

I. Rabi Thapa and Middle Class Consciousness

This research analyses Rabi Thapa's *Nothing to Declare* in the spirit of Mark Lietchy's concept of Nepali modernity to expose the cultural transformation (making of a distinct culture) in Nepal towards its own version of modernity. By projecting, the young characters like Ashok, Subodh Bikram and others and their orientation towards the consumption - consumption of foreign goods as well as foreign culture- Thapa in the novel has tried to portray the true nature of Nepali modernity.

Rabi Thapa is a writer, journalist, and editor based in Kathmandu. Though he spent close half of his life in the UK, Australia, and France, he grew up and went to school in this city. Until very recently he was the editor of the English language weekly Nepali Times. He quit his job to focus on writing. However, he hopes to continue to work as a freelance editor. He used to read wherever he could as a child and enjoyed creative writing and contributing to school publication. But the lack of opportunity and the pressure to have a career meant it was a long time before he went beyond crumbling in diaries and journals to actually consider writing as a potential profession. Even having contributed to newspapers and magazines, he never felt he could call himself as a sustained piece of work like a completion of short stories or a novel of course in the eyes of the public. He says that he writes because he has a compulsion to express himself through writing. In a daily newspaper, Gorakha Patra Thapa once said writing helps him to articulate his thought and reach out to those who might be interested in his thoughts fictional or otherwise. There are many writers who have impressed him. To name some of them are, Auster, Kundera, Atwood, Achebe and more. They inspire him that every thing is material. During his writing, he starts with an idea of what he wants to write for. The latter will influence the former as time goes by. Hopefully not in the way that compromise the integrity of the text. *Nothing*

to Declare is a collection of 16 stories that reflect the experience and aspirations of middle class youth in Kathmandu.

According to Mark Lietchy, Middle class people are those in between those neither corrupted by deprivation, nor debauched by excess. The middle class is “tied down” by the “restraints” of the social order. Middle class in Kathmandu is a social space where people negotiate what it means to be both Nepali and Modern; it is a place in which youths carry on a dialogue about how to wed the realities of a transformed materials and social universe with powerful preexisting cultural value and discursive frames. Mark Liechty defines the concept of middle class of Kathmandu in his book *Out Here in Kathmandu*:

To be middle class in Kathmandu means to be part of a project to overcome the paradox (or oxymoron) of the “modern Nepali” But joining this project comes at a cost. Participants must be willing (and able) to play the risky game of synchronized public consumption. The middle class occupies a precarious position along two continua, one the one hand, it is shaped by its self conscious awareness of its position between “high” and “low” classes. On the other, it is forced to pioneer a space for Nepali national identity somewhere between the global ideological poles of traditional and modernity. To be middle class in Kathmandu is to walk this knife’s edge between low and high, traditional and modernity. (5)

Members of the middle class tend to be defined more by their values, expectations, and aspirations than their income level although income may constrain the manner in which some of their aspirations can be realized.

In addition to this, Lietchy also argues that the new middle class did not own the “means of production” but also its member who offered access to other forms of

“property”- consumer goods, autos, and even private homes. The growth of this middle class reflected both the rapidly increasing bureaucratic services and professions, labor sector and the ability of the new consumer economy to absorb large portion of the old working classes in to the middle class by encouraging them to construct their social identities more around the goods and property they owned than the kind of work they did. Middle class people have money and just do whatever they want. They have parties, they go here and there and since there’s a lot of money, there’s always a lot of enjoyment for them. They can have anything like money as it’s the most important thing for them and they have it.

Rabi Thapa’s *Nothing to Declare* is the story of collective experience of middle class youths of Kathmandu. “Night out in Kathmandu” for example is about the middle class youths who smoke pot and get drunk on screwdrivers during a night out at Thamel, a local urban space teeming with global tourist and phoren returned middle class Nepalis. In “After Party” the youths search for dope in Thamel and gaze voyeuristically at a scene of cop interrogating, a tranny before visiting a dance bar. It is the act of consumption drinking, smoking, gazing at the dancers that define the class locations of most of the youths populating Thapa’s fictional universe.

In “The Trail” the scenario is different. It’s located in Kathmandu’s “International” circuit, the resto bar, the pubs at the Thamel area-have to drifter travelers and local youths who look for change. But it is also a failed love story of the Nepali protagonist falling for an Israeli girl. In away the story also reflect the rootless that affect many youths missing home while abroad but bored when back home , “I talk about what the Nepali at not be here. What I wanted to do with myself and how things turned out. A great listlessness buoyed along by a great passion” (78).

Thapa’s stories also, however, show that a homogeneous idea concerning the Nepali middle class might itself be a fiction. Generational differences cut across the

terrain of middle-ness since the middle-class people youths of today differ from their parents and grandparents. While the class identity of earlier generations was defined by the foreign film and TV serials arriving from India, middle-class youth of today project their desire upon other foreign locations, including that of the UK and USA, and defines their class location but also creates a fantasy transcending class borders to become “almost, though quit not” upper class.

In “Desire” Subodh, the rich employer’s son, falls for the charms of the maid servant but can’t reach out beyond the social hierarchy. “Her black, black hair swept clears of her face, smooth complexioned and proportioned her startling eyes reflecting his”(38). It shows the present condition of middle class youths of Kathmandu where middle class youths mostly fall in love with beautiful girls.

In “Initiation” Ashok undergoes the rights of passage ceremony to become a man while dreaming of a passage to America to become “modern” and “upper class.” For some their “Angels” were trainee girlfriends in all innocence. They’d go to see their angels, take them present, and tell them how much they loved them it was no surprise that the cutest kids were noticed first of all” (13). As for the youths, there is no doubt that they are seeking to construct their personal identities, as all the manuals tell us. But identities do not come in generic Nepali forms; they come shaped and coded in terms of class like everything else in Nepal. Moreover, the only place for an adolescent to seek them outside the family is in high school social groupings that are themselves class structured. Nepali youths may not have a consciously oppositional class subculture, like the working class youths of other countries.

Thapa’s characters are all reflecting their confusion about traditionality and modernity, and there definition of class and success amid the Maoist insurgency who kidnap a middle class youth in “Home for Dashain” and the servitude of a maid in “Nepali maid”. The woman is from the lower class working in a middle class

household in Kathmandu-differentiating order and cleanliness of her master's "filth" of her own. Since its publication in 2011, *Nothing to Declare* has attracted most of the critics' attention. So, it has been reviewed in a number of ways. Most of the reviewers or critics like Ranjita Biswas, Sanjeev Uprety, Martina A. Nicolls, Saurabh K Shahi analyze the novel from their perspectives.

Ranjita Biswas in an article "No Place like Home," on *The Hindu*, writes:

The 16 short stories in Rabi Thapa's debut collection *Nothing to Declare* is led by, quite aptly, "Initiation." The story introduces the reader to the milieu of Nepalese society where adolescent Ashok is going through the thread ceremony to initiate him into adulthood, so to say. He rebels inwardly at the endless rituals but dare not protest as the relatives hover around while his cousins get their fill of pulling his legs at his scrawny and "freshly shaven body." Ashok enjoys the sense of freedom only when he literally tries to follow his uncle Sano-mama's whispered words "Now you are man . . . you can leave home and go wander the whole world." (2)

It is in fact, Thapa's stories are woven around a young protagonist from Nepal, whether at home or abroad, are a mixed bag. The initial promise shown in the first story is not carried through uniformly to the end. However, the plots are interesting glimpses into the Nepalese society which are similar in many ways to neighboring India. In the story *Desire*, Subodh, the rich employer's son, falls for the charms of the maid servant but cannot reach out beyond the social hierarchy. On the other hand, "A Nepali Maid" sensitively portrays an old faithful servant Gauri's life where the *malik* and the servant are mutually dependent. In her words, "Though some of the plots are interesting, the style falters sometimes. Awkward construction of sentences jars at some places (5)".

Moreover, Martina A. Nicolls in her essay “Everything to Declare” writes, Rabi Thapa’s collection of short stories in *Nothing to Declare* is in fact everything to declare. His stories tell of cultural practices and influences on Nepal from India, China, and other neighboring nation as well as well as the west - England, America and Australia (11). The stories, for the most part, revolve around young middle class youths and their lives in and outside of the Nepal. The almost stories present the experience of the middle class, educated young men of Kathmandu, ultimately disenchanted, passionate and pensive, as they move from high school to marriage, pushing against the limits of a changing.

Likewise, another critic and reviewer, Sanjeev Uprety finds that the novel is about the masculinity of contemporary middle-class youths seems to be constructed at a middle space between tradition and modernity, by the new modes of consumption, and by a desire to go to the US, UK and other foreign locations. Thapa’s collection begins with “Initiation,” a story describing the bratabandha ceremony of a middle class boy Ashok. Traditionally the ceremony signifies rite of passage for Hindu males; after the ceremony, the boy supposedly becomes a man. Within the social imaginary of contemporary middle classes, however, what transforms a boy into a man is a passage to “America” or other centers of Western modernity.

Initiation into the rites of contemporary Western youth culture-including familiarity with the “fashion” of drugs, bars and malls, is not only what creates the class identity of the youths but also make them “proper” men. Leichy argues that middle classes of Kathmandu describe themselves as both suitably modern in contrast to the upper classes that are excessively modern, and the lower classes that, cut off from the rituals of modernity, are “seen” as too uncouth, almost pre-modern. Thapa’s stories portray middle-class youths that are searching for a suitable model of “proper” manhood that is caught up between tradition and modernity.

When we talk about modernity, we cannot negate the concept of globalization. Globalization is synonymous to modernization. Globalization describes the process by which regional economies, societies, and culture have become integrated through a global network of political ideas through communication, transportation, and trade. It is usually recognized as being driven by a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural, political, and biological factors. The term can also refer to the transnational circulation of ideas and languages. An aspect of the world which has gone through the process can be said to be globalized. Similarly, globalization leads to a world where people from all countries become more integrated and aware of common interest and share community. In this way, globalization plays a great role in the development of new consciousness, new ideas of the life of people in the globe. Due to the influence of globalization the old tradition ideas/concept have been demolished and new concepts have been mooted the life of people. In this regard, Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge write:

Modernity is now everywhere, it is simultaneously everywhere, and it is interactively everywhere. But, it is not only everywhere, it is also in a series of somewhere, and it is through one such somewhere, that this volume enters the global reality of modernity and for such a localized entry we propose an other general category. (2)

Due to the globalization all regional cultures, economies and societies have been integrated throughout the globe through mass media and improved communication. It is the consciousness of time and space, and self and others that is shared by all the human beings in the cosmos. Modernity can be realized when tradition has been destroyed.

Narrators of Thapa's stories are extremely self-conscious about the middle-classness of their class location, leading to what might be called a "narcissistic closure"; a

total preoccupation with the emergent rituals of their own class. At the same time, however, such narcissistic borders of class are punctuated by political upheavals, by the threat of the Maoists who kidnap the middle-class hero of “Home for Dashain,” and by uncompromising portrayals of subaltern characters such as Gauri in “Nepali Maid.” In this story, the narrator breaks through the narcissistic horizons of his class in order to understand the institution of “servant-hood” that supports the middle-class Nepali cultures. Gauri is a lower-class woman from the village who labors in a middle-class household in Kathmandu. It is her labor that allows the household to uphold its virtues of cleanliness and order; virtues that help it distinguish itself from the supposed “filth” and chaos of the lower classes, and probably also from the excessive modernity and resultant chaos-including imagined sexual chaos-of the upper classes.

Likewise, Vidyadhar Gadgil talks about *Nothing to Declare* that, Growing up in tradition-bound Nepal. Smoky bars in Kathmandu where rootless upper-middle-class youth gather, unable to reconcile to life in their home country. The desire to migrate to the West, and the difficulties in fitting in there, often forcing a reluctant return, Rabi Thapa’s debut collection of short stories has this and more, effectively evoking the flavors’ of life in Kathmandu – at least as seen from the vantage point of the relatively privileged sections of Nepali youths. Thapa’s depiction of this world is uniquely Kathmandu, but has resonances with which readers in other South Asian cities can easily identify.

The tales in this volume are arranged in an age-elated progression, startling with stories of childhood and moving in to adolescence and youths. This sparkling debut, with self-assured prose and convincing narratives, contains a number of gems-notably “The Trail” and the final story of the volume, “Valley of Tears”. There are some weak ones too, like “Home for Dashain”- about Maoist violence, an almost

mandatory strand in any book on Nepal. Thapa sticks firmly to the world he knows which of this collection. Nonetheless, the volume leaves one looking forward to Thapa's next work, when his ambition will hopefully expand to give full scope to his ample talent.

Furthermore, describing the nature of the characters includes in the collection *Nothing to Declare*, Saurabh Kumar Shahi writes: *Nothing to Declare* is a collection of short stories by Rabi Thapa that are either set in Nepal or amidst Nepalese Diaspora. A mix of sweet, sour, coming-of-age and sexual awakening sagas, *Nothing to Declare* allow its readers to pip into the life of a rainbow of Nepalese character like never before" (*Sunday Indian*7). Appreciating the life of Thapa, he again says; "*Nothing to Declare* is an essential buy for everybody who wants to experience Nepal up, close and personal. Rather, I will add, it remains the second best thing after going to Nepal and experiencing it by yourself. Not the landscape, but the people (7)". Taking the help from the above mentioned critics, this study research claims that Rabi Thapa's *Nothing to Declare* is the study of modern Nepali middle class youths particularly of Kathmandu.

Thapa's stories also, however, show that a homogeneous idea concerning the Nepali middle class might itself be a fiction. Generational differences cut across the terrain of middle-ness since the middle-class people youths of today differ from their parents and grandparents. While the class identity of earlier generations was defined by the foreign film and TV serials arriving from India, middle-class youths of today project their desire upon other foreign locations, including that of the UK and USA, and defines their class location but also creates a fantasy transcending class borders to become "almost-, though quit not" upper class.

Although this study analyzes the construction of modern middle class youths of Kathmandu, it does not offer a compressive analysis of lower or upper classes in

suitably modern. Rather on analysis of modern middle class agency as conceptualized by Mark Liechty remains the primary construction in modern middle class youth, a compressive discursive analyses of Thapa's often lauded critique of suitable modernism in *Nothing to Declare*.

The use of English word; such as "body", "face" and 'love" in colloquial Nepali marks out a new space of imagination in the minds of young people, a space heavily mediated by commercial forces. Thus what this new English uses signals is how young people's imaginations have been colonized by commercially mediated consumer ideals, and how certain people use these "imaginative resources" in new projects of distinction; in this case, projects of producing and embodying Middle class culture with generated consumer identities. What those voices demonstrate is how young people in Kathmandu actively use mass media and other commodities to imagine and produce certain class and gender components of their social class and gender components of their social identities. (215)

Regardless of the obvious modern and middle class youths overtones of *Nothing To Declare* a critical lens of the suitably modern; making middle class culture in a new consumer place the spotlight on the important ways in which its aims to understanding hoe the class in constructed and how do middle class youths do experience "Middle-classness" in this particular.

As this study dramatizes the making of middle class youths as delineated in *Nothing to Declare* in the context of modernity in the story, it follows the lead of modern middle class culture critic Mark Liechty who offers a remedy to the rampant representation of the reflection of youth. Most of the characters in *Nothing to Declare* they are caught between imitating their western counterparts. They conflicts about

their tradition values find themselves in to imbibe traditional values he suggest that a western model or image of modernity is simultaneously the object of intense local desire and always out of reach.

This study is divided into three parts, the first chapter contains general introduction of the research entitled “Introduction of Rabi Thapa and Middle class consciousness.” The second chapter embodies the discussion of the theoretical tools followed by textual evidences. Theory of Modernity is applied along with the idea propounded by Mark Liechty and some other critics. The third chapter is the conclusion of the entire research especially it focuses on the findings.

11. Middle Class Consciousness in Rabi Thapa's *Nothing to Declare*

The novel *Nothing to declare* by Rabi Thapa is a platform where the issue of middle class is discussed vividly through the portrayal of middle class people of Kathmandu within it. Middle class emerges as a never-ending cultural project that is simultaneously at odds with itself and with its class other. The middle class is a constantly renegotiated cultural space—a space of ideas, values, good practice and embodied behavior in which the terms of inclusion and exclusion are endlessly tested, and negotiated. From this point of view it is the process not the product that constitutes class.

Just like the milieu presented in the collection of the stories resembles the 1980s and 1990s society during the third wave of economic development and industrialization in the region. Not only in economic modernization, but also leading to the implementation of important economic policies, apart from increasing economic growth, those policies encouraged export-led industrial transformation. That further facilitated the growing movement towards a new economic system driven by financial globalization, market liberalization and the globalization of products. As a result of these economic policies, the process of economic growth and industrialization has produced improvement in absolute living standards. That seems to have improved Nepalese people's living standards, and a large number of people were able to move into the expanding middle class.

The middle class in Kathmandu is a social space where people want to know what to be modern is. A place in which to carry on a dialogue about how to wed the realities of a transformed material and social universe with powerful preexisting cultural value and discursive frames, which constitutes this sense of “middle classness,” is not necessary of common lifestyle or a uniform set of values. But, a shared project of locating oneself in a new and legitimate space between two devalued social

poles. The very characters represent the value of middle class family in a whole. At the beginning section of the novel Ashok is going through the thread ceremony to initiate him to in to adulthood. “It is a big day for you. You are going to be a man once your *Bartaband* is done” (1).

In “Initiation” the story introduces the reader to the environment of Nepalese society where adolescent Ashok is going through the thread ceremony to initiate him into adulthood, so to say. He rebels inwardly at the endless rituals but dare not protest as the relatives hover around while his cousins get their fill of pulling his legs at his scrawny and “freshly shaven body.” Ashok enjoys the sense of freedom only when he literally tries to follow his uncle Sano-mama's whispered word. “Now you are a man. . . You can leave home and wander the whole world” (2). We could see that at this point the sense of freedom – only when he literally tries to follow thread ceremony. In the connection, Mark Lietchy writes:

“Middle class” that cuts not only between the poor and the rich but also through the categories of tradition and modernity that a global development ideology associates with this social dichotomy. . . the middle class are those people struggling to rescue a socially valid traditional Nepali. (16)

Ashok is a middle class boy who undergoes the rights of passage ceremony to become a man while dreaming of a passage to America to become ‘modern’ and ‘upper classes’ Middle class people come to experience themselves, their city and their location in a world of meaning through interaction with media and other consumer goods from around the world of that cast shadows of desire and marginalization over everyday life. Litchy further says, “. . . Consumption is one of the key cultural dynamics of middle class life. How class formations relate to goods and how goods are imbued themes in social theories of class” (30). The middle class is a class of

people in the middle of a societal hierarchy. In *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Gerth and Wright say, “socio-economic term, the middle class, is the broad group of people in contemporary society who fall socio-economically between the working class and upper class” (19). The common measures of what constitutes middle class vary significantly between different cultures which I could count here in the novel.

An Indian socio-cultural critic Saurabh Kumar Shahi, finds that *Nothing to Declare*, allows its readers to pip in to the life of a rainbow of Nepalese characters lied never before. Not all of the sixteen stories are engaging, but majorities of them that are enough to spell bind you. He considers Rabi Thapa’s writing a marvelous gets to his act in the very first story, initiation which maps a child’s matrix of emotion during his Bratabanda’ ceremony. But more than anything the story inadvertently takes it readers in a world that draws parallel with some of the traditions that are prevalent in eastern states. Similarly, in the novel, Ashok a middle class boy is going to do thread ceremony to become a man while dreaming of a passage to America to become modern and upper class. In fact, these things are the part of culture. Doing this, Ashok feels that he is a man.

Thapa’s *Nothing to Declare* shows the present condition of the middle class youths of Kathmandu who want to be modern and upper class. In the story, “Angel” Thapa talks about Dhiraj, a boy from middle class family. He is starved of love. He falls in to relationship with girls, with whom he was in constant competition in class and on the terrain. In this regard, Thapa writes:

He never thought of them as his angels but he spent a lot of time with them, talking about films, his family, school, gossip inviting them to his room to listen to music. Sometimes, he had just sit in class, thinking about one or the other looking forward to seeing one at the

house. Other times, he found himself telling them how much he cared of them. (16)

Dhiraj is used to living with the girls. He uses to spend all of his times with them talking about films music and their families. He also uses to tell them how much he loves them. He used to do all this things because he has strong faith upon modern fashion, all kinds of cinema which impressed in the minds of young people. It is because of the consumption of modern fashion and commercial media and adaptation of norms and values of globalization. Globalization helps people to create new ideology and new concepts besides the adoption of tradition norms and values. For this point, we can say that middle class Nepali society is on the path of modernity which no longer believes on the norms and values of tradition. In this case Marshall Berman writes:

The maelstrom of modern life has been felt from a sources: great discoveries in the physical science, changing out image of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge in to technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds of the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle (2)

Modernity implies a gradual change in the attitude, ideas, and belief of the people because of various factors such as the process of urbanization, development of science and technology. The advancement of science and technology serves as the crystals for the flourishing modernity. Modern science, communication, philosophy, industrialization etc. stimulate the progress of human life, moreover, human consciousness. The emergence of modern science and technology, communication, philosophy, industrialization etc. have played vital role to create a new human environment.

Not only this, these things also contribute people to distinguish them from past to the present and also to destroy the old beliefs. That is why the germination of new mode of thought can be taken as a synonymous to modernity. The very state of modernity is possible only through the modern means. Similarly, in the story “Angels” Dhiraj represent the modern being. Dhiraj is not only youth of modern thought but also a representative of so-called middle class family of Kathmandu.

Nepali youths are also attracted to English films and pornography. They are used to seeing it with more interest. And because of that there is bad impression upon them. New Nepali youths all are almost similar in that case. Because of the impression of the foreign films and media, Nepali youths are used to doing these things. Foreign films and media, especially pornography have become necessity for middle class youths and they want to see it with very interest. For that, Thapa says:

Dhiraj found himself watching with rather more interest. There is one big screen at the back of the hall; Lassiter was having a drink with a beautiful, curly-haired brunette. They talk a while with mysterious smiles; then they moved closed and kissed. This was exciting enough. He stared open mouth as the woman stripped Lassiter of his shirt and pushed him to the floor. She then dragged; his trousers off roughly. The man seemed drugged; he didn't nothing to resist. But what happened next was most extra ordinary of all. (14)

Dhiraj is a teenager. He used to see the English films with interest. On the screen there is a beautiful woman with a man. They talk a while with smile and move to kiss each other. They start to kiss with excitement. Then the woman drags man's trousers but man doesn't resist.

Youths in Katmandu often view western films as stories of modernity, a modernity that is virtually always constructed as an object of desire. Teenagers are

always modern consumers and consumers of pornography for some of legitimate goods and services for others. It is these mixed, often intensely negative meanings associated with the word 'teen' that stand in such sharp contrast to meanings promoted in consumerial media. For that, Lietchy says:

Hard-core western screen pornography has been available in Kathmandu (on a small scale) for decades, but with increasing buying power among middle class families and the wide spread availability(since around 1980) of VCR technology , viewing “ blue films” has become a more and more common experience for men and women, young and old. (353)

Kathmandu is the place where everything is available if we have money. So for that pornography is also available here. And most of the people use to buy and see it. Its market becomes very increasing nowadays and it becomes the common experience for all men and women. For those CDs, VCR and DVDs are available here. And nowadays it becomes the enjoying parts of peoples' life. Thousands of pornographic films are easily available in the video shops. In Kathmandu, these days even though (pornographic) films shot in foreign countries are easily available; the desire of local people to see Nepali young men and women in blue films is growing rapidly.

Today's young populations prefer foods, cloths, music and several other commodities which are locally and internationally considered as the marks of modern lifestyle. In other words, the consumption of modern love of fast food, rap music, jeans and English language can be some symbol of modernity as practiced in Kathmandu.

Rabi Thapa also however presents the condition of middle class youths who do many things to satisfy the sexual urge, and other many things. It is as truer for Kathmandu. Kathmandu's middle class youths want to be English, for that they use to

read English magazines, listen to English music and use to watch English video and especially movie and according to those English movies they want to live their lives.

In that case, Lietchy says:

The publishers had identified a group of middle class youth who were pioneering the newly opened modern space between child and adulthood. Their aim was to also move in to this “between” space of ambiguity with a product that would provide youth with answer to questions that what it means to be modern or be English. These included audiocassette shop and rental stores, beauty parlor and body buildings club, computer and foreign language training schools, photo studio and sporting goods stores, stationers and book shop, yoga centre and disco and a range of snack and fast restaurants. (31)

It is mostly because of the availability of everything in the market. Kathmandu becomes the place of the consumer space where people can find everything with money. So that because of the money, people become more advanced and they can buy everything here. One of the most insistent of these new meaning systems is the fast-growing local market for consumer goods. From Hong Kong and Singapore, the Gulf states, from Europe and North America to China and India, goods from around the world pour in to Kathmandu to be sold everywhere from glitzy elite boutiques and malls, to make shift sidewalks stands.

According to Lietchy, today’s middle class youths show that they are free and want to be free. Because of the modernist fashion and impression of consumerism they feel that they also can do everything. Everyone has the freedom to show what they want to do. And they also want to do experience of life. They also want to be a different from their old generation.

Thapa also talks about teenagers who are from boarding school. They who want to make love and enjoy. Thapa also talks about all boys, young, and old who were starved of love. They fell in to relationship more intense than those with their peers, with whom they were in constant competition in class and on the terrain for some, in the story, Thapa says: “There angels were trainee girlfriends in all innocence. They’d go to see their angels, take them presents tell them how much they loved them. It was no surprise that the cutest kids were notices for all (13)”. The almost passionate urge to protect the name of the institution in the face of almost certain blots is as truer for Kathmandu. Lietchy says:

Our target group is teenagers coming from boarding school, English boarding school. Nowadays Hindi is fast fading, except for public school teenagers. May be they still like to see it. But boarding school kids, if they want to be English, they have to read English marginalization, listen to English music, and watch English video. Our age is teenage isn’t that right? In this age, we are interested in doing love. That the main thing right? I mean like how to love, what to do, how can we do love at first start a relationship how to get girl all of these angels. These new things we must be able to do ourselves so that’s why I usually like to watch the love stories. (43)

English boarding school teenagers are very active and fast in their activities. They want to be English and because of that, they want to listen to English music and also want to watch English movies. Middle class teenagers are also involved in the consumer society. Teenagers are also curious about new things. Because of that they see English as well as Hindi films. They want to learn how to make love and enjoy with girls and how to start love with girls and so on. It is because of the impression of fashion and consumerism; this is the sense of middle classness, but shared project of

locating oneself in a new social space between two devalued social poles, “above and below.”

Now a days in Kathmandu “fashion” has become a “must”. People are used to being fashionable as fashion becomes the armaments of the middle class people. It becomes the identity of people. But fashion is not easy for all people because for that money is necessary and lower class people have not the enough many so it is only for middle class people. As Lietchy says:

It is recent surge in material consumer abundance that provides people in the middle class with an extremely useful communicative medium or currency both for constructing new modes of class distinction, and for carrying on the debate over the meaning of “Middleness”. . . .

Consumer goods become necessary to the extent that they become part of the social currency and cultural practices at work in projects of class formation in Kathmandu. (19)

The young people in terms of their consumption behavior, today’s young population prefer foods, cloths, music and several other commodities which are locally and internationally considered as the marks of modern lifestyle. Sometimes they go to eat at a restaurant and then go to see a movie. They go to medium sized restaurants, not the high or third class type. In other words, the consumption of modern love of fast food, rap music, jeans and English language can be some symbol of modernity as practiced in Kathmandu.

Rabi Thapa’s debut collection of short stories has this and more, effectively evoking the flavors’ of life in Kathmandu – at least as seen from the vantage point of the relatively privileged sections of Nepali youth. Thapa’s depiction of this world is uniquely Kathmandu, but has resonances with which readers in other South Asian cities can easily identify.

In another story, 'No smoke without fire' Rabi Thapa first debunks the notion of conservative backwarder by making the protagonist a middle class boy and his younger sister smoke marijuana in unison and then, as if an attempt to rub it in.

Are you sure you want to smoke? Let's smoke it. He puts the match to the cigarette, cupping it against the imperceptible breeze and lights it. After a couple of short puffs to make sure it's lit. He drags in deeply, holding the smoke in his lungs before exhaling in to the night. There is nothing for it. He goes back to stardust and Aurchana joins him second later she closes the door plonks herself on to the edge of the bed and drums her heels against the carper impatiently. (25-26)

They try to smoke without their parents' permission and they do not give any information to the family member of their secret smoking. It shows that it is not the good and suitable work for them. They smoke because they want to be different and want to show that modern youths are energetic and enthusiastic and they can do anything for their experience and they can do anything without any hesitation. But for that we can say it is the bad impression of fashion and commercial media, video and films.

Modernity is clearly referred to a way of being newness or modern which has had the newest method, a current style of art, fashion, especially one that is attempting something new and not traditional. Modernity implies a gradual change in the attitude, ideas, and belief of the people because of various factors such as the process of urbanization, development of science and technology. The object of researcher in this novel *Nothing to Declare* is to expose the middle class Nepali society and influence of modernity in it. Modernity refers to the consciousness of new age, new sensibility and new attitude which germinate after transferring from old traditional values to the new way of mode of thinking. Modernity is a state of mind. It is a mind which transit from

the old values to the new. Further, it is a new kind of consciousness which emerges in the individual in the passage of time. Here, Archana's extreme obsession to smoke with her brother is also a result of her present state of mind. New generation of today presented in the story is revolutionary. Though their parents dislike their smoking they boldly supports their freedom.

In the story "Desire", we find the love attraction of Subodh towards Kamala a middle class youth, falls in love with his maid Kamala who is very beautiful and attractive. Somewhere amidst his search for a suitable girl and opportunity to satisfy his desire, the protagonist also takes the opportunity with his maid Kamala. Thapa writes:

He spun around as kamala, fresh from a shower and wrapped in a thin red cloth knotted at the bosom, walked in and stopped few feet shy of him. Subodh found himself staring at her full in the body. This young he had never truly seen before. Her body was tightly outlined by the cloth, the curve of her hips and the swell of her breasts and above the wraparound, her dark brown skin, soft to the eyes spreading up wards to her neck and flowing down along her arm; her black black hair swept, clear of her face, smooth-complexioned and perfectly proportioned, her staled eyes reflection his. (37-38)

It is the story of young generation of middle class, Subodh, who falls in love with a pretty woman. She is very beautiful in her appearance where her body is tightly outlined by the cloth. He thinks only of her body. At that time he finds her so sexy. It is the attraction of a youth toward a beautiful woman. Their example shows the love between two young boy and girl; they celebrate the love between them. Kamala, though is from lower class family, enjoys with middle class youth, Subodh. Though he is from middle class, he suddenly attracts with his maid Kamala. They forget all

their boundaries and make love between them. It is the love of youth in commercial society which is also attraction of young generation as claimed by Mark Lietchy: “Relationships are also commercially mediated and ritually celebrated in new consumer. Mass media often plays a key role in promoting these new consumer rites” (210).

Mass media becomes the most important thing in the life of middle class youths. Without mass media, people cannot live their life happily. With the media and foreign goods they feel perfect themselves. They don't think that they are co modified by these sources. They think that if they can enjoy with these things they feel they becomes super and unique with other who can't use it. Because of that Kathmandu becomes the place of mass media and consumer place. Thapa further says:

He began to let go, then looked her in the face, that moon face a few inches from his. It was suffused with color, her lips were parted and she was breathing in quick starts and stops. His desire rose to meet her and he clutched at her warm body discovering the unimaginably soft yield of her breast, with nipples as hard as he was. He stood up, the chair grating across the floor, and pulled her to the table. Not knowing what he was doing-how could he? He kissed her on the mouth, and aping the movies he had seen impassively thrust his tongue in to her mouth, she closed her eyes and kissed him back, her arms on the small of his back, her body pressed against his. (39)

Thapa depicted the love between two young boy and girl where they celebrate the love between them. Subodh though from middle class, suddenly gets attracted with his maid Kamala where they forget all their boundaries and make love. It is impression of commercial media, fashion, cinema and other mass communication.

People cannot remain always in a same condition depending upon the old tradition values rather they have to be dynamics to sustain their lives in the passage of time. We cannot negate the fact that modern science and technology, globalization, urbanization mass media are the determinant factor of modernity. Due to the influence of these factors the world is growing smaller. The development in modern science and technology challenges the old traditional values and makes people ready to follow the value of modernity. Mark Lietchy focusing on the influence of science and technology:

For many young people in Kathmandu, this life in the present is the experience of modernity. It is life of ambiguity in an “in-between” space: between village and external, modern metropole; between childhood and adulthood; between high and low class; between education and meaningful employment. The experience of youth like Ramesh and Suman are strongly inflected by the marginalizing and mediated forces of modernity, though their lives are far from these sublimed images of youth offered in the page in teens. Media and education stake claim in their imagination, though the possible futures they offer rarely seem to feed the realities of Nepal. (242)

The significance of this view is that modernity in Nepal affects differently to different generation. They are in between place, have the feeling of cultural admixture and accommodative changeability. The youths are engaged actively in constructing the new culture space; even it has been applied in the field of music, song and every aesthetic subject. They are affected with mass media and consumer culture.

Because of the impression as such they want to follow modernist rules and regulation and want to be a modernist they want to make a love, celebrate love, and want to be an attractive and different. Their example shows the love between two

young boy and girl; they celebrate the love between them. Kamala, though is from lower class celebrates love with middle class youth, Subodh. Though he is from middle class, he suddenly attracts with his maid kamala. They forget all their boundaries and make love between them. It happened mostly because of the fashion, and impression of the modern fashion.

In the title story “Nothing to Declare” Thapa tries to show the condition of Nepali youths who wants to go abroad for their suitable study and job opportunity. In this story Bikram migrates London to stay with his friend Raghav. There they enjoy a lot forgetting their responsibility and studies. They use to drink and smoke freely. In the same way they also go to the bar. For that Thapa writes: “Nepal suddenly felt far away and perhaps not at all. Sure, his parents were thousands of kilometers away, and so was the dust of Nepal, but his own Nepal, smoking and drinking with friends, was right here (49)”. For Nepalese student in foreign countries, it is a great opportunities. Though they earn money there, they spend it all- on food, rent, booze, dope, cloths etc. because they want to enjoy a lot. In this connection Tristan Brusle writes:

Young adults do not hesitate to spend money on alcohol, cards or clothes. Being abroad makes them more affluent and freer to spend money as they wish. Thus, the dilemma of a “useless” or not so necessary consumption may be summed up rapidly as a choice between saving for the family and spending on oneself. As we will see, these two types of behavior are not such a contradiction as they may seem, given the transnational features of the migration studied. (63)

Middle class youths want to enjoy their lives on their own way. Their journey starts from Nepal with lots of hope and expectations about the foreign. At foreign they struggle with their studies and work trying to be independent from their family. Everybody live their lives on their own way. At abroad they also feel that they are

free because they are far away from their family. They drink in party as they use to do before in their hometown. Here everything is done for money and they need to earn themselves to do anything. Even though they earn, they did not have much savings to send for their parents which wasn't his part of the thoughts.

Critic like Vidyadhar Gandgil says that grouping up in tradition-bound Nepal, Smoky bars in Kathmandu where rootless upper-middle class youths gather, unable to reconcile to life in their home country. The youths desire to migrate to the west, and the difficulties in fitting in there, often forcing a reluctant return. Rabi Thapa's debut collection of short stories has this and more, effectively evoking the flavors of life in Kathmandu- at least as seen from the vantage point of the relatively privileged section of Nepali youth. Thapa's depiction to this world is uniquely Kathmandu, but has resonances with which readers in other Southasian cities can easily identify.

The tales in this volume are arranged in an aged-related progression, starting with stories of children and moving in to adolescence and youth. This sparkling debut, with self-assured prose and convincing narratives, contains a number of gems-notably 'The Train and the final story of the volume, 'Valley of Tares'. There are some weak ones too, like 'Home for Dashain'- about Maoist violence, an almost mandatory strand in any book on Nepal. Thapa sticks firmly to the world he knows, which is at one and the same time the strength and weakness of this collection. Nonetheless, the volume leaves one looking forward to Thapa's next work, when his ambition will hopefully expand to give full scope to his ample talent.

Thapa has also given the reference of prostitution in the fiction *Nothing to Declare*. In the story "Night out in Kathmandu" he shows that Thamel is the sexual matters as well. Middle class are represented as desperate, willing to do anything to advance socially and intrinsically without moral values. About 'Prostitution' Thapa argues that: "There is still fresh- faced seductiveness, and perhaps because she isn't

married with kid, still fit, in every sense of the world, she squeezes my shoulder, sit to my right and leans towards the rest her bare arm pressed against mine quite innocently”(130).

In Thamel we can find especially unmarried women in sex work. It is so because of the extreme consumer desire and sexual objectification are collapsed in this figure. It is a distinctive place in the overall urban geography of Kathmandu. In Thamel we can find many unmarried sex worker who are doing their business with clean face and full make-up. They have to do that to attract men towards them and ultimately money and fashion.

‘Prostitution’ can also be taken as a sign of modernization of middle class youth. Moreover, Lietchy says: “Thamel is known to be a centre of prostitution in Kathmandu though the links between tourism and sex is less immediate. . . . Although people in Kathmandu often assume that the relatively wealthy western and east Asian tourists that frequent Thamel also keep prostitution in business”(236). Thamel is a place with its own distinctive ethos, a place in which one can peruse a dramatic public lifestyle built around entertainment, leisure, glamour, and sexuality. It is a quasi-foreign place where one can indulge in image and fantasies of foreignness. Thamel is a place 'conceptually distinct from 'home' even if 'home ' might occupy the same physical space.

These incidents happen in the novel *Nothing to Declare* displays the modern middle class society. When we talk about modernity, we can not negate the concept of globalization. It is usually recognized as being driven by a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural, political and biological factors. The term can also refer to the transnational circulation of ideas and language. And aspect of the world which has gone through the process can be said to be globalized. Similarly, globalization leads to a world where people from all country become more integrated and aware of

common interest and share community. In this way, the old traditional ideas/concept have been demolished and new concept have been mooted in the life of people.

People have been so much conscious about the global world and they make themselves ready to cope up with the globalized world. Middle class people come to experience themselves, their city, and their location in a world of meaning through interaction with media and other consumer goods from around the world that cast shadows of desire and marginalization over everyday life.

In “After Party” middle class boy wants to have sex with girls. There are many sex workers in Thamel and among them there is one who has average height, dressed jeans and shawl around her shoulder and over her head from under which hennaed hair fills out. “She wears dangly earrings and light make-up over a delicately featured, narrow, Dard face and answers his questions in a slightly hoarse feminine voice” (136).

For middle class youths, sex becomes the necessary part of life. So for that they go Thamel where there are bars, pubs, dance and Dohori sanjh, message centre. The Friday and Saturday nights are weeknight where 16-30 yrs youths come over there to have fun. They go to dance bars, rock, hip-hop, metal music performance where most youths visiting are from middle class. Around 200-300 people, mostly young couples attend such gathering every night. In this connection Lietchy says:

Commercial forces are able to construct a new consumer oriented space of ‘youth culture’ in Katmandu; they are able to construct the frame work of new social identity that is intimately bound to the marker. What we see is the simultaneous construction and colonization, by media and allied commercial forces, of a new conceptual and experimental space that I am calling the consumer sphere. These new mediated consumer space exist both conceptual in

people's imaginations and experientially as people move through commercially mediated space in the city. (44)

For many women it is a business for them because there is no way to live. Every human being wants to live happily but for that money is necessary. Though Thamel is a famous tourist destination of Nepal however, Thamel is also known as the prostitution area in the Kathmandu valley. About 99% tourists visit the Thamel when they came Nepal. It has very small but very famous area with the couple of rows of houses it is always attractive with the colorful bazaar. It is really beautiful marker and tourist destination of Nepal.

But these days Thamel is shamefully going to turn in to a prostitution area. And various forms of sex trade never become institutionalized in the Kathmandu valley as they did in some other parts of South Asia. Although some kind of free-for-service sex work must have existed around Kathmandu, the city never developed the highly visible "Red Light" zone. Some of the bad people operate putting the board 'MASSAGE' and bring the girls from the villages persuading them to provide the good job in the city, especially because of job. In that sense the conversation between boy and girl happens:

Why do you do this, you do this for fun or what?

No of course not, I do for my mummy

She is very ill, she has cancer

Can't you do anything else, haven't you studied?

She holds up two figure-classes "two". (136-137)

In the so called modern middle class society people are forced to do anything for money. Money becomes the necessary things for people. Because of the necessity of money people have to do any things. So for that especially women who are

uneducated have to compel to do that business. Though some does it for fun, many of them do for money. In that case Lietchy says that:

Middle class commentators on prostitution in Kathmandu were a bit more charitable when explaining why some women were drawn in to this trade, yet even these people rarely failed to maintain “doing fashion” as one of the primary motivations behind prostitution. Some do it for food. What else can a woman do if she doesn’t have money to buy food? Some have no one to take care of them. Some have parents and siblings to support and they can’t get enough money from others kinds of work. To eat they do it. (16)

According to Lietchy, middle class people want to do fashion and want to be a fashionable. Fashion is like a new kind of ornament these days-specially for middle class youths. Being well dressed is a sign of civilized. But for some people, they have been compelled to do fashion. For girls “Ordinary isn’t enough”! They have to look tip-top. And fashion becomes the important field and for that prostitution becomes one of the primary tools for them. Mostly women are the participator. Middle class youths are those who come to experience themselves their city, and their location in a world of meaning through interaction with media and other consumer goods from around the world that cast shadows of desire and marginalization over everyday life.

Haruki Murakami says that *Nothing to Declare* is an anthology that attempts to capture life in the Capital today. Its stories do that, but they go beyond simple middle class life. For, not one of Thapa’s stories contain the idea of a mystical or mythical Nepal that foreigners seem to look for once they land in Kathmandu, nor do they bother much with the politics that is forever running (or ruining) our lives. So we don’t have stories on price rises, Maoist ideologues, stinking rivers, bad traffic, cows, or yetis. Instead, we have stories that dwell on the individual who lives within this

massive khalto's borders, vignettes from a life that could be anyone's—yours or mine included. Amar—the protagonist who looks at arranged marriage as a weird anomaly—is the young Kathmandu professional who has been working for a few years now and has friends abroad. Similarly, the unnamed partygoer in *Night Out* in Kathmandu who declares, “You never hope to get laid here, so any night is a good night if you drink and smoke enough, it's that simple (38)” can be any one of the thousands of Nepali students who went to Western universities and came back home to join their father's businesses or some bank. And this is what is fantastic about Thapa's stories. Because his characters are so recognizable, because one can immediately think of someone he knows (including himself) while reading the stories, Thapa's characters endear themselves with the reader. Further, the Capital comes alive in its modern avatar like never before. This is not a Kathmandu where hippies roamed the fields of Swayambhu. Instead, this is the Kathmandu where girls dance evocatively to Bollywood numbers in dance bars, where Thamel becomes a place to experiment sexually, where the Maoist war has given way to equally-violent political strikes in which tires are burned regularly, and where youngsters continuously look to go abroad—either to work or to study. Essentially, this is today's Kathmandu.

They believe in fashion, style and sometimes they like to go eat at restaurants and then go to see a movie, they go to the medium sized restaurants not the high or suitable to their level (star) a place where they can pay the bill. In the novel there is a conversation “We smoke pot, got drunk on the screwdrivers and bloody marys, and when we ran out of mixer, resorted to vodka in a tub of ice-cream. “You miss out on a khatara party, man” (131). Hence, from the above mentioned event we come to know the impression of modernity upon middle class youths of Kathmandu. Basically, Rabi Thapa's novel portrays the modern Nepali interacting with the western ideas, science and modern consumerism. That's why, Thapa in his novel *Nothing to Declare* tries to

show the impact of modernity in Nepali society. Impact of west is vividly seen through the mouthpiece of Subodh, Bikram, Ashok and so on.

Sanjeev Uprety finds the story “Night out in Kathmandu,” for example, is about the middle class youths who smoke pot and get drunk on screwdrivers and bloody mary during a night out at Thamal, a local urban space teeming with global tourist and phoren return middle class Nepalis. In after party the youth search for a dope in Thamal and gaze voyeuristically at a scene of cup in interrogating a tranny before visiting a dance bar. It is a act of consumption- drinking, smoking, gazing at the dancer that define the class location of most of the youths that populating Thapa’s fictional universe. Thapa’s stores however shows that a homogeneous idea concerning the Nepali middle class might itself be a fiction. Generational differences cut across the terrain of middle- ness since the middle-class people youths of today differ from their parents and grandparents. While the class identity of earlier generations was defined by the “foreign” films and TV serials arriving from India, middle-class youths of today project their desire upon other foreign locations including that of UK and USA, and Australia and Thailand; consumption of cultures coming from those locations not only defines their class location but also creates a fantasy of transcending class borders to become “almost, though quit not” upper class.

It shows the condition of middle class youth in Kathmandu. They share the tables with those who could not go. They talk about pretty much the same thing; visas, music, booze the impossibility: there are foreigner too, trekking on the usual routes, smoking cheap grass and looking to their inner selves. In that situation they only of with their friend who are same generation mostly it is the impression of modern technology and fashion. So Lietchy says that “Even little things have now becomes fashion. In Kathmandu these days most everything has caught the fashion bug” (38). So that fashion becomes the most important part of the middle class youth

of Kathmandu. Kathmandu's middle class youths struggle cultural entity at once modern and Nepali middle-class people draw a deep rooted local moral values. Logic of prestige and forms of cultural capital as well as new "modern" symbolic resources from the burgeoning realism of consumer goods and media image to constructs a distinctive body of cultural practices that enable them to distance themselves for their social others, both "above" and "below". The consumption goods and media images becomes key cultural practices as the middle class products itself as a distinct social entity, and naturalize its values and privileges in concrete cultural life.

Another story "Home for Dashain" is about the story of Maoist insurgency where Maoists kidnap the middle class hero Ramesh Khatiwada from his home and they beat him very much. In the period of Maoist insurgency, Maoists kidnapped the villagers and they did as they liked. In that case Thapa writes: "They began to kick him, cursing him, their boots churning dust in to the morning air. He screamed once more, then started moaning, a long, awful exhalation of pain punctuated by the blows raining down him" (118). During the period of Maoist insurgency, all the people were in difficult condition. There is not any security in the life of people. People become the victim of Maoist, if there are any mistakes by the common people. Maoist used to punish them very badly without any mercy. Support for the Maoist found mainly in rural village and more poverty- stricken areas, especially mid western Nepal and Tarai region near the border with India. The Maoist has killed many innocent civilians and teachers who they suspect are government informants, while army forces also harass innocent villagers in the hunt for Maoist sympathizers. In that sense Thapa also writes: "Ramesh khatiwada, because you participated in the murder of our comrades during your deployment in Bara district last year, the Maoist party has identified you as an enemy of the people, we are passing judgment on you. The penalty is death!" (119).

At that time if anyone intended to go beyond Maoists activities, they would destroy them. At that time, Maoist could do as they liked because they were at the top of power. So Maoists used to collect money from common people and if they didn't give them they punished common people. And if any common people tried to go against the Maoists and helped the government, Maoists even killed them. In this case Lietchy says: "In the summer of 2001, people in Kathmandu were in state of alarm, over the country's ever-more-violence Maoist insurgency, despondent over their elected government's almost total ineffectiveness, and traumatized by gruesome murder of Nepali's royal family" (220). The Maoist announced a people war on Feb. 23, 1996 with the slogan let us march ahead on the path of struggle towards establishing the people rule by wrecking the rectory ruling system of state. It is a kind of war held by Maoist and because of this war people becomes victim of this.

In another story "Arrange Marriage" Thapa talks about the importance of the young marriage where a grandmother tells her grandson to marry at the right time which is very important for young generation in Kathmandu. For that she says: "Oranges are only good when they're ripe. That rayo saag is good when it's in season" (146)

In Kathmandu, middle class youths are almost by definition educated and un- or underemployed. Many thousands of young people, upon finishing high school and collage want to be employed and give importance to job more than marriage, because first they want to be independent. For that they intend get married in mature age. For that Lietchy says:

Compared with previous generations, young people in Kathmandu enter meaningful employment later and later in life, and since marriage is usually delayed until the groom has a job, the average age of marriage for men and women is also rising. A young man may of some

relative's already overstuffed retail establishment, but in most cases his marriage will be postponed until he has found some ways to contribute to the family's earning power. Young men especially are aware that marriage without a decently paying job means just one more mouth for their parents and or older siblings to feed at home. (211)

New generation of today is very different than previous generation. Today's young generation are educated and wants to live a meaningful and different life. When they finished their education they want a job. For that their marriage is usually becomes delayed. So marriage will be postponed. For many young people in Kathmandu, this life in the present is the experience of modernity.

Thapa's stories crisscross various genres of fiction: it is the stories of adolescence, of lust and desires, of marriages and love, of migrant souls and identity issues, and—since he is writing from Nepal.

Like Murakami says, not all of Thapa's stories are a masterpiece. But each of his stories makes the reader believe he is reading a writer whose style, at the very least, is fresh. The stories in this anthology aren't for the conventional reader who expects a twist in the tale, but for the reader who knows stories are also a way to explore one's different writing styles. With this anthology, a reader of Nepali writing in English begins to get new hope that the future may be a bit brighter than one imagined.

The agency of young people in constructing "youth culture" has to be seen in light of this competing image of "youth". Young people have choices. But they are not unlimited, to return to a special metaphor, if "youth" is a newly opened space, there are many interest with vast resources scrambling to develop that space.

Regardless of the obvious modern and middle class youths overtones of *Nothing To Declare* with the critical lenses of the *Suitably Modern; Making Middle*

Class Culture in Kathmandu and *Out Here in Kathmandu* in a new consumer place the spotlight on the important ways in which it aims to analyze how middle class youths do experience “Middle-Classness” in particular. Speaking English, watching Hollywood movies, parting out, conversant in modern technologies and what not for them, it may also mean living in a concrete house, with access to modern amenities such as TV or the Internet, or a moterable road.

III. *Nothing to Declare*: A Reflection of Middle Class Youths' Psyche

Set in the Kathmandu the novel *Nothing to Declare* exposes the condition of Middle class youth of valley. Most of the characters in the novel are gradually developed modern people of the modern city. The whole fiction revolves around the middle class youths of Kathmandu. In the stories, Thapa has shown that among the most important products that flood in Kathmandu's new consumer market place are mass media and foreign goods. In many way videos, pop songs, magazines and TV shows are no different from the countless other goods that compete for the consumer's money. The drastic change in consumer culture and consumer's behavior has reflected the milieu of the then society.

In the story "Initiation", we could see a middle class boy undergoes the rites of passage ceremony to become a man while dreaming of a passage to America to become "modern and upper class" and he is going through the ceremony to initiate him to adulthood. As he followed the parent's instruction, he began to feel less self-consciousness. Then he enjoys the sense of freedom. In "Angels" we could see the different kind of activities of teenagers like watching English movie, making love with girls and their love affairs. Dhiraj is a boy, used to make love with girls but never thought of them as his angles, but used to spend a lot of time with them talking about films, his family, school gossip, inviting them to his room. This story is as true for Kathmandu. In the "No smoke without fire" is such a story where middle class boy and his younger sister smoke marijuana in unison. They smoke without their parents' permission and they do not give any information to the family members of their secret smoking. They tried to smoke because they want to be different and want to show that modern youths are energetic and enthusiastic and they can do everything for their experience. It is also the true experience of middle class youths of Kathmandu.

The story “Desire” deals with Subodh the rich employer’s son falls the charms of the maid servant who is very beautiful in her appearance. He falls in love with her which is only attraction of youths towards a beautiful lady. Kamala, though is from lower class family, also falls in love with middle class youth but cannot reach out beyond the social hierarchy. Kamala though is from lower class, falls in love with Subodh and they celebrate their love. In “Night Out in Kathmandu” and “After Party” shows the condition of middle class youths of Kathmandu who use to go to Thamel. In Thamel they smoke pot, get drunk and visit advance bar amid western tourist and middle class who studied and worked abroad. They also enjoy with sex workers who are fresh- faced seductiveness and unmarried. In “Arrange marriage” deals with communal feelings where a grandmother tells her grandson to marry at right time alluding to the important of young marriage. Amar is the main character of the story shows the present condition of middle class youths of Kathmandu who does not want to marry at right time because of their unemployment and late studies.

Above all Thapa’s characters in short stories are in the line of middle class guidance. These characters are always seen in the benefit of their near and dear one. Different kinds of mass media which are the result of modern science and technology like radio, computer, film, gramophone, telephone, newspapers and television have controlled the lives of people condition in the modern era. These medias cannot be avoidable because they around us. It has made mass more creative, safer and more healthful and rich in creative possibilities. It is the media that makes the people up to date in accordance with the time and condition. They make people more creative and dynamics so that people can easily mobilize themselves in the complex world.

People cannot remain always in a same condition depending upon the old tradition values rather they have to be dynamics to sustain their lives in the passage of time. We cannot negate the fact that modern science and technology, globalization,

urbanization mass media are the determinant factor of modernity. Due to the influence of these factors the world is growing smaller. The development in modern science and technology challenges the old traditional values and makes people ready to follow the value of modernity. In this way, Nepali middle class society also influence by modern science and technology. Ultimately, the fiction *Nothing to Declare* is being defeated by the influence and technology in new global society.

The young people in terms of their consumption behavior today's young population prefer foods, cloths, music and several other commodities which are locally and internationally considered as the marks of modern lifestyle. In other words, the consumption of modern fashion, over of fast food, rap music, jeans and English language can be some symbol of modernity as practiced in Kathmandu.

Works Cited

- Appadurai, Arjun and Carol A. Brecknridge. *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*. London: UMP, 1985.
- Berman, Marshall. *Modernity: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Arcade Publishing House: New York, 1983: 1-22.
- Biswas, Ranjita “No place like home.” *The Hindu*: India, 2011.
- Brusle, Tristan “New technologies, consumption display of Modernity among Nepalese workers in Qatar.” *Centre d’Etydes Himalayeness: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 11, 2, 2012.
- Gandgil, Vidyadhar. *Introduction of the Subject of Middle Class Consciousness*. Penguin: India, 2011.
- Gerth, H. H. and Wright, C. Mills. *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: OUP, 1946.
- Lichety, Mark. *Out Here in Kathmandu: Modernity on the Global Periphery*. Martin Chautari: Kathmandu, 2011.
- . *Suitably Modern: Making Middle Class Culture in Kathmandu*. Martin Chautari Press: Kathmandu, 2011.
- Murakami, Haruki. “False from a Modern City.” *The Kathmandu Post*, 2011.
- Nicolls, Martina A. “FEAST OR FAMINE.” Amazon.com, 2011.
- Shahi, Saurabh Kumar. “Nothing to Declare.” *Sunday Indian*: New Delhi, 2011.
- Thapa, Shreya. “Not much declare.” *Republica*: Kathmandu, 2011.

UpretY, Sanjeev. "Masks and realities of Middle Class." *Republica*: Kathmandu, 2011.