in order to validate its claims for change whose rationale has to be set up so that the whole society finds itself in a comfortable position to adjust with the transformation. As long as doubt that relates to the contemporary reality and the established social institutions is not formed in the critical mind, the formation of new voice does not occur. This voice emanates from the social agency which dismantles the contradictions and contributes to transforming the

society into a 'just' place for every member where equality rules.

4.5 Formation of the Collective

The collective aspiration attempting change in society first of all also manifests through historical and literary crisscrossing. Representation basically carries two dynamics: firstly, the issues regarding the ways the collective is perceived from the outside position are more significant; and secondly, the inner strengths and art of resistance society at large employs for its survival and sustenance require critical attention. The perceptions of historical transformation of society leading to formation of new phase are critically raised through literary writings in Nepal. Since resistance displays the power of agency implied in society, the representation from within incorporates it in Nepali modernity. In forming the transformational phase in historico-political circumstances, representation of the collective begins to examine both the outer and the inner aspects as it appears after the formation and emergence of new voice in social development.

Nepal's is romantically portrayed in the colonial discourses. Even in the non-colonial situation of Nepal, the anthropological description that begins in the nineteenth century lies within the frame of British power structure. It shows the issue of representation of Nepal in colonial discourses (Dave Beine 163). The colonial anthropological descriptions and narratives portray Nepal as the perfect land to suit the interest of English people. In fact, Nepal carries all the possibilities to make a new England! Discussing Hodgson's narrative about Nepal, Beine Dave states:

He [Hodgson] stresses the ability of the Himalaya to grow European cereals, and European fruits, and the acceptability of the climate to the European temperament. In short, Nepal's ability to become new

England! The same theme is stressed by the other two works. It seems they are constantly comparing what they see to sights ‘back home and the potentiality of recreating’ England, only with the new added benefit of the awe inspiring views created by the towering Himalayas.
(171)

The romantic picture simultaneously seeks the practical utility of diverse geography under its possession. In such representation, the people and their potential are not paid adequate attention to, for such representation aims to see the land as a bare location that requires adding to meaning from the external position in order to transform it into a place. The colonial representation of the land addresses the taste of the colonizing power-centers in furthering their suitability of the land.

The native people in the most exotic geography are presented to the brutal ones in such discourses. For instance, the battle of Kumaun illustrates this point. Mahesh Raj Panta studies the juncture in history and explores that the colonial power defined the native Nepali forces as the brutal one and themselves as herald of liberal values in this war. They also distributed a pamphlet with these ideas in Kumaun at preparation of the war (51). On the contrary, the possession of the brutal people is a treasure for the colonizers. Analyzing ethnographic description of Nepal, Dave Beine argues, “Nepal is seen as a treasure just waiting to be exploited for British economic gain...” (167). The fascination towards Nepali geography forms the core issue of Anglo-Nepal war. The base of the war and Nepal’s defeat lie also in propagation of negative and distorted image of the collective: Mahesh Raj Panta speculates that the spread of rumor in the War times led to fall of power of Nepal in Kumaun in the war. The imperial forces employed rumor as the surest weapon to psychologically attack

Nepali forces (58). In fact, the war was won more on psychological bases than on military bases. The power of representation is based on formation and circulation of image of the other.

Mahesh Raj Panta talks about Nepal's defeat in the war as the result of British strategy to psychologically attack Nepali forces as the main base. The rumor thus spread completely weakens the forces. In a brief survey of Nepal-Britain War that is the first colonial encounter for Nepal, Mahesh Raj Panta states, "In this war, the British forces were defeated from the Koshi Province to the Karnali Province. Nepali forces still could maintain self-defense in the Yamunā Province" (translation my own 48). It is inability to promote the inner strength and self-image of the collective on the part of Nepali forces in the Yamunā Province where they could have taken a different turn. As a matter of fact, the course of colonial power adopted during preparation of the war was also sophisticated one which Panta thus explores:

Hamilton had stayed with Ambassador Knox in Kathmandu for a year in 1859 B.S. He had employed people to understand about Nepal as much as possible. Before leaving Nepal, he stayed at the Nepali boarders for two years and collected as much information about Nepal as possible. Thus, Hamilton was active in Nepal to gather secret information about Nepal. (Translation my own 49)

The secret information to understand the vitality of Nepali society was instrumental during the war. Now, the same information was psychologically manipulated to portray Nepal as a weak category in the mind of the people and defeat them in the war at the Yamunā Province. The promotion of image of the collective and its representation provides psychological base for the victory of the British forces in

Anglo-Nepal war.

The inner strands to form self-representation emerge in Nepali literature of awakening. The view of oneself appears in two ways in society. For the elite groups in South Asia, system stabilization is the key concern as Kanchanmoy Mojumdar examines the regional milieu. He observes, ““The political entrepreneurs’ ensconced in the policy formulating apparatus of the states are mainly concerned over stabilisation of the existing system which assures them power and patronage with which to swell their clientels” (8). The people at the top attempt to maintain the privileges they have attained through the traditional practice. Any call for change in the traditionally accepted social configuration poses a direct challenge to them. On the other hand, the national awakening that takes place at the base materializes the common people’s aspiration in literary productions. Ishwor Baral surveys the major development in literary themes before Sama. Discussing Shambhu Prasad Dhungyal's shift in literary themes that brought about social issues and consciousness of time to Dharanidhar Koirala's quest for national awakening, Baral locates the themes of social significance as they appear in Balkrishna Sama. Baral writes:

...the writers’ consciousness of a social function to be in accord with the people’s aspirations and expectations of improvement in their lot as a whole was not sufficiently formed to give them confidence; their writings tended to be either halting or hesitating, or excessively elaborate, abstracted from realities. (190)

The incorporation of social themes and voice of the large mass make the collective representation through literature more inclusive. Also, it adds to understanding of collective aspiration of the people who articulate it in their quotidian affairs. Besides,

the form of resistance that is observed as regular phenomena is brought in the forefront so that the collective is acknowledged and reaffirmed in making of history.

The status quo of the elite group finds it challenging to accept the call of the collective for change. The voice from the bottom and outside practices are continually resisted in formation of the collective. For instance, Jung Bahadur Rana, the first Prime Minister from the Subcontinent to visit Britain, refuses to implement the British model of parliamentary form of democracy in Nepal. How does contemporary readership take the rejection of the British form of parliament on Jung Bahadur's part? Is it national pride and ability to reject the Western form, or Jung Bahadur's greed to maintain autocratic rule? Is it a form of resistance towards colonial impact or resistance to virtues of democracy? Diamond Shumsher Rana explains:

Somnāth was the greatest pundit in the palace. He had the opportunity to go to Britain with Jung Bahadur, for he was expert at both Sanskrit and English. But after the return from the foreign land, he requested Jung Bahadur to implement British form of parliament as a reform in Nepali political system. Jung Bahadur did not like the pundit's advice at all and he was scolded for the first time. (*Seto Bāgh* 1)

The rejection can be accessed through economic analysis of the Rana rule in Nepal. The novelist very critically observes the economic differences between the ruling elite and the mass when he describes the marriage of Jagat Jung (160). The unequal distribution of state resources in the Rana regime leaves the mass outside the prospect of any kind of development in them. Viewed from this perspective, the rejection is grounded in the challenge directed towards the status quo of the ruling elite.

Rejecting democracy reaches the peak in Nepal's quest for freedom and

equality when Mohan Shumsher argues against democracy in Indian parliament in 1950. He has taken part in parliamentary discussion in Indian parliament and debated against the cause of democracy (Ganesh Man Singh 284). The contradictory nature of this debate in itself was organized to show the understanding of the Rana rulers in Nepal. However, Mohan Shumsher could not understand that he should not have taken part in the parliamentary discussion if he had in real sense understood the meaning of his position! In this sense, the stand for status quo is also blind force that recognizes no rational judgment. Diamond Shumsher Rana also brings in his novel the issue of blind resistance resulting in accident. Even though they repeatedly resist the Western medicine at various instances in the palace, the British doctor examines Trailokya, the Prince. However, it is already quite late. The doctor wants instruments for surgical operation in the ear but cannot find them in Nepal. So, the Prince dies (*Seto Bāgh* 230). The acceptance of the Western science in the palace implies the weakening effect of tradition.

As a force, resistance is traditionally backed up by the conceptualization of purity. In this sense, it leaves its impact in human affairs in non-colonial societies as well. Diamond Shumsher Rana narrates the situation when Rajatnayā falls sick because she perceives the chance that she might not get Jagat Jung who in fact does not answer her proposal for love. King Surendra wants his daughter to be examined by the British doctor but the Queen resists him on the ground that the ‘after-life’ will not remain smooth when such medicine touched by the foreigner is administered (*Seto Bāgh* 44). The question of purity turns into a powerful force for resistance in non-colonial location like Nepal. The social hierarchy further enhances resistance that emanates from class differences. The short fiction “Maiya Shaheb” by Bhawani

Bhikshu brings into question the basic social issue of love versus class. Ajaya's love for Maiya Saheb never materializes, for the resistance is rooted in the upper class arrogance of the hierarchized Rana society (73). Building the fiction around the revolution of 1950 in Nepal, Bhikshu pictures both pre- and post-revolutionary scene, and development of the middle class attitude after the fall of the Rana regime. The impact of structural rigidity in transformation of personal life of the time and the impact of society in perception of eternal issues like love appear in original taste of the time in the story. In essence, the elite group at the top of social hierarchy associates itself with purity and thus excludes outside sources of emotions and passions that are found in common people like Bhikshu's Ajaya.

Self-appreciation and self-adornment define the features of the elitist quest in the Rana rule in Nepal. The personal appreciation is more important for the Rana Oligarchy. Jung Bahadur's perceptions of British democracy are not positive. He actually fails to understand what it really is. He tells the King Surendra that Queen Victoria's rule is not sure to bring any praise as there is frequent change of Prime Minister in Britain (*Seto Bāgh* 153). This episode also indicates Jung Bahadur's desire to continue the power in the Rana family forever. As part of the personal familial aspiration, Jung Bahadur rejects the democratic values in managing the administration of the state. Yet, the fascination for this model of rule grows in the Rana palace. For the Ranas, Britain always functioned as the model. Even Ranodip Sing liked the peaceful transfer of power through election (299). Most significantly and contradictorily, they still understand democracy or the British model as a means to serve their familial interest. The failure of the Rana rulers to rise above the personal greed causes block in the formation of modernity in Nepal. In other words, the

personal and the familial turn into the central impetus in the Rana Oligarchy, resulting in fulfillment of the personal as the goal of the state. The collective welfare that the polity assumes never finds its due place in the Rana administration, whereby failing to address the issues of benefits of the polity to all the members. Indeed, the transcendence from the personal requires in forming the collective and the drive for modernity as such.

Like transcendence from the personal, the formation of the collective assumes the dissociation of the illogical. Formation of the collective does not materialize so long as the state practices center around the personal and the illogical. For instance, Ganesh Man Singh satirizes the Rana Rule after 1947 when India achieved its independence. During the British rule in India, Delhi center aided the Rana Oligarchy to maintain their position. Mistakenly, the revolutionary Singh says that the Ranas continued their connection with the post-1947 Delhi (282). The traditional forces detain the Ranas from seeing the differences in the historical conditions taking place after 1947 in India. Tradition is more powerful than anything in the then society during the Rana rule. The British advice to introduce parliamentary democracy in Nepal cannot realize because of resistance, backed up by traditional forces and perception. The state mechanism, as long as it does not feel itself compelled, does not accept any sort of change (*Seto Bāgh* 154). As Nepal witnesses in the socio-political change in the 1940s, the resistance from the top is checked from the revolt from the bottom when the ruling center does not contribute to formation of the collective.

The collective adds to both the power of every member who resides as its part and resistance which they make to establish the social codes of their choice. As an instinctual impetus, it is also present in the world of nature. For instance, Gālav in

Dixit's *Mādhavi* learns it on the way to Suparna Nāgjeṃyā's house. Gālav learns the value of resistance when he sleeps on a branch of a *shami* tree on his way to Suparna Nāgjeṃyā's house. The attack of an owl at night is resisted by the other birds together (25). As part of learning experience, he realizes that genuine strength lies in resistance as well. On the contrary, the rational state of mind also gets resisted when the irrational forces gain supremacy. The child-sacrifice ritual in Dixit presents Mādhavi as the Great Matriarch for her people. She gets adequately drunk before she starts the ritual. The security men repeatedly drink alcohol: the priest Halimak also consumes alcohol (22). The entrapment in the personal and ritualistic process does not entertain the use of critical rationality which is present in Mādhavi at that time. A critically aware person fails to offer slave-child into the burning mouth of the Varuna. Dixit shows the use of drink to suppress the rational forces and continue the blind path emanating from the dead practice of culture. So too, Mādhavi's acceptance towards serving Gālav implies another form of resistance to formulate the collective.

The formation of the collective for one thing refuses to acknowledge the patronage. Also, it revolts against the institutions that deny freedom and equality, refusing to transcend beyond the personal and listen to the collective call for change. For instance, Dixit's *Mādhavi* presents Suparna Nāgjeṃyā as mentor and friend to Gālav. The revolutionary youth in Gālav wants to attain a free life by paying the debt for knowledge to his Acharya, Vishwāmitra. Some eleven to twelve years younger to Suparna Nāgjeṃyā, Gālav does not know much about the practices of the world. Hence, Suparna Nāgjeṃyā travels to the assembly of Ahichchhatra to accompany and teach Gālav about the ways of the world. He asks Gālav to "behave properly" (*Mādhavi* 67) in the assembly, for he has many such assemblies of various societies to visit ahead in

his life. In fact, Suparna Nāgjeṃyā is a surrogate father to Gālav. This resistance to the patronage of Vishwāmitra on the part of Gālav parallels Mādhavi's acceptance to serve Gālav's cause for social change in that both of these acts resist the traditional repressive social institutions. Furthermore, Mādhavi's call for emancipation also challenges Vishwāmitra's rigidity one more time when in Champa, she asks him for emancipation (467). This implies that she is eagerly waiting for her own freedom from life that she hopes to enable her to marry Gālav and live together. Also, it is through Mādhavi that Vishwāmitra also gets to learn the real meaning of emancipation (468). Both Gālav and Mādhavi raise themselves above the prevalent social structure in their quest for change through critical rationality and call for formation of collective.

Gālav refusing to accept Vishwāmitra's patronage also implies that he wants to use critically rationality for the collective welfare. In fact, he is ready to pay any price for his freedom. Gālav goes to Suparna Nāgjeṃyā for help to find four shyam-karna horses as the payment to his guru (Vishwāmitra). In case of failure, there lies danger of being turned into a slave. Guru-dakshinā is the symbol of winning freedom for Gālav (*Mādhavi* 24). Dixit writes:

Four 'shyam-karna' [black eared] horses are no common thing. Why did you adamantly insist on paying the guru when Acharya Vishwāmitra allowed you to return home after completion of education? What to do now? If the guru remains unpaid, you will fall from the grace of the varnāshram into slavery with his curse. That is why they say, 'Don't be excessively smart; understand your own power; do not abandon wisdom; and loss of wit on time brings much

crisis.’ (24)

Gālav also knows the consequences of his challenge: he accepts the challenges and sets out in quest of his freedom that he thinks brings about formation of the collective which is the ultimate form of power in transforming social and historical forces into the service of humanity.

Parallel to Gālav, Mādhavi also employs resistance as a means to assert her agency in that she cannot tolerate to move beyond the frame of critical rationality. The rational self is further explored by Dixit in Hāryashwa’s assembly when she openly challenges the authority of the King to look at her as an object of sexual gratification. In fact, she has already agreed to produce a son for him: she reminds the King that she is not the object of sexual passion. In an angry tone, she asserts:

King! Do not glance at me so sensuously like Nāg Halimak, the priest of Ahichchhatra. Do not forget that the greedy blind also lose the remaining power of sight at the gain of light if they look at the sun. Don’t you have slaves to satiate your sensuous thirst at your palace of Koshal? If you don’t have them, find Yākshi, Gandharvi or Pichāshi for your mating partner at the communes of Ayodhyā and satisfy yourself. I have accepted to produce a son to you in order to help accomplish Acharya Vishwāmitra’s great endeavor... (*Mādhavi* 151)

Mādhavi critically assesses her rational self, immune from fear while challenging the authority since she seeks the strong collective. Like Gālav, she emerges as the collective call of the social order, also because she unities all the thirteen communes (Dixit Personal Interview) through matriarchy. Her emperor sons find their common root in the narrative of Mādhavi and Gālav.

The formation of the collective is required for social transformation that brings about modernity. The representation of Nepal from the outside forces in historical and anthropological discourses present the society with fascination for its geography. The colonial forces distort and promote the negative image when two societies come in contact. In fact, the colonial power aims at asserting its superiority through promoting such images about the other. Nepali experience with the colonial contact also verifies that its image was formulated along such lines during the Kumaun war. The colonial encounter of this non-colonial society presents a unique case of psychological manipulation of people as evidenced in Panta's discussion of the war at the Kumaun fort. On the other hand, Dixit's exploration of myth for contemplation on contemporary reality shows that unifying strands are required to form the collective in quest for modernity. Nepali modernity has its strength in matriarchal threads that unite peoples in opposing the repressive social institutions and putting the collective in a position to challenge the repressive authorities.

4.6 Self-sacrifice and Social Welfare

Nepali modernity posits in its center two intertwining values, namely self-sacrifice and social welfare, in formation of the collective body. The transcendence from the personal to transform the underlying social structures that dictate upon the contemporary subjectivity first of all assumes self-sacrifice for the cause of betterment of the collective. Nepali modernity is basically built on the foundation of these values: it attempts to examine the traits in the formation of polity in order to explore the ways that have lead to formation of collective, and enhancement of the conceptualization of self-sacrifice and social welfare in historical and literary understanding. Nepali subjectivity is largely shaped with these values. Besides, at the

juncture of historical transformation of an age into a new one, the basic guidelines for change are materialized with self-sacrifice of the agency who assumes social welfare to be the ultimate goal. In quest of equality and freedom, the agency contributes to advancement of human dignity through these typical values to Nepali modernity.

The relationship between the polity and individuals is formed in such a way that each shapes the functioning of the other. Furthermore, the state and individuals are presented in such a way that they negotiate in forming the philosophical and intellectual quest of the collective in general. For instance, Gopal Prasad Rimal seeks to establish openness and honesty as part of new ethics in post-revolution Nepal in the 1950s. He argues that the creative process must be able to frankly realize its natural beauty when he states, “we have met as the sun meets the rain, /perhaps you remember- / we have cuddled like a cloud” (“An Address” 2-4). The image from the world of nature is brought into the poem to assert the natural growth of the stated virtues in modern subjectivity. Furthermore, Laxmi Prasad Devkota attempts to bring both the state and the individuals in unison through practice of righteousness on the part of the state. According to Devkota, a healthy society with the values of righteousness is beyond imagination unless “The palpitation of palpitation's palpitation: / ‘Rice, pulse and mustard green’” (“Rice, Pulse and Mustard Green” 41-42) is made available for all people. He raises the fundamental issue of food for every one living in the society. With a tint of nationalistic touch, he relates the issue with that of equality and freedom. A society that cannot fulfill people’s basic needs for sustenance of life cannot expect to attain their full potential and thus disintegrates.

Freedom from worries primarily rests on equal distribution for Devkota who raises the question of equality as the central one in instituting a modern form of polity.

Without practice of equality in polity, the holistic development of the participating individuals turns impossible as he sees the people struggling for food right from the primitive times and hears in their heart-beat the demand for plain food. He writes, “Even when in a quiet moment the clock strikes the false notes, / Lying on the bed, I thought, / Is it not too, ‘Rice, pulse and mustard green?’” (“Rice, Pulse and Mustard Green” 60-63). Actually, whole struggle throughout the day is directed towards achieving food: it also implies the quest for basic substance for living. The inability of state to help provide the people with the basic substance results in the gap between the polity and individuals. Krishna Chandra Singh Pradhan critiques the difference between the individual and the collective when he says, “Politics has border but not friendship. Friendship rests in trust –not in conspiracy. It is an individual not a country that has meanness” (245). He points at the corruption of the leadership at the helm of polity in that he attempts to show how their degeneration leads to fall of total functioning of the collective as such. The regulation of the polity along the rationalist lines helps attain what Devkota aspires to achieve through equal distribution in society.

The polity requires that it guarantee every individual the basic needs for sustenance through the practice of equality and righteousness. For instance, Rimal claims that modern humans develop ability to critically observe themselves and act on their own. He argues modernity lies in ability to act on one's own; so, the mother tells her son, “You won't be helpless upon my lap / And listen to such stories as if hypnotized / After he comes” (“Mother's Dream” 23-25). Likewise, Devkota opposes the romantic meaning that is generally associated with the heart-beat. He points out the need for society to guarantee right to food to everyone. He very poignantly states:

Why should I feel shame to speak in this age of reality?

Feeling the breast and calculating,

Arriving at a judicious decision,

I found a different bird speaking there,

‘Rice, pulse and mustard green’. (19-23)

Both Rimal and Devkota see the possibility of enhancing the modern individuals by practicing equality. In fact, the quest for freedom from all worries unfolds in their creative writings.

On the contrary, the uneven social structures continue even after the change that took place in Nepal in the 1950s. To critically assess the hindrances in developing a ‘just society’, Bhupi Sherchan begins to resist contemporary negligence of the social and political structuring of the society. He critiques the contemporary Nepali subjectivity through the picture of a youth. Raising the issue of the downtrodden people, he critiques the ways of the upper class people in society. The people on the footpath for Bhupi Sherchan imply the problem of class discrimination since there are two obvious classes in society. Opposing the class distinction in society, he calls for change in “A Poem.” He bitterly argues about future Nepal thus:

And the historians will write at that time:

In those days, there were in Nepal

Two types of people-

One would lie on newspaper

With pillow of headline

As the significant news;

And the other

Covered in the warmth of the same newspaper

Would pass December chill-

Nepal in those days

Was like a stale newspaper. (43-53)

The uneven social structure, unless transformed into a just society, goes on creating the similar type of subjects for him. He discusses the right of every common citizen to realize the potential. The resistance that Bhupi Sherchan forms in the poem is a mark that arises when the presence of the society is analyzed in great detail.

The discriminatory mode of social structuration hinders the smooth growth of society. The potential of individuals fails to realize in such condition, whereby resulting in loss of national potential. Sherchan is tormented by many young mothers in his dream because they sing “My breast is of no worth anymore” (“Always in my Dream” 5). He sees the society lacks the heroes who really work for the cause of its advancement. Instead, there are the “lost sons” (13) about whose whereabouts the mothers keep posing the poet questions in his dream. In this regard, he presents a picture of uneven society that touches the sensitivity of the poetic persona. He develops a poignant way to point out the reality that suffers and forces the participant into suffering, for balance is absent. The resistance of the poem is rooted in the absence of justice and critical reasoning in society. The picture projected in Sherchan refers to the degeneration and loss of vitality in society. The decrease in number of youth also signifies the loss of national vitality and potential to realize the latent strength of the polity. The vision of a ‘just society’ cannot materialize without the young people to carry on the responsibility in contemporary times.

The common carries the full potential whereas the powerful are fixed,

immovable. The society regulated in the interests of the powerful turns into a stagnant one. Now, it becomes essential to condemn the mode of social organization in past, for this social structure begins to promote social contradictions and inequalities. Critically assessing the social development in this line, Devkota argues that he has denounced all the power centers and upheld the virtues of the ordinary as he has observed the real power of agency in them. Nawab's wine is "all blood" (The Lunatic 81) for him and the courtesan, "all corpses" (82). The ordinarily held notions of success and failures are just mere delusion for him: hence, he declares, "Your highly learned men are my big fools. / Your heaven is my hell/...your piety, my sin" (89-92). The world appears to misunderstand him for those values that force him to see the world in a different way as "Your progression is regression to me" (96). The service that the society bestows upon the power and privileges that it puts before them hinder the formation of a society based on the principle of social welfare. In such case, the real energy cannot be realized.

Besides, the excessive use of rationality in constructing the social mores has to be checked in social development. The uneven growth of social organization harms the collective health of the polity. In fact, both rational and emotional dimensions in individuals have to be put in equilibrium under the condition of modernity. Pointing out the need of the time to identify aesthetic pleasure in the inanimate things, Devkota says that he exercises his power towards this goal. He begins to "see a flower in the stone" ("The Lunatic" 10), communicate with the nature (19), and have romance with the moon (23). The contemporary world does not understand the language of both Devkota and the nature because he communicates "In such a language... / As is never written, nor ever printed, nor ever spoken, / Unintelligible, ineffable all" (20-22). The

lack of the communication between the world of Devkota and the world of others puts the others in a position to label him insane (25). The uneven growth of society in forming rationalist principles only does not help society attain its full realization of inherent potential as such in that the ultimate goal of social welfare gets missed. The emotional dimension adds to a new value in formation of subjectivity that gets ready for self-sacrifice for social welfare.

As typical feature of Nepali modernity, self-sacrifice for the collective welfare stands as the distinct feature of modern Nepali subjectivity. The collective aspiration for social reconfiguration is directed towards attaining a state in which the subject changes into agent of change through self-sacrifice. The narrative of social transformation also functions as the story of self-transformation to bring about self-sacrifice as the distinct feature of contemporary state. For instance, Dixit plays on the theme of self sacrifice very explicitly in the text when he makes Mahākapālik help Mādhavi understand the meaning of self-sacrifice as the nature of the world.

Mahakapalik in Kāshi says:

The night devours itself in the morning for the dawn to emerge. Also, the grain self-sacrifices itself to further produce other grains. For fire to produce brighter flames, it is given the ghee in it. In the evening, the sky devours its own glow and thus invites dusk and night. Devi, where is the food for animals if they don't devour other animals? (*Mādhavi* 311).

Gālav and Mādhavi banish themselves from the bliss of worldly life in quest of collective welfare and complete transformation of the age (*Mādhavi* 9). Dixit makes these two youths the point of departure for the following age. They turn into the icons

of change and self-sacrifice.

At the very harsh level, self-sacrifice also commodifies human beings who aspire for social change. Dixit presents Mādhavi accepting the commodification of her body. King Hāryashwa at Ayodhyā thus describes her:

After that, Hāryashwa thoroughly examined Mādhavi through his mind's eye. He grew breathless with the deep desire for children from her. He said, 'Four parts of body (hip, thigh, nose and forehead) that are supposed to be high are perfect in her; three things (voice, whole body and navel) required to be deep are also perfect in her; five parts (hair, body hair, nail, skin and the joints of fingers) expected to be minute are clearly minute in her; and five parts (palm, scalp, nail and both eyes) so required are red in her.' (147)

Mādhavi's whole being becomes a beautiful commodity and a teleological object as revealed through Hāryashwa's observation. Still, she accepts the torture and humiliation of becoming a commodity for the larger cause of buying freedom at the cost of her own being. As Mādhavi tells her brother Puru, "Halimak won't get to use me and I won't have to sacrifice baby now onwards. I am happy ... I will still be serving the sage's disciple even while remaining the hired wife at the palaces ..."

(114-15). Mādhavi accepts to produce four sons to obtain shyam-karna horses because she wants to obtain freedom from her position as the Great Matriarch who sacrifices babies to the deity, the Varuna. Hence, she accepts to serve Gālav for two reasons: firstly, to free herself from the bondage of the rituals and secondly, to contribute to the noble cause of abolishing slavery.

Mādhavi finds it essential to break free from the chains of rituals. The Great

Matriarch of her people has to obey the rituals that Halimak, the priest conducts to commemorate the deity of death, the Varuna. The Varuna statue is fiercely depicted when Mādhavi goes to worship the deity of death by offering baby in sacrifice. As the matriarch of her people, she offers the child as sacrifice to the deity of death. Hence, Dixit writes:

Suparna Nāgjeṃyā tells Gālav, ‘Be not afraid, Gālav. The Supreme Priestess of Ahichchhatra offers a baby as sacrifice to the Varuna today. The Varuna is the deity of death, and the *asurs* in Ahichchhatra are the devotee to this deity’. (21)

Gālav does not understand the dictation of rituals which are enforced upon Mādhavi in that baby-sacrifice drains all energy from seeker of freedom in Gālav. He is completely exhausted to see the sacrifice of a slave-child to the Varuna (24). The human-sacrifice as a ceremony is the ultimate form of torture that a seeker of freedom can experience.

Both Gālav and Mādhavi are spiritually united in their quest for freedom that metaphorically represents the aspiration of the collective for social welfare. Gālav attains his freedom from Vishwāmitra through Mādhavi. Simultaneously, Mādhavi realizes the potential to self-attainment through Gālav (17). Thus interconnected and interdependent, they bring about social change by functioning as the vehicle for freedom and equality. She achieves her freedom from the bondage of being the Great Matriarch of the Varuni clan by accepting to accompany Gālav in his quest for four horses (113). Besides, Gālav does not grasp the essence of Vishwāmitra’s argument: he develops a sort of doubt and hence refuses to follow his guru. Therefore, he decides to pay his guru for his knowledge to attain freedom from the imposed

episteme as well. Therefore, he says, “I adamantly insisted on paying my guru for the education to rid myself from the debt of guru and to move about freely since I have observed the unknowable aspect in the ethics of the great sage Vishwāmitra” (35). Gālav’s insistence to pay his guru also implies the significance from the epistemological trap in free exercise of knowledge. Gālav’s quest for freedom thus turns into a narrative of personal transformation as much as it is that of the social transformation.

The spiritual union of the seeker of freedom is attained through readiness for self-sacrifice for social welfare. The bondage of spirituality helps them continue their quest even in the most difficult of the times. Mādhavi is genuinely devoted to Gālav who has already found his place in Mādhavi’s heart. As a matter of fact, they are both spiritually tied to each other (293). Furthermore, Dixit writes, “Mādhavi felt proud for her friendship with Gālav and found herself filled with the desire to accompany him throughout life” (296). Besides, when Gālav suffers from typhoid (334) and Dixit (Personal Interview), Mādhavi breastfeeds him in order to fulfill Gālav’s desire to come close to his mother, Sukoshi. At symbolic level, it signifies union between the agents ready for self-sacrifice to attain transformation at both personal and social level. The change in spirit of the age also amends the understanding regarding social welfare. As the spirit of age changes with the ethos of social welfare, any social institutions like slavery completely lose their sway in social system (Chandra Shumsher 102-3). Chandra Shumsher attempts to credit the advent of modernity as the cause for erosion of slavery and the mode of social organization. In fact, the notion of self-sacrifice lies in formation of the polity and social reconfiguration in Nepal. The revival of this value to suit the spirit of contemporaneity is much sought

after as it is supposed to help attain the state of modernity.

4.7 Subjectivity: Composition of Nepali Self

Subjectivity as formed in and/or after social transformation presents an interesting site for observation of social value system in quest of a 'just order' in society. As a part of social history, small local revolts and national or regional movements to redefine the mode of social structure institute space which helps examine the trajectory of history in relation to subjectivity. As a matter of fact, the social change and subjectivity are conceptually related to each other in such a way that each shapes the function and development of the other. The promise of progress implied in social transformation emanates from the participants of the process and later on begins to act on the further participants. Put in a simple way, the social change brings forth the agendas for change from the actors who later on get shaped along the agendas refined through discussion. The subjectivity and social change function in an intertwined way.

The subjectivity in such trajectory of historical transformation as reflected in literary production of the age turns into a very critical domain to understand both the process of change and subjectivity as the product of the change. On top of it, the formation of subjectivity in modernity can be broken into various dimensions which appear as integral components for the change. The projection of subjectivity under certain circumstances of historico-political situatedness, the ways of birth of critical rationality through doubt, the quest to maintain equilibrium in material and spiritual domains of life and society, and nature of contemporary subjectivity demand critical observation in understanding modern Nepali subjectivity as such. In the promise of social transformation, the projection of personhood carries great significance in

materializing the process of change in itself. For one thing, the organization of the movement basically relies on the projection; for the other, the projection also shapes the outcome in new formation of subjectivity after the completion of the movement. Thus, the nature of contemporary subjectivity in modernity demands critical attention when studied through the examination of social history, evident in historical and literary documents.

Literature reflects the micro-historical forms of reality that does not enter into the canonical narratives. The formation and perceptions of personhood are thus revealed in the official records that always carry the dangers of misleading the understanding about the total process of social transformation. On the one hand, the social transformation assumes the aspiration for attainment of change; on the other, the resistance to change also simultaneously emerges to counterbalance the popular attempt for a different mode of social configuration. Besides, the vision of the changed state and the exercise to understand the human mindset in general turns into a difficult endeavor in a society that represses the free flow of expression. Thus, the analysis of creative literary production is required to understand the ways people at the micro-layer of society attempt to restructure the society through transformation.

The basic notion of change also assumes its opposite in the form of resistance. The promise of progress in formation of modernity in Nepal brings about the ideals of resistance to change. In fact, Nepali history presents the evidence that the process of each opposing the other has remained in function for at least three hundred years in C. K. Lal's observation. He argues that these two forces are instrumental in shaping Nepal's quest for modernity. Analyzing Nepal's typical case, he critiques:

Change induces dual response –people desire it, but resist it too.

Change holds the promise of emancipation from our dead habits, but it also carries the threat of disrupting the security of inertia. Nepali quest for modernity has been facing this painful duality for at least three centuries. (249)

The duality in social transformation in Nepal reveals the avenue for formation of subjectivity in that both the propensities are key components of subjectivity before and after the expected transformation. The desire for change and propensity to resist the change dialectically form the central impetus of both the personal and the national in Nepali history.

The projection of human values to promote sensitivity regarding contemporary subjectivity in the 1950s appears in both Balkrishna Sama and Gopal Prasad Rimal. Sama celebrates reviving the classical virtues in attaining a modern state. His seminal play *Prahlad*, for instance, develops the theme of non-violence as the traditional and classical virtue to oppose the oppressive forces in society. Ishwar Baral argues:

Prahlad... disturbed the Rana oligarchy ... Emphasizing as it did the principle of non-violent struggle against the oppression of the tyrant demon, the play appeared to the Ranas to be charged with dangerous political overtones, with nutrients for subversive activities and possibilities. (192)

Through assertion of classical attributes, the quest of self helps Sama establish the link between the contemporaneity and the tradition. Like Sama's *Prahlad* who affirms non-violence as the surest weapon the weak, Sama attempts to arouse the people to work together for change through the enactment of many such classical virtues. The

contemporary slackening and evils get remedied through the use of traditionally established values.

Feminine form as one of such traditional values provides a lens to view the whole nation as mother. The contemporary suppression and restrictions that are imposed on the people hinder progress in general. Through this phenomenon, Gopal Prasad Rimal constructs a picture of suffering mother whose sons have a pious duty to relieve the pain of suffering mother. Similarly, he raises the voice for change through the symbol of dream to refer to the future state. The projection of subjectivity in his poems feminizes the polity and presents the moral responsibility of the sons to rescue the mother from the tyranny of oppression. In fact, his poems herald the message of change that is both required and desired in Nepal. Analyzing Rimal's poems, Michael Hutt writes, "These poems could . . . also be interpreted as expression of the *angst* which grips the world during the *Kali Yuga*, the age of universal degeneration, or as more general expositions of the human condition" (140). The allegorical presentation of the issues vis-à-vis Nepali situation reveals the contemporary quest of society for transformation. Also, the projection of the contemporary subjectivity sets a unique vision for people in that the aspirants get to know that they lack certain attributes absent in them.

The search for typical Nepali self lies at the heart of both Rimal and Sama. For one thing, Rimal shows the moral responsibility of young generation to work for change in the society. For the other, Sama as "the progeny of Nepali Renaissance" (Baral 189) presents the society with poetry that marks a shift both in poetic sensibility of time and formation of social imagination in Nepal. The political turnover of 1950 adds impetus in attaining self-realization in Sama through literary

exercise. Formation of modern subjectivity and setting of projection that appears in society through modernity as such in Nepal, Ishwar Baral observes:

It was really since the political change-over in February 1951 that Sama really found an atmosphere congenial to his poetic genius, and by his literary output during the period ending 1960 became most outstanding figure in the literary scene in the country. (195)

In other words, Sama's call for change in the previous social structure had some hostile relationship with the state. Now, the themes of love and ethereal find their way into Sama (Baral 191). In the changed situation, he gets to exercise his freedom to contemplate on human suffering.

Sama begins to explore the depth of human suffering and its speculation in his writings. He produces the private world and quest for essence of life in the form of microhistory in literature. The human nature and its speculation finds due space in his writing. Ishwar Baral evaluates Sama thus:

... he has the faculty of putting into his works deep-felt anguish, torture and misery. He has a deep sense of unraveling secret thoughts and deeds and terrible depths and fires of passion, and above all he has sympathy with and understanding of human frailty. (195)

Baral's argument implies the liberty Sama enjoys in the changed situation in that the same sort of literary speculation and expression before the transformation would have turned into condemnation of the author. As C. K. Lal argues, modernity refers to "an important indicator of development, or change for the better" (249). Critically assessing it, the positive change that allows liberty to speculate and examine the formation of subjectivity is allowed only in a critically rational phase of society.

Indeed, the change for the betterment of the society on the whole lies at the core of modernity.

The examination of micro-affairs in bringing about change in society for the betterment of the collective reveals the attempts made to form subjectivity along the agendas set for the transformation. The literary production and historical attempts to modify the social organization help understand the whole social mode of organization in general. Particularly, the literary productions of a particular period of time carry the ways in which the subjectivity shapes the process of transformation and transformation in turn reshapes the emergent conceptualization of the self. This sort of relationship between subjectivity and social change is carefully analyzed through scrutiny of subjectivity formation as evident in literary and historical document of a particular age.

Subjectivity formation implies various dimensions in social transformation. As a conceptual category, the persons who understand themselves as actors of social change understand themselves in a particular way. Their objective for the transformation puts them in a position to foresee their own picture through the projection with the support of social imagination. In other words, the expected or transformed being as aspired for in the process of change falls under the category of 'projection' of subjectivity. The attribute of critical rationality is its foremost element that is grounded in the art of doubt as evident in modern Nepali literature. The quest for maintaining the balance between the physical or the material and the spiritual resides at the core layer of contemporary subjectivity attempting at change and new subjectivity achieved thereafter. Thus, the examination of contemporary subjectivity also demands that the question of its positioning be brought into consideration in that

it gets expressed through/in categories like general cultural attributes. Thus, the consciousness gets shaped through the positioning of self in a particular class. The realization of human agency that develops as the key theme of modern subjectivity turns into the major focus of subjectivity formation.

Human agency is structurally limited to attain its full realization at various points in history. In addition to this, the personal quest for full realization overcomes the structural forces imposing hindrances emanating from the order of society. Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan argues that Ashoka, Mahavir, and Gandhi are the ultimate realization of the human agency. Their failure to bring about the genuine change for the people and society also implies the limitation in human potential itself (243). So, Pradhan asserts that, the society must be ready to accept external suppression again, meaning if change is not established in the genuine sense of the term. Likewise, B. P. Koirala categorically associates reason, wisdom, and ethics are the humane attributes that help raise and acquire the human potential to achieve the state of self-realization. He places ultimate trust in human capability to assert oneself. He sees no place for the God in human life (*Jail Journal* 36). For both Pradhan and Koirala, the conceptualization of agency gains the prime concern in developing and comprehending modern subjectivity.

Agency also brings in the issue of choice in formulating the principle of social order. It functions as the source of the power for change the regulating force to come into existence in society. Even the traditional forces cannot work in front of political decisions when they are taken along the lines of proper justification. Put differently, the traditionally strong forces of social regulations are supplanted when rationalized decisions are made and implemented from the seat of political power. Diamond

Shumsher Rana depicts this issue in the discussion of the palace maids with Rajatnayā (King Surendra's daughter). Rana writes:

[Parbati says,] Now that there is no more the custom to find a Thakuri for princesses, lets initiate talk for marriage between Dhanhajuri [King Surendra's niece from his brother Upendra] and Jagat Jung [Jung Bahadur's eldest son]. When our princess can be married to Shumsher family, why can't Dhanhajuri get married to Jung family? (17).

The novel presents that the political directly strikes with the traditional mores of purity of the Kshetry clan in Thakuri. The traditional forces get weakened and political decisions give way to form a new alliance with changing mores in society. In such situation, even marriage is viewed as a political question. In the form of choice of social agent, the political will holds sway in altering the order of social institutions like marriage.

The development of human potential as reflected in political choice regarding the marriage question in *Seto Bāgh* also refers to human potential and its ultimate realization. Unlike Rana, Pradhan begins to view the historical development from the bottom when he examines the relationship among the Buddha, Ashoka, Gandhi, and common mass: the realization of common mass's suffering produces the Buddha; the Buddha inspires and transforms Ashoka into his messenger to the world; and finally, Gandhi practices what the Buddha thinks about life and society, and achieves the political goal of the common mass. Pradhan is deeply convinced that one needs to develop those qualities in order to attain personhood of modernity when he writes:

O Buddhas, Ashokas, Mahavirs and Gandhis, fie on my stature which has not reached higher to touch your stutue! Down with your height!

Perhaps, you are a person of the same stature so am I (*sic*). Perhaps we are the men of such stature and the nation too might be so. (246)

Naturally, Pradhan wants everyone to realize the height of human development for the cause of social change: in fact, the ultimate realization of human agency is possible as witnessed in the great personalities in past. This form of realization shows the ultimate possibility in attainment of human self.

Pradhan argues that the role of agency stands as the ultimate source to transform society from one state to the next. In fact, if one cannot resolve the crisis in society and guide the society to a newer state of being, the crisis continues. The contemporary crisis of his time is sure to produce the novel system of social reconfiguration for him. Elaborating further the role models of modern subjectivity, he states:

But, O Gautam, I try to reach your stature and Ashoka! I try to measure your (*sic*), Gandhi! I try to feel with your heart. Ah! Even thousands of years later we find ourselves shorter than we were yesterday. How have we shrunk! O Buddhas! Ashokas! and Gandhis! In the context of our failure to develop from the primitive stage of human nature, we are not prepared to accept you as our forefathers and we as your descendents. (246)

The major issue at discussion is the inability of contemporary humans to develop the virtues from the classical antiquity. Also, he points out that without accomplishing greater results than the achievement of the past, modernity cannot be furthered and sustained in real sense.

Besides agency and choice, modern subjectivity also bears self-reflexivity,

thinking for the collective, and courage and sacrifice. In Ganesh Raj Sharma's analysis, B. P. Koirala employed self-inspection as a method to evolve his personality and it helped give a new vigor and vitality by correcting the weaknesses in him. Also, Koirala was an atheist who ever looked forward to achieving a better place for all human beings. Sharma thus analyzes:

Towards the late stage of life, he would say, 'Godhood is an imaginative stage that human can attain through one's attempts'. Had he not possessed ambition towards godhood, such statements from him have no relevance at all. (21)

Like self-reflexivity, thinking for the collective helps move beyond the personal for modern subjectivity in quest for a 'just social order'. Diamond Shumsher Rana shows that towards the end of his life, Jung Bahadur understands the merit of British form of parliamentary democracy that does not possess any plot for capture of power (*Seto Bāgh* 210). At this point also, Jung Bahadur fails to rise beyond the personal. Modernity demands thinking about the collective which is absent in him.

Self-reflexivity and thinking for the collective help equip the actor working for change with self-scrutiny, and better understanding of self and the surrounding environment. As essential attributes of modern subjectivity, courage and self-sacrifice put the self in a position to take up the transformative actions at both the personal and collective layers of society. According to Koirala, it is necessary to develop courage and self-sacrifice as the values in attaining the full potential of life (*Jail Journal* 76) and only after such attainment, the society can establish the expected model of social organization. Respecting liberty in the process of social transformation, self-sacrifice provides with courage to take up any action that helps achieve social welfare. For

instance, Madan Mani Dixit's *Mādhavi* shows that Suparna Nāgjeṃyā wants Mādhavi to follow the path of self-sacrifice that leads to abolition of slavery. Now, Mādhavi willingly accepts to be handed to Gālav to achieve four horses (111). Also, the self-realization of Mādhavi and Gālav is made possible because they are ready to sacrifice their self for the larger cause of society. Like Dixit, Koirala also holds that the general practice of spirituality as understood in society induces lethargy, thereby denying trust on human agency for reform. He believes in human potential to win self-realization so as to bring about redemption in real sense (*Jail Journal* 111). Thus, both Dixit and Koirala attempt to develop courage as the force from the soul to conquer and transform the social circumstances.

Self-sacrifice and critical rationalism contribute to collective welfare in that combined together, they put the actor in a position to offer self at the service of the collective and to question the illogical practices prevalent in the social milieu. If any act serves the collective welfare of society, it must be duly followed. Rohitāshwa elaborates that Mādhavi should be given to Gālav to help obtain four shyam-karna horses (104). Besides, Dixit presents the birth of critical rationality through Gālav: the education that Gālav gets as resident scholar at Vishwāmitra's *āshram* can be termed 'art of doubt' which begets critical rationalism, a necessary attribute of modern subjectivity. In this specific case, 'art of doubt' leading to critical rationalism results in 'self-sacrifice' that in turn produces four key features –represented by four sons of Mādhavi –of the shift in transformation of the age of slavery into the age of agriculture. With its use, human emancipation becomes possible since it helps perceive fellow beings on the equal plane. For instance, people in Ahichchhatra seek to abolish slavery on human ground: all are equal in their aspiration for attaining

comfort/pleasure from worldly quest (99). Likewise, Koirala argues that redemption is achieved through analysis of social circumstances that are constantly perceived by individuals in their continual quest for self-attainment (*Jail Journal* 112). In all these cases, as the feature of modern subjectivity, the use of critical rationality is highlighted as through questioning the prevalent social practices, one gets to learn the rationalized frame of its configuration.

Through critical use of reasoning, the social issues blocking the full realization of the potential are identified and the ways to overcome them are explored. Also, Krishna Dharabashi states that one has to struggle to assert oneself in the backdrop of traditionally established value-system and cultural practices. He shows that the aunt wants the narrator to struggle against the social evils and stand on his own. She asks, “The mahout guides the giant elephant; but can the mahout do anything if the elephant is not afraid of him?” (“Jholā” 11). The aunt implies that the use of critical sensibility in modifying and changing the social structures provides one with the ultimate possible position. The birth of modernity is also rooted in learning to use critical sensibility against the prevailing mores of society. Thus, the critical minds like Koirala emerge as rational mind: he does not believe in ghost or any forces beyond the analysis of rational framework. Actually, he means to say that neither ghost nor God exists beyond human imagination (*Jail Journal* 48). Explicitly, the forces beyond the recognition of rational frame of understanding are left out by critical mindset. The dictation of the social forces is pushed to margin in quest of equality and freedom by the critical rationality which supplements the features of modern subjectivity.

The ability of the critically rational agent is also deeply supported by the tradition. In a very critical tone typical to his style, Koirala observes that those who

have weak ability should not be master of revolution in post-revolutionary scene (*Jail Journal* 39). The comprehension of historical forces in bringing about transformation and historical development are required in the post-revolutionary agents in that the historical forces and the post-revolutionary forces stand as complementary to each other. For example, Pradhan argues that the Buddha and Ashoka complement each other. He makes it indispensable for both the Buddha (renouncement and the wandering sage with critical rationality/scholarship) and Ashoka (the ultimate form of bravery/ strength) to come together for the realization of each other. He analyzes:

The Buddha is speaking to *dharmaraj* Ashoka and I listen to it.

Ashokas are taking birth in the Buddha –you are failing to see it. But I speak the truth, O Ashoka! Had you not been there, perhaps, you can believe that my Buddha might have been wandering around Lumbini and Sarnath. But Lord Buddha! Had you not been born, believe it, Ashoka ever dear to the gods, would never have been born. (244)

The understanding of relation between the circumstance in the pre- and post-transformation phase in history complement each other. When the connection between these two gets missed, the formulation of modern subjectivity remains incomplete, whereby failing in creation and promotion of a ‘just social order’. Also, the expected goal of critical rationality through practice of critical questioning and demand of equality as the standard measure collapses in producing modern agents who work towards the collective welfare.

The projection of subjectivity that is articulated through social imagination also forms another dynamics of subjectivity. People aspire social transformation in a particular direction under specific socio-historical circumstances as they envision a

certain type of subject. Social imagination that gets articulated through literary writings presents the social vision of a revolutionary. In fact, the society attempting to bring about change has to construct a revolutionary that possesses attributes absent in society. Social imagination identifies what is necessary for such agent. For instance, Gopal Prasad Rimal points out that the change is sure to come in the society when the mother answers the son, “Yes dear. That comes” (“Mother’s Dream” 2). He then goes on to find the goal of the arrival thus: “And he will fight the evil” (6). The vision of revolutionary for Rimal embodies features of both the Buddha and Lenin for Rimal. Therefore, he states, “here should come impregnation -pious and responsible / the Buddha should be begotten here, and Lenin” (An Address 19-20). Rimal wants complete transformation in the order of social configuration. The change must be rooted in tradition that carries piety and also enhances the sense of responsibility. The social vision that is born out of social imagination locates itself in a particular spatio-temporal development of society. Addressing the absences and enhancing the vision of a ‘just society’, it contributes to formation of a new subjectivity that is empowered with both agency and choice. Indeed, such vision of personhood develops capacity to oppose the rigidity of tradition in search of fluidity and swiftness.

Seeking fluidity and swiftness in Nepali modernity, Laxmi Prasad Devkota opposes the rigidity of the society. The angry revolutionary in “The Lunatic” wants to dismantle the underlying codes of society that do not allow the healthy, rational development. Devkota cannot tolerate the extreme situation in the society and revolts against it. The shameless dance of the leadership (The Lunatic 111) compels him to raise his voice fiercely against the society and its prevailing norms. The inhuman treatment of people to other fellow beings leaves its impact in his body: “The machine

parts of my frame jump out of their places, /Disordered and disturbed!” (138-9).

Devkota begins to feel the need to act and change the ways of the world; however, the society terms him ‘lunatic’ in order to detain him from realizing his magnitude as the change-maker. Rimal joins Devkota when the former presents a collage of the Buddha and Lenin for the change essential in forming a new paradigm of social rearrangement. The old arrangement of the social milieu cannot address the complexities developed out of its underlying codes in the contemporary times. To reframe the total social order, both the achievement of the past and the new form of social revolutionary are required and desired in the society. In “An Address,” Gopal Prasad Rimal wants the birth of two extreme the Buddha and Lenin to come together for social change (20). The irrational forces of the society working at the underlying structure need to be abolished for total restructuring of society.

Like Devkota’s lunatic persona who raises voice against the hypocrisy of the world, Rimal’s revolutionary seeks to establish both honesty and openness at the same time. Resisting the double standard value-system of the society, Rimal points out the need for honesty and openness when he states, “instead of a mere ‘I love you,’ / I could have dared to say, ‘I am impregnating you’” (An Address 13-4). He fights against the double standard that the society sets for its governance and regulation by exposing the reasons to produce a new subjectivity that evolves from both honesty and openness. For Rimal, the hope of birth of agency depends on this frankness. The refrain the of poem, “It was my youthful dream / That that was you” (“Mother’s Dream” 18-19, 45-46), is an attempt to arouse the young generation to do away with the irrational system of society and bring about the situation of complete change. The change in the value-system of the young generation results in emergence of such

revolutionary.

The mass ignorant of their basic needs fails to achieve the state of modernity for Devkota because the national leadership lacks both honesty and openness which are morally guiding notions. Critiquing the national leadership failing in their essential duty to feed all the members of nation, Devkota states that a nation which is ignorant of hungry people turns into a flock of sheep. The realization of ultimate human potential is only a mirage in such society. He questions, “The leaders ignorant of it are sheep, / Can such sheep guide the nation's fleet?” (“Rice, Pulse and Mustard Green” 72-73). Like Rimal, Devkota’s projection of subjectivity is based on the quest of equality and justice for the common people. Contemplating on the absences of the society, Devkota proposes the elements that modern subjectivity must achieve in order to attain the full realization of their potential. Such type of projection based on the absent features of contemporary subjectivity helps identify the attributes expected in/through transformation.

On the contrary, the dismal dimension of projection finds outlet through Bhupi Sherchan who appears completely dissatisfied with the transformation that could not bring into existence a new set of values. He does not find any solace even with the social change because the expected changes are not experienced in society. The democratic change in the country has for him turned every one into a mere vote. So, he states:

Yes, I am only

A revolt,

A democracy,

An election,

And a vote,

Just a vote. ("I" 38-42)

Despite such dismal contemplation about the contemporary and projected subjectivity in Sherchan, Rimal optimistically presents the mother in "Mother's Dream" in that the whole poem implies the powerful anticipation for social change. Written in the form of dialogue between a revolutionary mother who represents the nation/society itself and a helpless son, the poem powerfully critiques the society and helplessness of the young generation to take action of the change. In the last moments, the son realizes the potential he carries to transform the repressive social order. The social imagination which is manifest through Sherchan and Rimal shows that modernity carries with it both the dismal projection and the powerful formation of social agents. Sherchan's subjects are all structurally limited and hence they suffer from the dictation of material conditions in history whereas the projected subjectivity in Rimal attempts to modify and force the historical, material circumstances to the service of contemporaneity.

When Rimal and Devkota address the absent features of the subjectivity, they envision the requirements which they find essential for emerging agency. In this sense, the projection implies the vision of the revolutionary who realizes the goal of social transformation. However, Sherchan views only the prevalent features and puts himself in a position to pass his reaction against the contemporary situation. The birth of critical rationality through the art of doubt as the third dynamics of subjectivity results in the formation of critical attitude that enables the revolutionary to question specific domains of social structuring. On top of it, agency that is born to address the social contradiction begins to explore the principles that contribute to discrimination

between humans, adding to complexity in such a way that critical attention be paid on time to overcome them. Devkota's perception of revolutionary seeks the holistic progress for everybody through balance of opposite polarities as present in Rimal.

As a feature of modernity, doubt questions the fundamental beliefs and thus sees the possibility of finding a better alternative for social organization. Furthermore, the rational doubt based on critical faculty of mind allows the use of agency to question and thus alter the mode of social organization that emerges as the instrumental feature in understanding and analyzing modernity. For instance, losing *Gotra* refers to turning into a slave: Gālav knows that Acharya Vishwāmitra has not yet turned anybody into a slave and the guru fights against slavery; however, as a doubtful youth, he is not sure about the future course of Vishwāmitra. He believes that in case of failure to provide the promised gift to guru as payment for the knowledge, anything might happen (*Mādhavi* 35). As a matter of fact, the modern way of relating oneself to the present social structure heavily relies on what people perceive in the form of social structure that assumes the repressive nature over a certain period of time. The modern subjectivity seeking to relate the self to the ethos of the current/contemporaneity begins to question the nature of society that goes out of the tract set in the beginning with the help of critical standard of the age. Also, when the new standard develops in the succeeding era, it also manifests itself through the doubting mind.

As a necessary precondition, doubt attempts to achieve modification and change in the prevailing value system. Gālav attains such state of mind in Vishwāmitra's *āshram* and begins to question: Should he unquestioningly follow the imposed argument that he gets to learn at the *āshram* even after the declaration of

completion of his education? Instead, his doubt towards his own guru leads to form a different state of mind that forces him to offer payment of guru's choice for the knowledge (*Mādhavi* 35) and attain his freedom from which he sees that he can achieve full growth of inner potential. In the meantime, he becomes an agent of change (35). As long as the social structure is not questioned, social transformation does not and cannot begin to find a form for its manifestation. The birth of critical rationality through 'art of doubt' helps the seeker of freedom and justice question specifically established norms in society from which the contradictory and discriminatory practices emerge. Dixit presents Gālav doubting the total patronage of slavery, for he knows that Yayati's family priests Bhrigu and Sukraniti had provided patronage to slavery. So, Gālav faces a question here: how would such people be ready to abolish what they have protected for a long time? (42) As a form of critical rationality, the doubting youth in Gālav has in fact learnt the art of doubt in Acharya Vishwāmitra's *āshram*. This art of doubt allows him to see the world differently and helps him not to take things for granted (54). As a form of social organization in Gālav, the critical sensibility towards rationality is born from the art of doubt.

Furthermore, Nepali literature presenting women with the power of critical rationality refutes the charges put against social transformation in Nepal as being gender-biased. For example, Mark Liechty presents Nepali women in a very helpless form (216), implying the idea of lack of critical attitude. For instance, Dharabasi shows the inner narrator's aunt raises some critical questions that no one answers. She raises her voice against the prevailing situation that allows men to marry as many women as they want but on the other hand, forces women to burn themselves alive with their dead husband. Also, she asks men to take initiative to change the situation.

She says, “If you can, break this system to burn own mother. How I wish they stopped burning own mothers in your age, son!” (“Jholā” 6). Likewise, Mādhavi views life differently: she perceives self in a very different way. She says:

The clarity of life is truth and righteousness, Gālav! So, it is difficult to obtain life, and yet harder to live it with understanding. It is the greatest penance of life to turn the living meaningful. So, Gālav, render your existence towards sustaining, living and bringing life at the service of others. (343)

Both the aunt and Mādhavi practice critical reasoning which Liechty fails to take into account in analyzing Nepali modernity with regard to the question of gender. In this sense, Liechty fails to understand the way Nepali woman is structured along the lines of Nepali modernity and Nepali way of understanding and practice of critical rationality.

The use of critical rationality that is derived through ‘art of doubt’ in Nepali modernity challenges the contemporary practices that carry contradictions regarding the question of equality, righteousness, and justice. The ideal principles of the society that face difficulty in making life prosperous and arriving at a state of equilibrium between the emotional and the rational, and the material and the spiritual are put back in their desired places through the practice of rationalized frame of comprehending the social reality. The contradictions emerging from the focus on either of them only does not allow society to prosper and move along the path of righteousness. The balance between the opposite polarities in the quest for modernity is both expected and desired simultaneously.

The quest for the balance between the emotional and the rational appears in

Devkota and Parijat. They argue that only through the equilibrium, a ‘just state’ in social order is achieved. Analyzing the duality of emotions versus reason, Devkota favors emotional dimension. He argues that the world runs along the correct formulas: “But in my calculations one minus one is always one” (29). The contemporary rationality that is held true by the collective is questioned when he argues that “You work with your senses five, / With the sixth I operate” (30-31). He sees the world behaving in just the opposite way from his own; so, he brings a strong comparison: “You are strong prose, / But I am liquid poetry. / You freeze, I melt,…” (36-38). Further elaborating the comparison, he boldly states, “You have a world of solids, / Mine is one of vapour / Yours is thick and mine is thin” (42-44). The society fails to understand the call of Devkota, thereby resulting in serious chasm in understanding between the self and the world. The poet chooses to herald the change in society for progress of all; however, the majority of the people for whom he attempts to bring transformation do not understand him in proper sense. Similarly, Parijat seeks to bring emotion and reason together when she explores eternity in love and thus balance the two polarities of life in each of them. She writes, “Love is immune to death, but we ought to kill it / your beginning should be as strong as my end / here comes the remnant of this letter…” (68-70). Thus, she presents the need to balance between the emotional and the rational aspect of self as she wants to “...revise once more, /the emotionality of a love/ old, as a century old” (7-9). Both Devkota and Parijat attempt to bring together the opposite polarities of life in order to achieve a modern state of personhood.

Like duality of emotion and reason, the material and the spiritual also require balance in quest of modernity. The focus only on one end results in accident. Koirala

observes, “The ultimate point in materialism means greed, sensory pleasure and cacophony of dissatisfaction whereas the apex of spiritualism refers to traditional dogma, its practice and intellectual blindness” (*Jail Journal* 53). He seeks the equilibrium between materialism and spiritualism in Nepal’s quest for modernity. Excessive focus on either of them leads to collapse of social structure. Similarly, the mutual cooperation in Dixit’s *Mādhavi* between these two forces leads to success of each of them. For instance, Suparna Nāgjeṃyā and Gālav represent the spiritual whereas Rohitāshwa corresponds to the material one. Since Gālav and Suparna Nāgjeṃyā help Rohitāshwa carry out yagna to overcome the tantric practice of his wife, Rohitāshwa in the assembly stands by Gālav and presses the King Yayati (Ahichchhatra) to find a way-out to manage four horses to Gālav (*Mādhavi* 95-6). The coordination of the complementary domains assumes the attainment of holistic features in modernity. The social milieu aspires to achieve wholeness through such coordination. The effective coordination between the two results in a modern state that guarantees prosperity and success.

In line of various dualities, the conscious-unconscious also demands equilibrium in quest for a modern state. An event from *Mādhavi* exemplifies the case. Mādhavi’s society is matriarchal and based on institutional slavery. The people comfortably adjust themselves with this mode of social arrangement. However, Mādhavi is not satisfied with the present state of life, for she realizes the inhuman practices of slavery as evident in child-sacrifice. Her fascination towards Gālav implies two projects in this sense: instinctual appreciation for beauty and most significantly, the attainment of freedom from the dictation of customs. As it unfolds, the text does not elaborate the first line of argument. Hence, Madan Mani Dixit’s

focus is on instinctual fascination for freedom that Gālav represents (*Mādhavi* 19). Losing rationality and consciousness refers to a less modern state in that the essence of modernity lies at balancing rationality and feeling for others. Mādhavi is offered drink before and after the child-sacrifice. The high music that is paused for a while during the sacrifice continues after the episode is over. The most remarkable observation by Suparna Nāgjeṃyā and Gālav is about the tear in Mādhavi's eyes (23). Is she really happy? Does she like the things that she is compelled to do as the matriarch of her people? At the deep level, Mādhavi is herself a slave to the customary practices and hence, she, first of all, requires that she win her freedom. She has to agree to work for the cause of Gālav to win her freedom from the custom. Also, after the sacrifice is over, there is no dynamism in her body. The tiredness overcomes her, perhaps because of the drink she has consumed before and after the sacrifice, and the fierce music give her physical strain. The psychological shock from the ritual is adequate enough to mesmerize her (24). Also, this apparently appears to be the first time she has worshipped the Varuna, for she was appointed the Great Matriarch just the previous year by the assembly of Ahichchhatra (20). As dictated, she performs the ritual and thus loses balance of her self. The baby-sacrifice and the ritual of the Varuna torture her so much that she begins to question her own being that does not get to enjoy the conscious and rational self.

The failure to balance each of the ends results in production of limited agency and contradiction in subjectivity. Dharabasi's "Jholā" presents structural limitations in asserting agency through portrayal of the mother and son escaping from the repressive institution of Sati (widow-burning). If anything saves the narrator's mother, it is the lack of visibility/darkness. In the second case of widow burning in "Jholā", the

woman attempting to escape is stoned to death because it is in the broad daylight that she is put to the burning pyre. The mother and the son see it at the bank of the Tamor river from the jungle (“Jholā” 10). The critical rationality finds a dark space to grow because there is absence of the light of prevailing rules. The sati-mother gets the dark space in the prevailing social structure to save herself. On the other hand, Dixit depicts the complexity resulting in *Mādhavi* through excessive focus on doubt and reason on Gālav’s part. Now that Gālav’s fear about his inability to manage those horses resulting in himself turning into a slave is meaningless: can Vishwāmitra turn his own disciple into a slave? If he does it, why does he want to abolish slavery? What is the difference, then, between him and Vashistha who wants the system to continue? (*Mādhavi* 34-5). The complexity emerges in the argument that Acharya Vishwāmitra needs four shyam-karna horses to abolish slavery and begin a new age of agricultural economy of feudalist society.

Unlike Dharabasi who fails to present real modern human beings, Chandra Shumsher effectively balances in his rhetoric between reasoning and emotion. In his critical reasoning about slavery as an institution, he emotionally appeals the audience when he asks, “For a moment think yourself how slaves might think of slavery” (105). If anything saves the inner narrator’s mother in Dharabasi, it is the lack of visibility at the bank of the Tamor river. On the other hand, Chandra Shumsher’s rhetoric succeeds in bringing together both emotion and reason to establish his claim about slavery as an evil institution. Furthermore, the balance of the feminine and the masculine stands out in Rimal when the mother successfully motivates her son. The mother finally materializes her dream of change when the son rises up, convinced of the change. He says, “I think that will come, mother. / Hope of his arrival has grown

goose on my body/Like the throats of birds at dawn” (“Mother’s Dream” 38-40).

Thus, the balance in two opposing polarities succeeds in establishing norms that really lead towards a modern state of social organization.

Nepali quest for modernity brings both the ends in unison because it seeks to establish the prosperous society that helps practice freedom and equality for the cause of social welfare. Like Rimal who feminizes the polity and Dixit who presents the Great Matriarch in *Mādhavi* to unite all the thirteen communes, the masculine and the feminine are also put in equilibrium in Nepal’s quest for modernity. Devkota argues that the focus on only one of components of each duality results in stagnation of society that propagates contradictions and complexities in contemporary subjectivity. As a matter of fact, contemporary subjectivity stands as yet another dynamics of subjectivity in comprehension of modernity. Furthermore, the overall positioning of such state through self-perception and class through class appear as two significant aspects of contemporary subjectivity.

The social imagination seeks for the absent features in contemporary subjectivity while projecting the desired state after transformation. However, the analysis of contemporary self-perceptions of subjectivity heavily relies on the features that are present in the contemporary society the way in which the participants observe them. Devkota argues that contemporary social practice is filled with elements of irrationality. Standing as the powerful critic of Nepali society in “The Lunatic,” he puts forth the question of irrational aspect of society as the prime issue in the poem. Elaborating on the contemporary social practices of his time, he implies that the society has been lost to the irrational forces and thus defends himself: he is labeled the lunatic by the people who could not understand the nature of reality he aspired to

create and shape (70-72). The limitations imposed on the contemporary subjectivity results in frustration that Sherchan's poetic persona presents himself limited in quotidian routine of life when he says, "A hotel, /A bottle, /And a peg am I" ("Ma" 7-9). The quest for people in such circumstances is directed towards exploring the forces that hinder realization of maximum potential of human agency.

Sensitive subjects become brooding intellectuals for Sankar Lamichhane when the realization of agency is barred with structural frames of society. He focuses on inaction, resulting from decay of ethical values and lack of exercise of liberty in the contemporary times. He presents himself as a case of modern personality suffering from the negative growth. He states:

You may please see my universal form today: you will see what is in my mind? But let me first tell you something about me. I am an intellectual of the 20th century AD; from a middle class family; married and father of children; young; healthy; full of constructive ideas, a sincere citizen, and full of worries, with myriads of problems.

(232)

Lamichhane approaches life in a resisting tone because he is hit by the sensitive issues of existence: he finds lack of meaning in life and thus the existential crisis is experienced. More than inside, he chooses to look at the outside world and be influenced by those ideals set in the West for the perfection of personality. In fact, he misses the power of resisting the Western models of subjectivity. Implicitly, appropriation of the modern subjectivity finds itself in problem.

The heavy abstraction limits human agency in the contemporary times. The ability to realize oneself through the maximization of the potential does not appear

favorable to people since the exercise of liberty in Nepal the 1960s and the 1970s is put under specific constraints by the polity itself. As Lamichhane argues, every life is abstract and full of confusion. As he observes,

Every person is a God who builds his own world by deceptions, intrigues, frauds, butcheries, and by laws, irresponsibility, superstitions, devotions, truths and follies. The god of today, in reality, is not bounded by any religion –he finds his rival even in Christ, Buddha and Mohammed. Also the God of today is a bit of a diplomat ... (234)

The genesis of the problem lies in loss of social agents capable of bringing about transformed state. The loss of creative potential is lost, whereby resulting in the imbalance.

Like Lamichhane, Sherchan is extremely upset when he is encountered by the widows in his dream (“Always in my Dream” 23-24) because those killed soldiers fight for the other countries and their families suffer in Nepal. In fact, Sherchan's resistance is founded on the presence of malpractices of the society which he cannot tolerate; hence, he begins to present them through the lens of critical questioning. The change that is required does not appear within the horizon of the society. The balance of the society is wholly at a loss in his vision. So, he sees “numerous children, carrying germs of destruction / come and stand in front / and ask for their school-fee” (31-33). In gist, Sherchan is tormented by past (parents), present (the widows), and future (the children) in his vision of the country. Hence, he resists the total system that need to be demolished, saying, “Ah, the history of my reality/loathes me in my dream” (48-49). The present devoid of creative energy to transform itself produces

Lamichhane's twentieth century subjectivity that broods over the historical consequences and comes to realize that life possesses abstract layers at multiple layers. Similarly, Sherchan's subjects are victims of both past and present, and devoid of agentive role. It shows dysfunctional subjectivity in the repressive time.

Abstract ways of modern personality produce dysfunctional, brooding subjectivity. Lamichhane presents a symbol of 'onion' to represent this state, devoid of any essence. In other words, he finds a fitting symbol in onion to represent the modern life. Hence, he pleads the creative genius to use it as a means of expression to capture the ethos of lack in presence. He critiques the modern situation thus:

So Mr. Bangdel, please, paint a still life of the onion. So Mr. Vyathit, please, write an epic on the onion. Those works of yours will remain historical because of the stench of the person and the society today will be preserved in numberless layers for an indefinite time to come. And in that painting and in that poetic work I will also remain alive for indefinite time to come. (237)

The dysfunctional subjectivity as perceived in modern state again appears in Sherchan's "I": the root of the problem lies at the structure of society that functions as no impetus to compel people towards higher achievement in life (8). The poetic persona shows the minimal existence in order to present oneself structurally limited.

The inability of modern subject is rooted in excessive reasoning about life and society which results into abstraction. According to Lamichhane, the abstract fascinates him so much because he feels that he is just like an onion that does not have any essence. He says, "In my realistic painting, I am an onion –devoid of reason but arranged in many layers, with depth and eternal stench" (237). He sees the loss of

agency to bring about renovation in society and break the chain of irrational forces in asserting the key notions of freedom and liberty. Without Mādhavi's courage and bravery, Sherchan presents modern persons brooding just like the clock tower at Ranipokhari, waiting motionless:

The clock-tower

Standing motionless on the bank

Is brooding

Angling in the Ranipokhari, the pond

Just like an old, pensioned soldier. ("Ghantāghar" 1-5)

Sherchan's world reveals the typography where agents are absent: the lost sons are also sought after by their parents ("Always in my Dream" 20). Consequently, he feels disturbed as he has no answer to offer them. In fact, the inability also victimizes Sherchan who can offer nothing to answer the riddles of history. He observes inaction in humanity and considers it an obstacle towards achieving modern state in life and society. For him, the symbol of 'ghantāghar' [clock tower] represents the unwilling witness of history that records the inaction in human society. The genuine change is not possible until humans are inspired to work towards it.

The inability and inaction of modern subjectivity cripple life in general, for the essence is lost. To denote to the loss of meaning in modern life, Lamichhane puts forth the symbol of 'onion'. Bringing together the global and the local, he shows the inability inherent in modern subject's life and comes to realize that the border-line is blurred in an ordinary man's life. The confusion of the cold war time as perceived in the modern Nepali personality thus manifests in his essay: "In the midst of the border of all such incoherent ideas, I have set up a no-man's land of my personality. Take it

for granted O [Kedarman] Vyathits and [Lainsingh] Bangdels, my life itself is an abstract picture” (233). The inaction results into stagnation of social milieu that denies power to assert oneself. The stagnation thus developed is revealed in Bhikshu as well: in the last scene, before Maiya Saheb leaves the country, she offers Ajaya a diamond ring as the symbol of her love to him (74). Why could Ajaya not assert agency to declare his love? What detained him? How was their real love not successful? Bikshu describes the scene thus:

‘Oh, if yours was a true love, why didn’t you get me?’ asked Maiya Saheb, ‘Why didn’t you take possession of me? Being a man, why did you become so timid as not to claim me for yours? Why did you leave me? Why didn’t you snatch me up by force as a matter of your right?’
(73)

The local suffers as much as the global resulting from the confusion and loss of agency. The personal and the national crisscross in both quest for equality as much as they get intermingled in the time of perplexity. The resultant effect is felt in the ultimate quest for realization of human agency through freedom.

As the society cannot continue to carry on with stagnation, social structure needs modification. The excessive appreciation for history promotes inaction for Sherchan. He expects change to occur in life and society that people have been waiting for generations but feels frustrated when he finds people just passing their time praising their past as reflected in “Passes the long and dreary days of old age, / With the two favorite relics of his army life” (“Ghantāghar” 7-8). The situation is further explored through the discussion of ironic origin of a beggar thus:

The infant was born

Like Christ
 From the womb of a virgin
 And is settled now
 On the footpath of New Road,
 With the cross of lamp post. (“A Poem” 18 -23)

He sees the potential of every human being to achieve the ultimate realization to bring about the change in the personal and the social domain of life. However, the prevailing social structure does not allow it. Even the beggar at New Road for him has some similarities with Christ. Implicitly, Sherchan sees possibility of full bloom of human potential to result in social transformation.

Like Sherchan, Lamichhane optimistically presents the solution to this state in the long span of time. He sees the relation of idea and mind in a different way in that the idea does not leave the curious mind until it is fully realized. As he argues, “...once an idea grips it, it’s really a problem to drive it out. The moment you try, a conflict starts between your personality and the personality of the idea itself” (232). The substantial impact of the idea in human personality remains until the full realization of such idea. Besides, the hope lies in realizing human potential through complete freedom. In an attempt to search for the ideal world, he argues:

I am not a man of this age, Mr. [Kedarman] Vyathit. I am yet to be born, a millennium in the future. When I would be reborn, there will no longer be any boundary between nations, nor any belief, religion and politics –none of them will exist. Now I will tell you why I stand today in the no-man’s land! And I do not like to dip into your hue. After crossing the boundary I must obtain citizenship. So I am a non-citizen.

I myself am a boundary that has separated the present from the past,
and the past from the future. (236)

The regulations of society and the distinction between the global and the local vex him so much that he longs for a world without boundaries. He sees the boundary as the most important aspect of modernity in Nepal. It refers to the space of social change. Politically, he is not happy with the present situation in Nepal and anticipates the shift in this contemporary reality.

This boundary between the past and the present, and the present and the future turns into a spatial location that presents Lamichhane as a person tormented by myriads of domestic and global threats. Similarly, Pradhan also opposes the idea of fragmentation in order to attain regional mindset, blurring the national boundary when he contemplates about the virtues of the great personalities like Ashoka and the Buddha. He writes, “Both of them [the Buddha and Ashoka] are yours. Both of them are also mine. The border does not read their height. The citizenship of a particular country does not limit their expansion” (243). The fragmentation is thus perceived in the contemporary subjectivity to act and assert his agency to bring about change for the cause of society. His dissatisfaction is rooted in art of doubt and critical rationality which do not yet obtain their due position.

In addition to positioning contemporary subjectivity through self-perception, the issue of class also plays significant role in comprehensive analysis of understanding of subjectivity. The rise in the size of middle class questions the underlying codes of social norms that regulate the structure of society. Sanjeev Uprety puts modernity as unifying project of the middle class. Employing the epistemological frame of the singular European modernity, he sees the development of middle class in

the eighteenth century. He argues:

With the growth of capitalist/technological modernity, however, the middle class of Europe began to make their claims of power, in the fields ranging from politics to economics to art and culture. Painters and writers began to use lives and experiences of common people as the subject matter of their narrative and portrayals. (228)

Analyzing modernity as a three-strand phenomenon under three key terms, capitalist/technological, politico-ethical, and cultural/aesthetic, he almost accepts Habermasian quest of unity of morality, aesthetics, and science in attaining enlightenment.

The role of middle-class in resisting certain structural changes in Nepali modernity is ever desired. The support of this class for change makes it possible to bring about the structural variation. S. K. Chaube analyzes Nepali history and makes the middle class responsible for suspension of democracy in 1959 by King Mahendra Shah. He observes:

The bulk of the Nepali population stayed outside the political game that was fought between the Rana elite and the educated, middle-class encounter ...after the introduction of parliamentary government for a short period, the king disbanded it and introduced a party-less panchayat system of government, the articulate middle class failed to resist it. (33)

As an internal dynamics of modernity in Nepal, resistance refers to rejection of class domination as well. C.K. Lal argues that the rise of the middle class professionals in the 1980s had a deeper impact in institutionalizing modernity in Nepal (252). The rise

in middle class helps society attain higher degree of critical sensibility in that the core of the class comprises of working class professionals who begin to seek and analyze the complexities and contradiction resulting from the underlying social structure.

The situatedness of the middle class also benefits modernity as this class possesses access to both the lower and the upper class. The gap in distance between the upper and the lower makes it possible for the middle class to critically observe both of them. Analyzing Sherchan's life and works, Michael Hutt argues that by turning into a Sarvahārā (communist), Bhupi Sherchan rejects the patronage system in general as early as the 1960s (Hutt 11). Assuming the life of the common for Sherchan refers to his attempt to participate in the process of social transformation. Hutt further states, "He lived his short life against the backdrop of unprecedented social, cultural and political change in Nepal, and he was simultaneously a participant in and a commentator on this change" (2). Thus, the situatedness of class helps establish Sherchan as the most authentic voice of social change in his time. Yet another authentic voice of this class is Gopal Prasad Rimal who expresses hope in poetry of the 1940s and 1950s in Nepal. Hutt states, "The works of the 'revolutionary' poet Gopalprasad Rimal are the best illustration of this tendency" (140). Since both Rimal and Sherchan raise the voice of the time, full of contemporary social and political issues, they become popular among the people of emerging generation: "Sherchan quickly became a major influence upon the younger poets of the time, with the result that many began to simplify their language and to reintroduce references to contemporary social and political issues" (Hutt 150). The dissatisfaction about the contemporary situation and call for complete change in both of them reveals the desire for attaining new subjectivity, compatible with the ethos of

modernity.

The positioning of contemporary subjectivity through class appears in the form of the question regarding status quo. The singularity and rigidity of the upper class values function against the choice of youths in realizing their agency. For instance, Bhikshu brings the issue of discrimination in the Rana family where the logic of hierarchy had intense impact in their domestic life. He thus describes Maiya Saheb:

The child's psychology developed in a singular manner. She found herself in a slightly lower rung than that of the Maharani's other children but did not become arrogant and pompous. At the same time, enjoying a slightly elevated position than that of her own mother and other, the child developed self-respect and a dignity of her own. (61)

The upper class arrogance is inscribed in her right from the early age detains her from accepting somebody below her class. The rigidity makes the life of 'concubine' miserable. The girl does not even know what she is learning about through the practice of the class distinctions. She comes from the lower strata of society: consequently, in the elite society of the Ranas, she develops such self-respect that does not allow her to perceive a normal human being in herself. By placing herself in the upper rung of social hierarchy of the time, she paves road that later on detains her from being united with Ajaya, her love. The rigidity of the class-based society is maintained and sustained only to result in disintegration in love.

The attraction and personal choice of human agency cannot realize since class differences begin to intrude even in the personal relationships. The high-low duality that functions before the social transformations of the 1950s does not allow Maiya

Saheb to accept Ajaya in her life. As a youth, Ajaya (though a low class aid in the palace) begins to get attracted to Maiya Saheb. He cannot resist himself before the beauty of the girl. Ajaya finds the epitome of beauty in her as Bhikshu describes, “The big, expressive eyes, thin lips and shapely nose had enhanced her beautiful face. She was a picture of gentleness and innocence. Pure, pretty and simple, she resembled rose at that moment” (62). However, Ajaya’s love to Maiya Saheb remains unrealized because of the gap in class positioning. The upper class rigidity does not accept Ajay into her life. The love of Maiya Saheb to Ajay is thus reflected when she says, “... you are even today an object of my love and you shall remain so the rest of my life” (71). Despite love to each other, she ends up getting married to an old man of her own class. The personal choice getting barred from realization presents the nature and function of contemporary subjectivity that is built along the lines set by the high class status quo. The rigidity rooted in class leads to separation between the youths.

The marks of distinction associated with class promote inequality. A society based on unequal relationships among various groups of peoples cannot respect human dignity, whereby denying realization of ultimate human potential. For example, Dixit presents that clan marks are essential for the people in the world of *Mādhavi*. These marks of distinction protect from falling into slavery and unwanted/undesired attacks from the people (55). The marks of distinction also show the heavy discrimination that exists in slave-based society. Also, Bhikshu raises the issue of inequality and discrimination based on class distinctions. On Ajay’s realization, Bhikshu writes: “He then realized the ‘inequality’ between her and himself. But was it his fault? Was it a crime to love her? Hasn’t he loved her for so long? Love and inequality! Inequality and love!” (64). Both the personal and the

social suffer from the structural inequalities in such societies because the will of the elite instrumentally shapes the fate of the common people. According to Dixit, slaves would get emancipation during great occasions: so, Hāryashwa of Ayodhyā plans to free some of them on the day of conception, others on the completion of six months of pregnancy, and yet others at the birth of Mādhavi's son (*Mādhavi* 199). Although it appears on the surface that the discrimination and inequalities result from the whims of the upper class, the examination of the underlying codes reveals that those forms of inequalities are rooted in the value chain that the society has developed.

The new values regarding the class positioning are required after social transformation for the exercise of liberty. As long as society does not enable itself to develop such structural codes that allow every to practice liberty regarding their personal choice, the realization of human potential does not take place. Regarding the problem of South Asian societies in the postcolonial context, Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan does not find them enabling themselves to develop new set of values suitable to address the contemporary problems even after winning independence. He argues:

Great India of the Asian continent! You are Ashoka. You are Mahavir.
You are Mahatma Gandhi. You are no more the colony of Elizabeth.
Even though the British have quit India, India could not abandon the
Britishers; maybe, because of this, isn't another Britisher going to be
born there? (243)

Even after the social change, Pradhan does not see the growth of new values: he questions the nature of change itself. The classical values are reborn and modified through the process of change in transforming the positioning of subjectivity through class in order that equality and freedom prevail after the social change.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Nepali modernity seeks to establish novel value system based on equality and freedom through social transformation. Grounding the transformation in the practices of the past, it sees continuity in temporality by/through which the cause and aspiration of social agents at present are served. In study of social history and transformation of society, the historical shift functions as a site of negotiation: the succeeding age that is aided with its agency points out the structural forces which promote inequalities. The succeeding age retains the classically held values; yet, it corrects the course the preceding age has taken with the objective of bringing it up to the expectation of the contemporary time. The preceding and the succeeding ages interact to establish new order in society, doing away with certain evil social norms. For instance, Nepali society presents the abolition of social institutions like sati and slavery while updating itself with the ethos of the present. In fact, the present becomes the measure through which to examine the past and set guideline for future of the society.

The nature of social change in Nepali case exemplifies that the agents begin to see it as both personal and collective social enterprise. The emergence of new voice that takes place in social scene first of all is equipped with 'art of doubt' and critical rationality, for the critical appreciation and comprehensive analysis of the society require these two tools. Now, the ethical issues detaining the ultimate growth of human potential are identified and critically approached in that the subjectivity attempting to shape the course of history has to develop the sense of the present by assessing the absent attributes that are required to cope up with the contemporary challenges. The foundational attribute that is observed in formation of subjectivity that aspire change in Nepal is self-sacrifice for social welfare. In the trajectory of

history, the formation of subjectivity, projection, and attempts to maintain the opposing forces result in formation of new subjectivity that is viewed through two lenses: self-perception and class. In fact, understanding of the personhood at the contemporary times it appears to self and as it appears through the structural conceptualization like class ultimately determines the nature and function of subjectivity in the changed situation. Thus, Nepal's quest for modernity through social transformation aspires at creation of a 'just social order' based on the principles of equality and freedom for the social welfare through creation of subjectivity compatible with the spirit of the present.

Nepali modernity becomes a dynamic process of relating the society up to the expectations of the contemporaneity when viewed through culture and history, the dynamics observed in it comprise of agency, choice, quest for equality and freedom, and self-sacrifice for the larger cause of social welfare. Most significantly, the dialogue between two ages at the juncture of history displays the ways in which Nepal's quest for modernity materializes these dynamics. Aspiring to move deep down the structural domain from which social inequalities emerge, the social agents begin to grow doubtful about the contemporary practices. Through art of critical reasoning, such agents question and pose threat to institutions that do not fit in the frame of equality and freedom. This study has taken two such social institutions that were washed away: Sati and Slavery. At the same time, transformation of the other values also takes place in society.

As evident through the analysis of historical and literary texts, Nepali modernity seeks to establish freedom and equality as the social agency expects in the contemporary time. The doubt and birth of critical rationality provide such agents

with the ability to form a personhood that helps bring about the change. Literary texts often address the absent attributes in the maker of change, and thus articulate the expectations and projection of society. Likewise, such texts form a gamut of the body of social imagination through which the society understands the necessity of contemporary society. On the other hand, the historical documents that are employed in the study help concretely materialize some of the cases in historical shifts in Nepal's quest for modernity.

CHAPTER 5. MODERNITY: NEPAL IN SOUTH ASIA

This research focuses on influence and initiation as the key marker of Nepali modernity in the backdrop of South Asian modernity. Specifically, Nepali modernity displays its typical ground in South Asia even when it shares some of the general attributes with the regional modernity. Close inspection and examination reveals that modernity in South Asia and Nepal independently emerges on their own. The regional mindset that appears in South Asian landscape develops the cultural values which various other modernities that develop as distinct cultures at the macro level seem to share in general. However, specifically talking about the nature of modernity at two layers, they stand so unique as revealed through the scrutiny of crosscurrents of subjectivity and cultural dynamics that each finds a unique voice, goal, and course of their own. In the backdrop of the regional modernity, Nepali modernity possesses distinct attributes in formation of social imagination and articulation of social agency through it. The subjective form through/in modernity also displays that it is rooted in the local ground and holds regional and global connection and awareness.

This study approaches South Asian modernity through four major angles: tradition, representation, resistance, and social imagination. The first of the dynamics of South Asian modernity emerges directly opposing the ideals of the Western modernity in that past in South Asia does not imply the notion of immaturity as implied in the Enlightenment discourses of modernity. The Kantian notion of social awakening requires that past be abandoned for the present to attain the ultimate realization of human potential. In fact, the South Asian modernity displays that its modernity at regional level upholds the cultural values and thus maintains the continuity with the traditional values. In other words, as the classical case of Gandhi

fighting against colonialism in India shows, the modernity in South Asian landscape maintains its root in the living tradition as such. The traditional values and forces prove to be the window for the people to understand the contemporary social reality and frame their way of relating themselves to the world and the world to themselves in the contemporary times.

The cultural forces that appear in the contemporary society have also been largely shaped with persistence of traditional value system. The connectedness of the South Asian modernity with the present reality and the knowledge system of the past posits it in a position to adequately balance both contemporary and the past dimensions along the temporal lines. Similarly, as another dimension of South Asian modernity, representation demands that the critique of the western episteme, colonial impacts, and self-representation be adequately addressed. As a zone of cultural encounter through imperial expansion, South Asia has also undergone the influence of the colonial domination and direct rule. This colonial encounter has led to formation of unique kind of perception of the native subjectivity about the foreign practice. On the one hand, the evaluation of the western episteme is witnessed in the land as the outcome of the cultural encounter; on the other, the people begin to be influenced with the material prosperity that the colonial values seemingly promise to bring about in the society. The issue of representation in the process of writing history and literature raises as the prominent issue in that the native also, learning the art of the foreigner, begin to seek their place in the mainstream history that the foreigner attempts to promote.

The issue of self-representation in representation gains the momentum as the result of the postcolonial scholarship in history and literature. In the nations formerly

under the control of the imperial administration of the west, the annals of history and the repository of literature have suffered the epistemic violence that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak designates as the attack upon the cognitive power by the ruling system and center through distortion of the native cultural values. Also, such values provide the people to view themselves vis-à-vis the world and the vice versa. As the source of one's identity, the understanding of history and literature awards the people with the understanding of themselves as the agents of their social reality. The social history through political narrative as the macro and literary interaction as the micro history finds grounds to see how the social agency to form and transform their contemporary social reality is reflected in the formation of the discourses on self-representation. South Asian landscape of modernity presents that the social agency gains the prime significance through their self-perception of themselves.

The colonial encounter in the Subcontinent also led to cultural encounter with the imperial forces, also known as the colonization of the West. This crisscrossing resulted in resistance as the major dynamics of the South Asian modernity in general. The deep observation in the cultural flow of the regional modernity reveals three further dimensions to resistance. In the beginning, the regional mindset completely rejects anything and everything associated with the colonial forces as the foreign. The native taste does not really acknowledge the other as the inherent part of their own mode of social structuration. However, the blunt rejection gradually begins to turn into appropriation when the native location begins to embrace the foreign values with the modifications of their own in order to suit their taste and social organization. As a matter of fact, the cultural rejection turns into appropriation in the due process when the foreign is appropriated in the new cultural situation, resulting in a mixed, hybrid

situation. The hybrid consciousness still does not lose its hold in the quest of the pure domain of social life before the encounter. In fact, the quest to revive the lost heritage of the social life that existed before the colonial intrusion still survives even after the process of appropriation begins in the social life. However, this argument developed so far also does not imply that each of the stated dimensions emerge as the forces in the historical chronological order. On the contrary, they happen to have simultaneous growth of their own in the development of the social and the political in the South Asian cultural and social milieu.

The decolonization movement in the cultural interaction in the political domain also demands enhancement of nationalism so as to help the collective stand firmly like in the past (before the intervention of the imperial forces in the collective). The nationalist struggle begins to examine the discourses that underrate the natives in order to justify the superiority of the colonizers. Likewise, the national history under the complete control of the foreign bureaucratic set of rule erases certain nationalist movements as the threats for the imperial forces. The historiography of South Asia also shows this trait: hence, the process of rewriting begins in order to reconstruct the history of the 'downtrodden' or the 'left-outs' in the canonical process of history making. In this sense, the third fundamental dynamics of regional modernity, resistance forms a cluster of rejection, appropriation, and rewriting that reveal the pattern of gestation and birth of a unique subjectivity in the South Asian region.

The historical and literary intersection of society at both regional and national level are required to discuss the emergence of subjectivity in that the real and the assumed help understand the formation of social agency as such. For one thing, the formation of South Asian subjectivity is deeply rooted in traditional value-system of

the society as witnessed in the case of Gandhi and Tagore; for the other, the projection of this kind of subjectivity through social imagination as manifest in the literary productions of the region is also rooted in the appropriation of the traditional mythical structures as evident in the narration of Dixit in *Mādhavi*. The path that social imagination in South Asian modernity explores and maintains first of all does not leave the track set in the classical times on the one hand; on the other, equally significant issue is brought forth through the presentation of the self-perception which is so instrumental in identifying the lacks in society.

As long as the social agency fails to identify the areas of absences in the mode and structure of social organization, the society fails to formulate the guiding vision for the people to explore. The essential dimension of subjectivity thus rests on self-perception of the actors of the collective who aspire to bridge the gap between the present reality and the projection of the society. The absences identified in the process of society relating itself to the spirit of the age through formulation of specific ways to relate to oneself and the world play pivotal roles in that they are instrumental in shaping the course subjectivity explore for the social enhancement. Moreover, the social vision of change as witnessed in Gandhi and Dixit or Chandra Shumsher in both national and the regional area assume the potential to provide the basic meaning for the founding of social vision. The quest of modernity basically depends upon the assertion of social agency that identifies the areas of lapses whereby the whole social and political aspiration is directed towards fulfilling the chasm between the present and the aspired, and realizing the social agency for the collective welfare of the society.

In this backdrop, Nepali modernity presents its distinct standing with certain

unique features in the major dimensions like social change, formation of the collective voice, sustaining the classical values implying the (trans)formation of social organization/configuration, and the issues related to subjectivity. Despite the fact that modernity in South Asia and Nepal share the fundamental values rooted in the classical tradition, the points of departures are adequately seen when the both are posited in the crisscross of history and literature. Historical facts are required to track the path Nepali modernity as such has taken across the temporal and spatial dimension in the evolution of Nepali society in particular and the social movements taking place at the local level. Similarly, the social aspirations and the projection of subjectivity, its self-perception, and the aspiration for change in the social configuration appear firmly in the development of the nation as examined through the cultural production through literary analysis. Thus, literature turns into a site where to observe the play of social aspiration and formation of the collective for the society to desire for the jolts and bolts in the making of history. The shift of the age emerges as another area whereby to understand the major realization of the social aspiration.

The understanding of the tradition in Nepali modernity appears as the impetus for the social change in that, unlike the Kantian perception of tradition as the evil force in history, Nepali modernity assumes that requirement of a considerable amount of modification in the prevalent social configuration does not put the previous arrangement of the society along the irrational and/or immature state of living. The society mostly attempts to update itself with the changing ethos of the time in order to relate itself to the world and the world to itself, assuming that both are complementary to each other. At the regional level, the manifest force to compare to and contrast with during the colonial present and its aftermath is the foreign culture and its epistemic

hurts. However, with the benefits of such absences in Nepal's case, the modernity enjoys a completely different state as it seeks to understand the contemporary reality through the perception of history and the mythical narrative as evident in Madan Mani Dixit's *Mādhavi* and Chandra Shumsher's "Slavery Abolition Speech." The quest for liberty and freedom are deeply rooted in the classical values of social welfare and collective well-being in Nepal.

Unlike the historical transition in colonial society that largely depends on resistance as the major impetus for building both social configuration and subjectivity, Nepal displays a unique case in that it explores the dictation of social structures basically on its own. The structural inequalities leading to formation of bonded subjectivity that is imposed limitation in the exercise of freedom and liberty in quest of realization of ultimate human potential from within turn visible for the actors aspiring to change the fate of the structure. As modernity foretells the story of human endeavors to transform their present reality towards an ideal projected through social imagination, the core values lying deep in the structural domain are put at test in the scale of emerging ethics, whereby the judgment regarding the current values is generated in order to meet the requirements of aspired social space. Most significantly, the collective demands for such endeavor turn into a locale to transform the society at two levels: the personal and the social. The personal transformation precedes the social in both South Asian and Nepali modernity.

Social change in Nepal uniquely presents two ages in dialogue and the former giving way to the latter by losing the hazards/irrational/illogical/limitations in practice of liberty and freedom in the former and gaining new ways to cope up with the emerging issues at hand. Most significantly the emergent age also maintains its

continuous relation with the former. In colonial societies, the transition from the colonial to winning national independence is marked with the break in the flow of tradition as such. In Nepal, the continuity with the correction of course of historical development is vividly witnessed in Abolition of Slavery and Sati. The social institutions in practice at a point in history lose their hold in the value chain of society as the collective social agency is activated in such a way that the energy of the state is directed against them. The realization of the social that they cannot carry on with these institutions gives them the energy and vigor to find out the ills that these systems induced in the social order and thus they get abolished for the cause of collective welfare.

The formation of the collective in Nepal is also built along two basic themes of representation and resistance. The social imagination and historical experience lead towards formation of self-image of the social in such a way that the contemporaneity is posited in the historical reality of the society. Similarly, the social institutions that enhance the representation move back to the classical repository of values in the scripture to find a suitable narrative through which to perceive the contemporary reality. In fact, the issue of representation in formation of the collective as evident through Madan Mani Dixit's *Mādhavi* and B. P. Koirala's *Jail Journal* imply the basic argument underlying the social imagination supplemented with the historical experience. In addition to this, the theme of resistance presents a different paradigm in Nepal in that unlike resistance in colonial society where the thrust of the society is directed against the ruling elite who are civilizationally different, resistance in Nepal is all directed against the paradoxes of contemporary life with a corrective purpose. For instance, Bhupi Sherchan's resistance identifies the areas of presence in which the

contemporary thrust of the society misses the expected course. The negative images that he brings about to discuss the social reality also implies how the society could have taken the better course.

Although both modernities under consideration deal with the fundamental question of sacrifice and social welfare as rooted in the traditional value system, Nepali modernity presents that the quest for social welfare also unites the divergent groups of people through willingness for self-sacrifice. The story of Gālav and Mādhavi in Dixiti's *Mādhavi* and the persona's observation in Laxmi Prasad Devkota's "The Lunatic" bring forth the issue of self versus the other. The other is also the part of the self as much as the self is the part of the other for both creative geniuses. However, the colonial experience in South Asian region hinders in formation of such ideal as such. In Nepal, the responsibility of the self to correct the course of the resistant other requires willingness to self-sacrifice on the part of the seeker of transformation for collective welfare. Mādhavi and the lunatic persona in Dixit and Devkota respectively revolt against the oppressive socio-political reality of their contemporary times to bring about complete transformation by addressing the lapses the society has been unable to bridge.

The awakened subjectivity in the interaction of the social imagination with the historical reality appears as the first precondition in the formation of subjectivity, capable of finding a voice for transformation. Subjectivity formation in Nepali modernity also appears in a very distinct condition in that unlike the regional modernity in colonial context where the distinctly different civilizational groups struggle with each other, Nepal projects the typical subjectivity that begins to doubt the contemporary reality in quest of critical rationality. As a matter of fact, taking the

social configuration of granted does not challenge the social order even when it challenges the exercise of liberty and freedom in attaining the ultimate possible realization of human agency. The people aspiring to (trans)form a novel ethical core that guides the contemporary reality also seek the areas in which the full employment of human rationality –however, such reason does not essentially require to be immune from the tradition as in Kantian-Habermasian nexus of modernity –to assess the contemporary reality. For instance, Gālav in Dixit's *Mādhavi* attains this state of doubt in quest of new order in society. The realization of doubt through Vishwāmitra's education puts Gālav in a position to seek for four-horses for the cause of abolition of slavery. The oppressive mode of social order thus gets challenged through doubt that begins to critically assess the social configuration.

Most importantly, such subjectivity in quest for equality maintains equilibrium in that it does not fight against the forces without. The total reconfiguration of the social order in fact magnifies the inner functioning of the seeker under question. Hence, Devkota's lunatic persona, Rimal's vision of revolutionary, Koirala's speaker in *Jail Journal*, and Dixit's *Mādhavi* and Gālav become various dimensions of typical modern Nepali subjectivity that seek to maintain balance while attaining the full realization of a 'just' society. Furthermore, capable of addressing the contemporary issues at hand and organizing them for the cause of human dignity, social structure in function emerges when history provides society with a real ground to examine the course of its evolution and social imagination that manifest through literature with social aspiration and projection of subjectivity in a particular direction. The guiding vision of the society emerges as in Gopal Prasad Rimal's search for a revolutionary youth who dismantles the ills tormenting the collective and paves road for social

prosperity –both the inner and the outer.

Nepali modernity in South Asian milieu appears with distinct marks in search for equality, freedom, and liberty. The nature and function of subjectivity in the course of historical development stand completely different from the way modernity has evolved in South Asia and Nepal. The examination of historical and literary development reveals that though each complements the other in certain respects of social restructuration and both are grounded in similar type cultural landscape, the distinct marks of Nepali modernity show the unique position of Nepal in South Asia.

5.1 Implications of the Study

This study provides a functional theory about Nepali modernity in relation to South Asian modernity. Even when it holds the distinctly observable presence in the regional cultural milieu, Nepali modernity shares certain features with the regional modernity. Methodologically, this study provides a frame of analysis of other modernities of the region in relation to the regional one. In fact, the relationship between the regional and the local can be explained through the methodological designed developed through this study. Besides, future studies on local modernities in Nepal can be benefitted if they aim at studying the local in relation to the national. In this regard, this study opens a wide scope for further research.

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