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Self-valorization in Rijal's *Torture Killing Me Softly*

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Letter of Approval

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Abstract

The research explores the subjective reflection of the author Tek Nath Rizal in his book *Torture Killing Me Softly* as he gives the giddy details of torture called 'mind control' a techno-savy surveillance technique that was used on him during his decade long incarceration in Bhutanese jail. The book revolves around self aggrandizement than shining some light on the Bhutanese democratic movement. Moreover, Rijal foreshadows the sufferings of more than one hundred thousands of Lhotshampas people who were wrongfully evicted from their country and forced to live their painful lives in another country while describing his own torturous experiences. Thus, Rijal's high profile job, vicissitudes of his relations with the then king Jigme Singe Wangchuck and his dehumanized prison life pervades the whole book which just brings his subjectivity on limelight and valorizes his self.

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I. Torture Killing Me Softly: A Tale of Harrowing Torture

Bhutanese human rights activist and political leader Tek Nath Rijal in this book *Torture Killing Me Softly* gives the details of torture called 'mind control' a scientific torture technique applied on him during his decade long incarceration on Bhutanese jail. The repressive regime of Bhutan used such torturous hypnotic effect on him in order to deviate him from his goal of fighting for democracy. According to this book, this surveillance continued to follow him not only in prison but also in Geneva where he had gone to attend a conference even after his release from the jail in 1999. So, this book provides an unbelievable account of efficacy of the so called mind control device and its resultant effect on the subject. As Rijal claims that the remotely sent modulated magnetic or electronic microwaves can read not only the brain of targeted subject but it can hypnotize, manipulate and effectively control emotional faculty as well as will of the operator of the device. Despite all the odds it was his sheer courage which helped him keep his mental faculty intact as against the intention of the Bhutanese government. So, he has become successful to share his torturous experiences with us. Not only this, but he has also become Successful to unravel the most degrading and inhuman conditions of Bhutanese jail.

Besides, the book revolves around self aggrandizement, than shining some light on the Bhutanese democratic movement. He has failed to explain the ordeals and sufferings of Lhotshampas (people of ethnic Nepali origin) and his role in protecting the human rights of those groups to which he himself belongs. He is not addressing those Bhutanese refugees who had been wrongfully evicted from their country, and living the painful lives in another country, while focusing upon his own struggle. Though he explains that the primary objective behind writing this text is to reveal the other side of the so called last Shangri-la where ethnic cleansing is being practiced as

a state policy in the name of maintaining cultural purity. To silence any criticism from the international community, the repressive regime said that such cleansing is being done to flush out terrorists from its Southern part. Rizal has foreshadowed the painful story of more than one hundred thousand of Bhutanese refugees while bringing his subjectivity to limelight.

Rijal was one of the most trusted bureaucrats of the regime with multiple responsibilities assigned during the time when the dubious Land act of 1980, Green Belt policy in 1984 and Citizenship Act in 1985 were enacted. Was Rijal an accomplice of royal regime until he was thrown out of the palace? This book fails to address this crucial question.

Bhutan is a multi ethnic country although the Bhutanese government aspires to a single cultural identity for the kingdom. These ethnic groups have their own linguistic and religious varieties. Most accounts of the population identify three main ethnic categories. These are the Ngalongs, Sharchhokpas and Lhotshampas. Ngalongs as the ruling group controls the monarchy, the government and dominates the economy. They inhabit the north-west region of the country, belong to Tibetan ancestry, speak Dzongkha language and practice Drukpa kargyupa sect of Mahayana Buddhism. Sharchhokpas belong to Tibeto-Burman ancestry and live in the eastern and central region and speak Tshangla dialects and practice Nyingmapas sect of Mahayana Buddhism. Lhotshampas are restricted by law to south Bhutan only, bordering India and the vast majority speak the Nepali language and follow Hindu religion. They are often referred to as 'Ethnic Nepalese'. The surprising aspect of Bhutan is that the minority of Ngalong controls and dominates the majorities of Lhotshampas, Sharchhokpas and other groups. In this regard Michael Hutt in his book *Unbecoming Citizens* writes that:

Although the Ngalong are acknowledged to be in a minority overall they and the central Bhutanese – with whom extensive intermarriage has taken place at the elite level over centuries are politically dominant, and the polished form of Ngalongs language, the Tibetan derived Dzongkha, has been the national language since 1961 [...]. The Ngalongs, the central Bhutanese and the Sharchops practice a Tibetan style of Mahayana Buddhism: the Drukpa Kargyu School is predominant in western Bhutan [...]. The southerners are mostly Hindus, and the vast majorities speak the Nepali Language. They are often referred to as ‘Ethnic Nepalese’. (4-5)

Ngalongs as ruling ethnic group control the government and dominate the economy. Other groups were oppressed and victimized by the Ngalongs. In Bhutan, the Lhotshampas’ growing confidence and influence came to be seen as a threat to an ethnicized order of power and to the maintenance of a distinctive Bhutanese way of life. Since the mid 1980s the Bhutanese government has referred to its Nepali speaking population with the Dzongkha term ‘Lhotshampa’ or as southern Bhutanese.

Besides these three dominant groups there are a dozen of other groups, smaller in numbers, including Khengs, Brokpas, Kurteopas, Mangdepas, Doyas, Adivasies, Tibetans and others. All these ethnic groups migrated to Bhutan at different points of time in history, but before the turn of nineteenth century. Before the rule of Jigme Singe Wanchuck, there was not any instance of ethnic conflicts, communal or religious clashes but as he ascended the throne in 1974 he started enacting several new laws, and policies especially aiming at the Lhotshampas of south Bhutan only. In this regard Hutt further writes:

The policies the Bhutanese government adopted on citizenship, education and culture in response to this perceived threat meant that Bhutan's history and destiny were conflated with those of the dominant element of its population. Other elements were marginalized, subjugated and excluded for what the dominant group considered to be legitimate historical and geographical reasons. The Lhotshampas were presented with a choice between remaining in Bhutan, but as subordinate citizens maintaining abbreviated versions of their traditional way of life or fleeing to Nepal. (14)

The objective of all these new laws, policies, and regulations was to make the life of Lhotshampas as difficult as possible and to bring the ethnic cleansing of Lhotshampas. The repressive Jigme Singe Wanchuck transformed large number of Lhotshampa citizens into non-citizens, foreigners and encroachers. Because of the effect of these laws thousands of Lhotshampas were victimized and forced to live the life of refugee in other countries leaving their homelands.

Firstly, the marriage act of 1980 introduced punitive measures against Bhutanese who married non Bhutanese. According to this act, the Bhutanese cannot marry their sons and daughters in families outside Bhutan. This was followed by the land act of 1980 where in a ceiling was placed on the size of land holding severely curtailing the economic activities of Lhotshamps. In 1984, the Bhutanese government implemented Green Belt policy which aimed to create the Green belt at India - Bhutan border densely populated by Lhotshampas. After these censuses were implemented the government of Bhutan brought a modernizing train to make the homogenizing nationalism. In which the state promulgated a national costume `Gho and Kira` mandatory for every citizen and the enforcement of "Driglam Namzha" among the

general public which was a severe blow to the Lhotshamps. 'Dzongkha' which is the mother tongue of the Ngalong people of the Western highland districts of Bhutan was declared to be the National language of Bhutan and was made a mandatory mode of communication through out Bhutan. Curriculum made the emotional and psychological impact upon those Bhutanese Nepali people as the script of Dzongkha and Nepali are poles apart. The Lhotshamps therefore view the removal of Nepali from the school curriculum as a highly symbolic and deliberately provocative part of a more generalized attack on their culture (Hutt 185). However, it remains true that many Lhotshampas began to experience a sense of conflict between policies which had been designed to make them become the same and their natural urge to remain different and true to themselves.

The net effect of all these laws was that thousands of Lhotshampas were victimized by the coercive methods threatening their denationalization and subsequent eviction. The first people claiming to be Lhotshampa refugees from Bhutan entered Nepal towards the end of 1990. These Bhutanese refugees settled in the refugee camps which had been established at five different sites: Timai, Goldangi, Beldangi and Khudunabari district and Sanischare (pathri) in Morang. But Bhutanese government argued that none of the people in the refugee Camps in Nepal were refugee from Bhutan. It alleged that the Camps contained illegal Nepali residents in Bhutan. In this regard, Hutt further writes:

Imported labourers who were claiming to be Bhutanese national by virtue of having worked in Bhutan; dissidents many of whom had committed criminal and terrorist offences in Bhutan; Bhutanese nationals who had emigrated legally after renouncing their citizenship

and selling all their properties and people from other parts of the region including Nepal itself who had never ever set foot in Bhutan. (258)

Tek Nath Rijal was one of the eight children born to a farming family of Lamidara Village in Chirang district and he was chosen to represent Lamidara in the National Assembly in 1975 He was also elected to the Royal Advisory council. Distressed by the grave political consequences of the census Lhotshampas begun to bring their concerns to Tek Nath Rijal and Bidyapati Bhandari the Royal Advisory councilors who at that time represented the south. As he brought this issue in front of the king, the king over throw him from the Royal Advisory Council and jailed him for three days and then made to sign a confession and an agreement not to meet with more than three at once. Believing himself to be under surveillance Rijal crossed the border and moved to Nepal for his own safety. Rijal was seized by Nepalese police at the house where he was living in Birtamod on 15th November 1989 and taken by raid to Kathmandu along with two associates, Jogen Gazmere and Sushil Pokharel. The next day they were flown to Bhutan and were jailed in Rabuna prison at Wangeli Phodrang. As Rijal claims that the repressive regime of Bhutan applied mind control devices upon him in order to destroy his life and his goal of fighting for democracy.

Tek Nath Rijal also gives the details of torture called mind control a technology surveillance technique applied on him during his decade long incarceration in Bhutanese jail. In this book Rijal provides an “unbelievable account of efficacy of the so called mind control device and its resultant effects on the subject” (Wagle 2009). Rijal had drawn a daring portrayal of precarious political and human rights situation in Bhutan and the harsh scientific torture technique which was applied by the Jigme dictatorship upon the political prisoners, hitherto little heard about such torture technique. Pramod Kaphley who belongs to the “Group for International Solidarity”

(GRINSO) asserts that Rijal was languishing in Bhutanese jail and was undergoing an entirely bizarre torture, hitherto unknown in south Asia. He views:

The spirit and mental strength of Mr Rijal however remained defiant to bring his horrifying tale to the knowledge of the rest of the world in general and South Asia in particular. This book is a living experience of the hell named Bhutanese prisons and first documentation of mind control in that part of the globe.

(viii)

It is clear and believable that the author became victim of electro-magnetic mind control technique which can take full control of the person's body and mind permanently. To a common man such claim of sophistication of such device can be unbelievable and it was natural that no one initially believed his words that described experiences of being under such "scientific torture techniques". The confession of author himself is so convincing and touching that no one could dare to disbelieve his words. Similarly, the Professor of War Studies Indrajit Rai not only explains that such device exists but also explains that:

The motive of mind control is to destroy the targeted person's life. He digresses from his goal, forgets his mission, behaves strangely with his family members and relatives and can't follow his routine life. It is used by losing control his mind, to elicit the required information from the prisoner as it hypnotizes him. As a result, the mind works under hallucination that the victim sees different images in his mind which are implanted by the controller. (xx)

In this way, Rai explains the efficacy of such device and its resultant effects. And the Bhutanese government practiced mind control techniques on Mr. Rijal as a means to

inflict physical and mental pain in order to destroy his life. Rai further says that “with a view to deviating him from his goal of fighting for democracy the Bhutanese government used these devices and pumped out all his thoughts and feelings” (xxi). And it is used by making the prisoner lose the control of his mind through hypnosis to elicit required information. Rijal recollected his torturous experiences to share with the world which will be helpful for human rights activists to formulate tools to stop such unjustifiable practices and the law maker to award stiff punishment to the perpetrators of such crimes.

Torture, inhuman treatment and degrading punishment are not tolerable at any cost and privacy is the fundamental right which can not be compromised in any pretext. Rijal in this book presents such evidences of human rights violation of Bhutanese government which applied cruel and degrading punishment to its political prisoners. In this regard, Raju Thapa, the president of HRWF writes:

The first hand account of torture by Mr. Rijal should be a prima facie evidence to prosecute the king of Bhutan in the international criminal courts for committing crimes against humanity. The book inspires all the human rights community to stand together to lobby against the cruel, inhuman degrading technology. (vi)

The United Nations and other organizations should take initiative to make people aware of such degrading technology for the prevention of miserable human suffering. This book will be the evidence to advocate the new forms of torture through mind control. Similarly, Achyut Wagle in his article to *The Kathmandu Post* entitled "Torturous Hypnotism" argues that, "Rijal so conclusively and convincingly claims that the remotely sent modulated magnetic or electronic microwaves can read not only brain of the targeted subject but it can hypnotize, manipulate and effectively control

emotional faculty as well as the will of the operator of the device” (7). Achyut Wagle writes that how such mind control device was applied to Rijal and how he was thoroughly victimized by it. He further writes “through this device he only as targeted subject used to hear weird instructions on what next to do and what to avoid” (7). Rijal is fortunate as against the intention of the Bhutanese government, he is not only able to read and write but also become able to share his experiences with us in spite of having been tortured with the mind control device. It was his sheer courage and fortitude that helped him to keep his mental faculty intact through it all.

Reading all these critics we can state that this book is a true account of Rijal’s harrowing experiences that he went through and the best example of human injustice that he suffered from for which the Bhutanese king and his regime of tyranny are mainly responsible. It is also appreciative that he has brought out the darker aspects of Bhutanese prison life and the dehumanized, barbaric practices of Jigme dictatorship upon the political prisoners. I believe this book will be a milestone to prosecute the king of Bhutan in the international criminal court for committing crimes against humanity and discourages such inhuman practices. But there is one thing that the critics not put their eye into, and that is the focus of writer’s own subjectivity. That the book revolves around self aggrandizement than shining some light on the Bhutanese democratic movement and the sufferings of those people of ethnic Nepali origin who have been victimized by the tyrannical rule of Bhutan. He has focused upon his own torturous experiences under such ‘techno-savvy surveillance’ though the writer has given some clue about the dubious policies and Act of 1980, Green Belt policy in 1984 and Citizenship Act of 1985 which were practice as a state policy.

The book fails to address the problems of more than one hundred thousands of Bhutanese refugees who are living their painful lives in another country leaving their

homeland. He has not revealed the darker side of so called Shangri-la where ethnic cleansing is being practiced as a state policy in the name of maintaining cultural purity. There is not any description of other political prisoners who were also arrested with him and kept with him. So the book made injustice upon those Lhotshampas whose one and only hope of freedom is Tek Nath Rijal as a human rights leader of Nepalese origin as he fails to address the problems of those refugees while bringing his subjectivity to limelight.

This thesis has been divided into different chapters to elaborate the study. The first chapter includes the general introduction to the study and also presents the hypothesis and elaborates the statement of problem against the backdrop of different critics' commentaries on the novel. The second chapter elucidates the methodology employed to study the text. The principle theoretical tool employed in this research is theory of subjectivity with respect to power and representation in relation to Michel Foucault, Hall and others. The third chapter presents an extensive textual analysis and the fourth chapter concludes the research with a brief recounting observation of the work affirming the hypothesis and summarizes the findings of the analysis.

II. Subjectivity and Its Politics

Subjectivity is the way in which an individual perceives the world, and it differs from one human being to another. *The Oxford English Dictionary* presents the modern notion of “subjectivity” as “the condition of viewing things through the medium of one’s own mind or individuality dominated by personal feelings, thoughts, and concerns.” But in ordinary speech “subjectivity” refers to first person claim of incorrigible introspective authority. In this sense it is contrasted to objective, corrigible impersonal or neutral descriptions of states of affairs. Unlike objectivity, in which the object under consideration is considered based on observable facts that are perceived the same way by everyone, subjectivity is based on an individual’s own experience of life and his own ideations. Subjectivity is based upon the analysis of an individual’s opinions, which in turn, are based on his past experiences and what he knows from what he has learned in the course of his lifetime. This is colored by the individual’s particular background and upbringing, the environment in which he lives, his developed likes and dislikes, prejudices and biases developed over his lifespan, and through his interactions with other human beings.

Moreover, subjectivity is a term which is associated with the condition of being a person and the processes by which we become a person that is how we are constituted as subjects (biologically and culturally) and how we experience ourselves. Legal theorist and social historian Lawrence M. Friedman interprets subjectivity as the result of a gradual move from a “vertical” (hierarchical, inflexible) to a more “horizontal” (negotiable, agency-driven) mode of defining our relationship to each other, one in which we are laden with the responsibility for “making something of ourselves”. Subjectivity is the intersection of two lines of philosophical inquiry: epistemologically it is the study of how we know and ontologically it is the study of

nature of being or existence. In other words inquiries into subjectivity might ask, “How does our understanding of knowledge relate to, impact and constrain our understanding of our own existence?” Subjectivity is the tension between choice and illusion, between imposed definition and individual interrogation of them and between old formulae and new responsibilities, especially as those tensions help us to understand the intersection of literary and other forms. In this regard Friedman argues:

Choice is often an illusion. People are firm believers in free will but they choose their politics, their dress, their manners, and their very identity from a menu they had no hand in writing. They are constrained by forces they do not understand and are not even conscious of. But even the illusion of choice is of enormous social significance. (240)

In his investigation, Friedman complicates the matter by raising the issues such as those of freedom and constraint and of self construction and social construction. Rene Descartes a seventeenth century philosopher shows the difference between ‘objectivity’ the perspective of impartial truth and ‘subjectivity’ the limited, error prone perspective of the individual though he never uses the term “subjective” or “subjectivity”. Indeed the famous delineation in his *Discourse on Method* cogito – “I think therefore I am” Descartes sets out his definition of human “being” itself as one of struggling to know in spite of this futility of ever knowing completely. The concepts of subjectivity and identity are closely connected and sometimes been used interchangeably. Ones identity can be thought of as that particular set of traits, beliefs and allegiances that in short give a consistent personality and mode of social being, while subjectivity implies always a degree of thought and self consciousness about identity.

In the concise delineation of Ross Murfin and Supriya Ray, the authors of the *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, subjectivity points “to that which we would (but may be unable to) know that which we do (or believe ourselves to) know and individual and cultural ways of knowing or of trying to know” (388). So the very concept of subjectivity invites us to consider the question of how and from where identity arises and what degree it is something over which we have any measure of influence or control. The concept of subjectivity problematizes the simple relationship between the individual and language replacing human nature with the concept of the production of the human subject through ideology discourse or language. These are seen as determining factors in the construction of individual identity.

In this way, the concepts of subjectivity and identity are closely connected and in everyday language they are virtually inseparable but they are distinct. Subjectivity and identity are contingent, culturally specific productions. Nowadays, we analyze texts looking not only as a form of entertainment and instruction but also look at reasons that are politically driven and connected to agendas well beyond aesthetic understanding. In the Nineteenth and Twentieth century identity of human being has become thoroughly politicized and part of our continuing struggle to understand the different ways in which identities are socially valued. In this regard Donald E. Hall in his book *Subjectivity* writes:

As literary and cultural critics have aggressively expanded what they mean by the term text, the textuality of the self as a system of representations has itself become a singularly important arena of investigation and speculation. Thus, in exploring subjectivity we are in effect exploring the self “as a text” as a topic for critical analysis, both

in and beyond its relationship to the traditional text of literature and culture. (5)

Hall suggests that identity became politicized by critically engaging with a wide variety of cultural texts. For theoreticians of subjectivity, especially those of late a central concern is how we should and to what extent we even have an ability to change society through concerted individual action and the ways that cultural representation can or can not abet those change.

Besides, the term “subjectivity” refers to interior life or selfhood of any individual, especially as it is theorized in terms of its relationship to gender, power, language, culture and politics etc. For Foucault subjectivity is a discursive production. To him, the discourse functions in structuring the individual’s subjectivity though it is not static. Hence there is close link between power and subjectivity. While forming the identity of any individual power operates a lot. As Foucault supports in his work *Power and Knowledge*:

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike. It is already one of the prime effects of power that certain desires come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual is an effect of power. (98)

Here, Foucault clearly exposes the concepts that our identity or subjectivity is formed by power. He understands subjectivity as associated with power. Power is a machine in which everyone is caught. For him, where there is power, there is subjectivity or identity. Power for Foucault operates not through physical forces or representation by law, but through the hegemony of norms and political technologies. Power is purely structural activity for which subjects are anonymous by products. He conceives power

as purely fragmentary and indeterminate. His subjectivity is nothing but a construct of domination.

In his book *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, Michel Foucault argues that “subjectivity is not something which is given to us, but instead is an effect of power, knowledge and other influences” (108). Foucault draws a connection between subjectivity and power which was not attempted before. He interprets the self to be the outcome of human sciences and political control but maintains that the ethics of ‘caring for oneself’ was a way to exercise freedom. He finds self as developing a new form of subjectivity which came from power and knowledge. In his essay from 1982 “The Subject and Power” he writes:

Power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. Therefore two meanings of the word “subject”: subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. Generally it can be said that there are three types of struggles: either against forms of domination; against forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; or against that which ties the individual to him and submits him to others in this way struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity. (781)

Foucault clearly indicates that power constitutes knowledge, discourse and subjectivity. It is through the exercise of power an individual’s subjectivity is formed.

Foucault examines the shifting patterns of power within a society and the manner in which power relates to the self. He examines rules which govern the claims that could be determined as true or false at various times in history.

Thus, subjectivity will be produced by the discourse that dominates at the time as a person may be the subject of various discourses. The person in power can create his better subjectivity as discourse informs and shapes the subjectivity including the possible activities and knowledge of the individual. Discourse is produced by power play in a culture at a certain time and place. It expresses a particular way of understanding human experiences. Foucault's approach to subjectivity is his rejection of the author as an originator of meaning. In the essay "What is an Author?" he argues that it is a matter of depriving the subject or its substitute of its role as originator and as analyzing the subject as variable and complex function of discourse (209). The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation and functioning of certain discourses within the society.

Similarly, Foucault tries to show that the basic ideas which individuals accept as permanent truths about human nature and society changes during the course of history and this claim challenges the writings of other philosophers. Foucault provides detailed analysis of the ways in which power is exercised to produce and control individual subjects through systems of knowledge. Within any historical period various discourses compete for control of subjectivity, but these discourses are always a function of the power of those who control the discourse to determine knowledge and truth. Thus, while a person may be the subject of various discourses subjectivity will be produced by the discourses that dominated at the time. Discourse is wider and more varied than either ideology or language, so discourse informs and shapes the subjectivity including the possible activities and knowledge of the individual.

Our individual identity is not merely a product of society. Neither is it merely a product of our own individual will and desire. Louis Tyson in her book *Critical Theory Today* writes that “our subjectivity or selfhood is shaped by and shapes the culture into which we are born” (280). An individual undergoes a process of “subjectification” which on the one hand shapes them and on the other hand places them in social networks and cultural codes that exceed their comprehension or control.

Foucault rejected centuries-old assumptions concerning subjectivity. Rather than starting with the Enlightenment idea of full self knowledge and self aware agency, Foucault shifts the critical focus onto “discourses” a broad concept that he uses to refer to language and other forms of representation – indeed all human mechanisms for the conveyance of meaning and value. In “The Discourses on Language” Foucault asserts that in “every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed” (216). Indeed, it is that multifaceted and multivalent relationship between power and discourse that is the subject of Foucault’s most intense intellectual interest. Foucault asserts that we can only come to know our “selves” through historically specific (and differentially valued) categories of truth, propriety and normality He suggests:

In regard to human nature or the categories that may be applied to the subject, every thing in our knowledge which is suggested to us as being universally valid must be tested and analyzed ... [We must] circumvent the anthropological universals (and of course, those of a humanism that would assert the rights, the privileges, and that nature of a human being as an immediate and timeless truth of the subject) in order to examine them as historical constructs. (461-462)

Foucault never delineates the precise new form that subjectivity would take, nor does he predict some utopian moment of full self-knowledge or empowerment over our selves. Instead he calls for “critically examining old different forms and manifestations” (460) of subjectivity in the future. Thus Foucauldian critics and theorists of the past two decades argue that one does not necessarily need a point of pure outside perspective on power to gain some leverage over its flows and instances of regulation. In his essay from 1982 “The Subject and Power”, he even offers an explicit challenge to his readers concerning a possible deployment of power over their own subjectivities:

May be the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political “double bind” which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures...we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries. (336)

We are always caught up in the notions, terms and values of our day do not lead inevitably to quietism or defeatism in our relationship to them. But it certainly should dislodge our assumption of mastery over them. Judith Butler the most important recent critic and theorist finds a clear political dynamism in Foucault. In “The Psychic Life of Power” she makes a point that “The Foucauldian subject is never fully constituted in subjection” (54). Foucault does not suggest that discourse turns us into automations because political disagreement has always existed. Falzon, in his “Foucault and Social Dialogue”, adds his voice to Butler’s saying that “there will always be resistance, revolt, and struggle against socially imposed constraints,

renewed dialogue and the transformation of social forms. The agent of change here is the concrete, resisting human being” (52).

Besides, subjectivity is an awareness of oneself; it seems to have no stable content: every moment brings a different ‘self’ to light. Montaigne puts it this way “anyone who turns his attention to himself will hardly ever find himself in the same state twice” (196). If subjective reflection offers proof of the existence of the self, it does not necessarily deliver self knowledge. Amelie Rorty in his essay “The Many Faces of Subjectivity” presents his ideas about subjectivity as our experienced sense of ourselves which serve multiple functions and fuse distinctive archaeological layers of meaning. In this regard he writes:

The reflective ego is only individuated as an embodied being, subject to unreliable passions. The subjective reflection that delivers certain knowledge only delivers mathematical science. The subjective reflections of passions, ideas only deliver fallible indicators of the individuated mind body; and these are only as trustworthy as is the individual’s grasp of the scientific laws that provide adequate interpretations of the confusing information afforded by the passions. (196)

Amelie Rorty makes it clear that subjectivity is the production of unreliable passions which deliver only the fallible ideas of individuated mind. He interprets the ideas of different philosophers who talk about subjectivity. Borrowing ideas from Locke, he argues that subjectivity is fixed by the consciousness of the memory of its sense experience. “It is by consciousness that the personal self has of its present thoughts and actions, that it is self to its now, and so will be the same self” (197).

So, Amelie Rorty's argument is that the source of subjectivity is in the content of experience that is in the sequence of impressions and ideas. There is no existence either of our being or of objects. Arguing from *Wealth of Erudition* Montaigne ironically mocks the pretension to knowledge and to self knowledge. "Whom shall we believe when he talks about himself?" (32).

Amelie Rorty claims that there are many faces of subjectivity. We are confident that our experience is ours but the moment we try to explain what subjectivity consists the sense of certainty vanishes. He proves his statement by borrowing ideas from different philosophers. The empiricists believe that the source of the idea of personal identity is the content of experience that is in the sequence of impressions of ideas. Lock says that "it is the imagination, rather than the memory that construct the idea of the identity of a person. The identity which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one" (198). Besides, the rationalists locate subjectivity in the passions of the soul. Descartes argues that "yet passions can be highly misleading because they do not directly represent their causes or objects (196)". Moreover he brings Fichte's idea who claims that the "subjectivity that pervades all conscious experience is coordinate with and limited by the realization of freedom of others" (200). Sartre sees the subjectivity of the ego self as inescapably inauthentic. Hence, though the different philosophers describe subjectivity from their own point of view, in common they all accept subjectivity as fallible and inauthentic perspective of an individual as it does not have a stable content. So, Amelie Rorty argues that "in nature subjectivity is instinctual; in society it is emotional; in political citizenship, it is rational and universal". In this regard he further writes:

Our history has revealed several distinctive strands in conceptions of subjectivity: it was constituted as 1) a first person 2) individuated, 3)

self referential, 4) expression, 5) occurrent 6) mental state. These distinctive markers of subjectivity can occur independently of one another, indeed they demarcate radically different conceptions [. . .] in some usages subjectivity reports claim validity; in others they are fallible. In some usages subjectivity is contrasted with objectivity, in others, it is a self constituting performance. In some usages, subjective reflection is individuated; in others it reveals the structure of any and every mind's necessarily self validating ideas. (201)

These radically distinctive conceptions of subjectivity have dramatically different roles in the phenomenology of reflective experience. So the claims of subjectivity may or may not be trust worthy. But he accepts one thing that is the unstable content of subjectivity.

Similarly, our self is not rational rather it is formed by chance. So there is instability of self and so is our knowledge. Richard Rorty an American philosopher in his essay "Contingencies of Selfhood" argues that self is contingent, not absolute and it is formed by chance. He vehemently criticized the pre-Nietzschean philosophers who believed in self permanency or self as universal, unified and transcendental. Rorty develops his redescription of the fully contingent self with the help of Nietzsche, Freud and Bloom and tries to de-divinize the self and truth. In this context Rorty writes:

Freud suggests that we need to return to the particular- to see particular present situations and options as similar to or different from particular past actions or events. He thinks that only if we catch hold of some crucial idiosyncratic contingencies in our past shall we able to make something worthwhile out of ourselves, to create present selves whom we can respect... he suggested that we praise ourselves by weaving

idiosyncratic narratives, case histories as it were of our success in self creation, our ability to break free from an idiosyncratic past. He suggests that we condemn ourselves for failure to break free of that past rather than for failure to live up to universal standards. (174)

Rorty points Freud's account that our conscious private goals are as idiosyncratic as the unconscious obsession and phobias from which they branched off. His utility lies in his ability to turn us away from the universal to the concrete from the attempt to find necessary truths; inalienable beliefs to the idiosyncratic contingencies of our individual pasts to the blind impress all our behaving bear. What Rorty tries to clarify through the reference of Freud is his idea of contingency of selfhood. There is no self that has stable core. Our self is not perfect but indeterminate and dominated by id, ego, and superego. There are many things in the world that are out of our personal experience. Even morality is not constant.

For Rorty human understanding is not based on some objective structure of mind. Rather we interpret the world through a variety of paradigms. He de-divinized truth by bringing the idea of Nietzsche, who degraded "man as not so rational being and man's attempt of finding truth as mere futile effort" (170) because truth according to him is 'the mobile army of metaphor, metonymies and anthropomorphisms'.

As Aristotle said philosophy begins in wonder. That 'wonder' as Rorty points out is the awe of "finding oneself in a world larger stronger and nobler than oneself" (170). Rorty, following Nietzsche and Harold Bloom, argues that "poetry begins in fear". Strong poet's anxiety of influence, Bloom says is precisely the horror of finding oneself to be only a copy or a replica. Rorty further writes:

In this Nietzschean view, the impulse to think, to inquire, to reweave oneself ever more thoroughly, is not wonder but terror. It is once again

Bloom's 'horror of finding oneself to be only a copy or replica'. The wonder in which Aristotle believed philosophy to begin was wonder at finding oneself in a world larger, stronger, and nobler than oneself. The fear in which Bloom's poets begin is the fear that one might end one's days in such a world, a world one never made an inherited world. The hope of such a poet is that what the past tried to do to her she will succeed in doing to the past ; to make the past itself, including those very causal processes which blindly impressed all her own behaviors, bear her impress. Success in that enterprise the enterprise of saying 'Thus I willed it' to the past – is success in what Bloom calls "giving birth to oneself". (171)

Here, Rorty invokes Nietzsche because he was the first philosopher who explicitly suggested that we see ourselves not as truth seeking animals but rather as self creating animals. He tries to redescribe Bloom's idea that it is precisely the poet's horror of finding that his or her most important creations are not really his /her creations at all, but instead is inevitably by products of the unconscious impressions left in his/her mind by another stronger and more impressive poet. So, strong poet is continually anxious about his/her self and he wants to be free of impressions of other and wants to create his/her own impressions.

Rorty points out that the process of becoming free of impressions of other and thereby tracing home all the idiosyncrasies of one's individual self is identical with the process of inventing a new language. Thus, Rorty attempts to tie his view on the contingencies of language and self. He believes that the self changes due o the change in socio political circumstances. So through this essay he tries to de-divinize the world and to de-divinize the self and truth.

In conclusion, subjectivity denotes our social constructs and consciousness of identity. Subjectivity is much broader and multi faceted than the term 'identity' though they are interrelated concepts. It is social and personal being that exists in negotiation with broad cultural definitions and our own ideals. Subjectivity comprises numerous discrete identities like race, class, gender, sex as well as our own imperfect awareness of our selves. It is a human nature that we are obsessed with making our selves perfect. We are widely led to believe that we have the freedom and ability to create and recreate our "selves" at will.

This book is about the mind control torture inflicted upon Rijal while he was in Bhutanese jail as a political prisoner. So, Rijal valorizes his self because the book revolves around self aggrandizement than dealing with the refugee issue as a refugee leader and human right activists. Subjectivity is an individual's perception of the world, his own experience of life and his ideations. In other words, subjectivity denotes our current obsession with perfecting our selves. So, it is an error prone perspective of the individual which is contingent and limited. As Foucault defines subjectivity is the effect of power, knowledge, and other influences, it will be produced by the discourse. Discourse informs and shapes the subjectivity, including the possible activities and knowledge of the individuals. So, in this research, I will try to explore how the writer focuses more upon his subjectivity ignoring the issues of refugee. As a refugee leader, Rijal has not been successful to deal with the problems of them while being obsessed with perfecting his self which I will explore in this book *Torture Killing Me Softly* applying the theoretical insights of subjectivity.

III. Self-valorization in *Torture Killing Me Softly*

Tek Nath Rijal , the veteran leader of Bhutanese democratic movement, in his book *Torture Killing Me Softly* deals more with self aggrandizement than shining some light on the Bhutanese democratic movement that is now fast waning. He has foreshadowed the suffering of more than one hundred thousands of Bhutanese refugees who are living with their painful lives in other countries leaving their homeland because the central focus of this book is upon the mind control device applied in him during his prison life in the Bhutanese jail. Moreover, he discusses about the vicissitudes of his relations with the then Bhutanese king Jigme Singe Wangchuck and his dehumanized prison life under Jigme dictatorship. While bringing his subjectivity in limelight he has failed so far to explain his role in protecting the human rights and the rights of the Lhotshampas in particular from 1979 to 1988, before he developed differences with king Jigme.

This book is based on Rijal's own experience of life when he was subjected to mind control torture during his incarceration in Bhutanese jail. He gives a detail of his personal thoughts and opinions, and his realization when he was put as a political prisoner in a solitary confinement. Though time and again Rijal describes the effects of such techno-savvy-surveillance upon him he seems so touching when he describes the situation of Bhutanese prison and the barbaric torture techniques of Bhutanese authorities. But it is unfortunate that Rijal has foreshadowed the problems of refugee when he becomes too personal and describes his own personal issues and it is because of his subjectively guided position.

As subjectivity is based on an individual's own experience of life it contains his/her personal opinions which in turn are based on his past experiences. So, subjectivity is shaped by an individual's developed likes and dislikes, prejudices and

biases developed over his life span. In the book *Torture Killing Me Softly* the writer, Tek Nath Rijal describes his past experiences. But while going through the ordeals and melancholies of past he focuses more upon his own self. From the beginning to the end he describes how he was kicked out by the king from his power position despite being faithful to Tsa- Wa- sum, his decade long prison life. He also describes how he becomes successful to remain intact from painful mind control torture and his success to share his torturous experiences with rest of the world. After his release from the prison, Rijal describes his journey to different countries for treatment. So, in this book the central focus is only upon his life experiences and ideations.

In the beginning, Rijal was one of the public representatives from south Bhutan holding four offices. As a representative from his area it was his duty and responsibility to raise his voice and work for them. And when the hundreds of Lhotshampas were victimized by the coercive methods applied by the census teams they complained about it to him. But Rijal describes this situation in such a way that brings his subjectivity in limelight in front of the international community. In this regard he writes:

These victimized people began to flock to my office at Thimpu complaining about the excesses being done by the above mentioned polices especially the census teams. At that time, I was one of the public representatives from south Bhutan ...I inquired with the secretary Department of Census and Immigration who told me that it was a routine exercise.[...] Distressed by the grave political consequences of the census I verbally brought this issue to the knowledge of the king Jigme Singe Wangchuck. Then he told me to give everything in writing. Thereafter I called meeting of southern

Bhutanese holding important position in the government and public life. (5/6)

Here, Rijal describes every action taken by him in great details. He says I do this and I do that so in a way he is beating his drum himself. It proves that more than truth seeking he becomes a self creating writer.

Certainly it is not very easy to go against the people who are in power position. Rijal has unveiled the darker side of Bhutanese jail and the barbaric torture technique of Bhutanese authorities for which he is praiseworthy. He says that “I had pointed out the corruption carried out by the officials, and for this I was declared a criminal and antinational” (8). But he is describing his action in such a great detail in this small book that the reader can feel he is praising and highlighting his self.

Moreover, Rijal also describes his concerns for the oppressed and voiceless people left behind. He says that “I continued to be concerned about oppressed and voiceless people left behind [...] I deeply anguished at the plight of the poor families, including the Sharchhokpas and Ngalongs” (10). Thus, Rijal describes and makes analysis of his own individual opinions which in turn are based on his past experiences when the king branded him as an instigator and an anti-national, he was removed from his positions then arrested and detained in the prison for three days. After his detention Rijal left Bhutan and went to Assam but finally decided to take shelter in Nepal. He describes his decision of leaving Bhutan as “Fearing serious threat to my life and liberty from the state I decided to leave Bhutan” (10). So in the book he describes his personal thoughts, feelings and concerns.

Besides, the book delves into Rijal’s own life and in detail describing the use of mind control device that was applied on him during his trial. He has presented an account of his harrowing experiences and injustice that he continues to suffer for

which the king and his regime of tyranny are mainly responsible. Rijal describes his observation of the prison room in such a way:

In a small room where I was kept all my eyes could see its floor and the ceiling. There was a bulb hanging from the ceiling of the room, which was lit for twenty four hours. I was not allowed to pen windows covered with thick curtains. Due to complete isolation inside the room, the feelings of irritation and hatred started to grow with in me. The infuriating manner in which the constables were incessantly staring at me increased the sense of hatred. (17)

Thus, Rijal makes the observation of the prison custody where he was kept. The phrases like ‘small room’, ‘floor and the ceiling’, ‘a bulb hanging’, ‘windows covered with thick curtain’ gives the sense that he is clearly making the observation and analysis of his prison room. Similarly, he also makes his realization of the sense of hatred at the presence of constables. As he says “I started feeling allergic to their unrelenting and hardened presence” (17). So, here, Rijal expresses his different kinds of perspectives towards the face to face vigilance of these constables.

Throughout the book, Rijal describes his experience of being under such ‘mind control’ torture technique. He claims that, through this device he only as targeted subject used to hear weird instructions on what next to do and what to avoid. He was subjected to unbearable physical pains meted out by the loud sounds in the ear and sudden convolutions of laughter and weeping. He describes his experience of getting torture through mind control device in such a way:

With each passing second, the sound decibels gradually increased and became deafeningly loud. Terrified, I removed the blanket from my face and looked around. The constables were standing in their same

position, in the same mood unperturbed by the sound that was blaring out so loudly in my ears. I could make out that they were least affected. Realizing that I was the only victim of this deafening sound, I was immensely terrified. (20)

Here, Rijal describes his painful experiences of torture, to which he was the only victim as he says “Realizing that I was the only victim” (20). He focuses upon his victimization in such a way as if others were not the victim. So, it is purely his own experience of life that he has got in the course of his lifetime. He expresses the sense of ‘terrified’ by the loud sounds and his reaction to it ‘I removed the blanket from my face and looked around’. He even claims that he was more terrified to learn the fact that he was the only victim of it as the constables who were standing in their same position being not affected by the sound. Thus, Rijal describes his own personal feelings, of being subjected to ‘mind control’ device.

Rijal even acclaims that the Bhutanese government made every efforts to prove him insane and encourage him to commit suicide by keeping him in solitary confinement. Despite all the odds, it was his sheer courage and fortitude that made him intact through it all and he becomes successful to share his experiences with the rest of the world. It must be noted here that though Rijal made every effort to bring out the injustice and criminality made by the Bhutanese king his own subjectivity dominate the whole book and foreshadows the problems of those Lhotshompas people who were wrongfully evicted from their country and living their painful life in another country as refugee. Rijal focuses upon his subjectivity because he writes focusing upon his situation “at that time the rest of the world was yet to be aware of the injustices and degrading treatment given to me” (29). Moreover, he focuses upon the resultant effect of such inhuman treatment upon him. In this regard he writes that:

The mechanism used to control my mind was not only abusing my mind or torturing me physically, it was torturing my inner soul, leaving me with unbearable pain. My hunger, slumber and throat were not under my control I had been transformed into a dead body, I only had my conscious alive. I lack to put the agony and grief of the enslavement of my spirit and consciousness in black and white. (29)

Here, Rijal presents his incorrigible introspective authority as they are purely his experiences, and thoughts. He is making careful examination of these feelings ‘torturing his inner soul’ and with ‘unbearable pain’. He also makes the careful analysis of his feelings that his hunger, slumber throat were not under his control. As his body is not under his control it had been transformed into a dead body. So, Rijal explains his introspective authority which relates to the subjective analysis of his feelings.

Moreover, there are some instances which give the evidence to argue that Rijal makes self valorization in the book. Because time and again he says that “when I was brutally subjected to mental torture, the other inmates were only being subjected to very mild relay of sound waves, without any torture” (41). It means that he was only the person who was brutally punished where as other prisoners not. But it does not seem truthful because the barbaric Jigme regime did not leave a stone to torture and persecute other prisoners who went against his tyranny. Once Rijal recollects the incidents of the assassinations of Zhabdrung, Garjaman Gurung, Mahasur Chettri of Chirang and others there were some political prisoners in Bhutan who were pushed over cliffs or thrown into the river, after being stuffed in cowhide-sacks with their hands and tied. The cruel regime killed Garjaman Gurung “by throwing him in boiling oil in a large frying pan” (14). Mahasur Chettri of Chirang was killed by wrapping

with the slaughtered cow's "fresh skin along with a big stone and then thrown alive into the river" (14). These were some barbaric misdeeds of this despotic dynasty against its citizens. So, we cannot believe that the despotic dynasty did not behave cruelly with other political prisoners with Rijal.

Though there is no point raising question regarding the claims and arguments of the author as they are purely his experiences and ordeals. But this book seems more as subjective analysis of Rijal rather than the exploration of the predicaments of refugee. Rijal also claims that the cruel authorities encouraged him to commit suicide by deliberately leaving a sharing blade and a rope in his room by fixing a hook in the ceiling. Because it is strictly prohibited to provide such things to prisoner as he may hurt himself or others. But while discussing about these issue Rijal highly valorizes himself as he escape from these tactics. In this regard he writes:

Thanks to my immense inner strength, I could resist all these relentless efforts of the regime to end my life. That is how I survived ten years of rigorous torture. In spite of all these provocations pushing me to the edge of committing suicide, I escaped such a fate, due to the lesson learnt from my mother. Since childhood, she always told us that life, in due course of time, might create some moments, inflicting of sorrow and pain on me, but at such times I should never think of ending my life. It was this teaching of my mother which helped me survive those days of extreme brutality. (48)

Thus, Rijal valorizes his inner strength "thanks to my immense inner strength" which helped him to survive ten years of rigorous torture. He says that despite the cruel government's practice of making him commit suicide he made self defense in this regard and could escape from those extreme brutality. He gives importance to his

mother's lesson of childhood which according to him helps in this regard. So, he did not think of ending his life and escaped such fate.

Similarly, Rijal describes how he had presented convincing arguments during his legal proceeding of his trial in court. And the corrupt judges of "Kangaroo Court" remained silent. He argues that "understanding the rationality of my argument the judges quickly dismissed the charge" (59). So, Rijal has the sense of correctness regarding his self. In this regard he writes that:

My dear fellow countrymen, brothers and sisters, for a peoples representative like me who was always committed to the good of the country, the king and the people, the type of punishment I'm receiving from the government is not at all justified. By producing me before you all in this manner, the administration is trying to frighten you, scare you all and at the same time, trying to make me frustrated and ashamed. But you should not be frightened and I, too, will not be frustrated nor will I lose hope. (56)

Here, Rijal is to justify him in front of the crowd who were presented in the court to hear his legal proceedings. He describes himself as a person "who was always committed to the good of the country, the king and the people", so the kind of punishment he is receiving is not all justified. He express his strong determination 'I will not be frustrated nor will I lose hope' in front of the crowd. Thus, Rijal is exploring his personality by relating to his own issues.

In this manner Rijal deals with the issue of his life in this book. He says "He was terrified of my potential outbursts in front of the crowd" (60). This suggests the praise of his self. There are so many words and phrases in the book which gives the sense of writer's obsession with perfecting his self. Though it is really appreciative

and sympathetic on the part of Rijal that he becomes successful to save his life and inner qualities despite of being inhumanity tortured and brutally persecuted by the Bhutanese authorities, he is overemphasizing his subjectivity. The reader can feel that in order to get more sympathy from the reader he is closing his eyes in his inability.

Rijal recounts an event of the visit of Amnesty International in the jail to see his physical condition. They requested him to write about his feelings but he wrote something different as “provide food to old people around the world”(74). But he says that he wanted to write about refugee problems and human rights in Bhutan. In this regard, he sympathizes himself:

I consoled myself with the thought that whatever happened was not done by me, but I was manipulated to write, through mind control whatever my controller wanted. This was deliberately intended to depict me as a mentally deranged person in the eyes of the international community. From this episode, I wonder what kind of diverse, laughable statements the other inmates might have given during visits from different institutions and organizations. (75)

Thus, Rijal is consoling himself in writing such statements. He claims that “whatever happened was not done by me but I was manipulated to write” whatever his mind controller wanted. His claim of manipulation by the authorities to do what they wanted is questionable .Because if so then why he was not manipulated during his legal proceedings. How could he become able to write this book if he was controlled by his mind controller even after his release? These claims trigger several curiosities which he cannot answer. It is because he is valorizing his own self in order to prove him innocent.

Besides, our self is not rational rather it is formed by chance so there is instability of self. Rijal's self is also contingent so his decision changes time and again. As we do not find our self in the same state twice, our self or ego is also changeable. I want to link this to the Rijal's decision of accepting his conditional release. Because at first he rejects his conditional release feeling humiliated and insulted and tore the document furiously. But later he changed his decision and signs the paper of his conditional release. He expresses his feelings of acceptance of conditional release in such a way:

I felt that I would not gain anything by not following his instruction. After all, I would not lose my commitment if I accept the conditions laid by the king. I knew that the decision to set me free from the prison was due to external pressure and, sooner or later, the king would release me, but longer it took, more torturous it would be...I knew that the world outside the prison was waiting for my release and I had a lot more to tell them once I was free. (110)

Thus, Rijal expresses his changing self from his earlier state. When he accepts the conditions laid by the king he does not want to accept his failure because he succumbs to the barbaric practices of king. But he is sympathizing himself as he says "I would not gain anything by not following his instruction" (110). But he seems to be determined not to lose his commitments. More than this he gives self importance because he says that 'the world outside the prison was waiting for his release'.

Though, Rijal says that he made the right choice of accepting the conditional release "I made a right choice" (112), it was only his illusion. Because he thinks that after his release from the prison he will do lots of things. But his determination remains unfulfilled as he lives in exile after his release. Moreover, he could not do

any significant work. Later he realizes it as he says “My release was made possible only after procuring my signature under duress on my commitment to Tsa-Wa-Sum. So, my hands were tied in Bhutan and I was pitted in circumstances which forced me to take a painful decision to leave Bhutan” (182). Thus, Rizal shows his helplessness which makes him a sympathetic character rather than a determined leader, because of his inability to understand the fractured freedom due to his acceptance of the conditions laid by the king.

Certainly, it is a hateful and sinful practice of cruel Bhutanese government that it tried to make Rizal aloof and alienated from the rest of the people. The regime threatened and noticed the person who came closer to him in order to deviate him from his goal of fighting for democracy. But I think Rijal misunderstood those helpless common people who were afraid of being noticed in his company. Because if they were arrested no Amnesty International, united Nations and other human rights organizations would come to visit them in prison. They may have to spend their whole life in prison. So, it can be their compulsion. Thus, Rijal shouldn't be angry with them. Moreover, Rijal has some ego of being superior to others. He thinks as if he is the only person who fights against the cruel regime. He says:

I felt as if I was the only person trying to defy the ruthless Bhutanese regime but I had no definite plan to proceed with my mission. In jail my task was comparatively minimal but now circumstances demanded me to evolve myself in a new role. What would I do next? My mind was unable to focus, always moving from one thing to another. At that time, faces of my father, mother, wife, sons and friends came floating before my eyes. (121)

Rijal is making his self valorization because he thinks as if he is the only person who defies the ruthless regime “I was the only person trying to defy the ruthless Bhutanese regime” (121). He is contemplating himself to be evolving in a new role which will build up his subjectivity. Moreover, we can see the inconstant nature of his self as he fails to focus on something but it moves from one thing to another and remembers his family members and friends.

Likewise, Rijal’s ideas are to some extent controversial because whenever he does some mistakes though unknowingly he says that it is because of the manipulation of the controller “as I was manipulated by the mind controller, I completely forget to contact my wife and sons the day I was released” (123). On the other hand, he claims that he is giving authentic facts and data as he says “all the events and incidents that I have mentioned here in this book are authentic and real, though the government of Bhutan has erased facts and figures from its records” (184). Moreover, he also claims that even after his release he was manipulated by the remotely sent modulated microwaves and it follows him as far as Geneva where he had gone to attend a conference. So, it is questionable that how could he become able to write this book including authentic documents regarding the dates and incidents? Thus, Rijal concerns more upon his life as he describes how he was severely tortured in Bhutanese jail and what consequences is he facing nowadays because of the effect of torture, through out the book.

In order to prove himself as fully dedicated and highly responsible leader Rijal tries to justify his medical treatment. Rijal went to several hospitals and doctors to treat his diseases. Some international organizations provided him the free treatment service and he went to different countries during his treatment. In this regard he argues:

I am not afraid of death, as it the only certainty of life, but I was not willing to die due to my own carelessness. So, it became important for me to learn about the organs malfunctioning in my body. It was equally important for me to under go medical treatment. I would be able to do anything in life if I continue living! All these thoughts were churning in my mind during the treatment in Jigme Dorji Memorial Hospital. There were problems about the treatment – no food was provided no proper attention was given. (124)

Though it is the fundamental rights of every human being to be worried about his/her health, Rijal is trying to justify his treatment. He wants to prove that his life is for the sake of other so he wants to live otherwise not and it seems exaggerated. Thus, in order to reflect his perfect self Rijal highlights his nature “I am not afraid of death” (124). Being a marginalized Lhotshampa group he claims to be unafraid of death which does not seem reasonable. Moreover he gives the reason behind his medical treatment “I would be able to do anything in my life only if I continue living”. He seems contradictory because he is talking about two sides as he is not afraid of death but he does not want to die due to his carelessness. So, he demonstrates his superiority to death which seems fake.

Similarly, he is highlighting his ability and efficiency to fight against the tyranny in spite of being subjected to brutal torture. He says that “these invisible and non traceable technological assaults destroy me psychologically and physiologically” (154). He creates certain discourse about him self in order to maintain his leadership and personality. In this regard he further writes:

I find difficulty in expressing my sadness emerging from the circumstances prevailing in Bhutan, particularly the way the country is

being ruled, I still do not hesitate to raise my voice against the tyranny. [...] the Bhutanese regime had tried its best to break me but I still stand on my ideologies. Despite all the farce I had gone through, I still defy the uncanny rule of the king of Bhutan, because the king alone with the members of royal family, with their goons and cronies are serving their own interest at the cost of their people. (155)

In the above extract, Rijal clearly establishes himself as a superman who never leaves his stance despite being cruelly brutalized. He valorizes himself “I still defy the uncanny rule of the king”. He describes himself as a person who stands on his ideologies though the cruel regime tried to break him. So in a way he is demonstrating his powerful ideology.

Moreover, Rizal describes himself as superior and knowledgeable than the other prisoners who were imprisoned without committing any crime. When he was shifted to Chamgang prison from Rabuna he was not kept in solitary confinement and got the chance to mingle with other fellow prison inmates. At that time he urged them to appeal to the king if they were not satisfied with the court’s decision. He says “I motivated them to appeal to the king” (93). But his motivation to other prisoners to appeal to the king seems unreasonable. Because if the king is cruel and barbaric than what was the purpose behind the appeal to the king?

Besides, Rijal also focuses more upon the torture that he got during his prison life due to his vicissitude with the then Bhutanese king Jigme Singe Wangchuck. While reading through the book, the reader can realize that Rijal makes self aggrandizement instead of talking about the problems of Bhutanese democratic movement. In order to bring his subjectivity in limelight, he focuses more upon his struggle. He does not touch the issue of precarious political and human rights situation

in Bhutan. Moreover, he is also silent about other political prisoners who suffered from the same torture as he faced. He does not tell us what happened to the (Mr Sushil Pokhrel and Mr. Jogen Gazmer) who were arrested with him in Nepal. One of the instances of his self aggrandizement can be taken as follow:

By nature, I am a brave, fearless and transparent person with guts to fight for rights causes. But somehow I was frightened to such an extent that I left my country and this was enough for the regime to declare me antinational and alienate me from the people [...]. But after I was brought from Nepal, the aim of controlling my mind was to extract as much information from me as possible, and in the process severe torture was inflicted. Yet another objective was to teach me a lesson, to destroy me, as I had dared to defy the king. (148)

Thus, Rijal makes the valorization of self as he says ‘I am a brave fearless and transparent person’. He shows his pompous nature as he explains his virtue by himself. Another point is that if he is brave and fearless than why was he frightened with the king and left his country? He says that he had dared to defy the king but once he accepts the conditions laid by the king during his release from jail. So, in a way he succumbs to the king but not dare to defy to him. He also explains that he is not certain about the beginning of mind control device as the waves were relatively weak previously. But Rijal is not sure as he says “probably”.

In this manner, Rijal highlights his self while describing his painful experience with the rest of the world. Though he claims that his primary objective behind writing this book is to reveal the other side of the so called last Shangri-la, where ethnic cleansing is being practiced as a state policy, in the name of maintaining cultural purity he can’t do so. Because his description of the torture through mind control

device foreshadows other issues related to Shangri-la. He even acclaims that he continuously became a victim of mind control till the date and it has severely curbed his thought process and shackled his activities. So, he tries to give evidence of such hitherto little heard techniques in order to prove his claims. Thus, this book relates to his harrowing experiences that he went through. Besides, Rijal talks about his inner qualities which he had lost due to the infliction of torture. In this regard, he says:

Before I was sent to prison I used to be a brave person, having a sharp and long memory and I was an established orator with a continuous flow of words and sentences. But now I lost my grip over these things for sometime but subsequently I fought and regained my strength to show the regime that it has failed to break me. Because of my mind control I find great difficulty in addressing public functions as I get jittery nervous, and scared of delivering extempore speeches. (156-57)

Rijal describes that due to the infliction of torture he has lost his qualities and capabilities of brevity, long memory and orator ship. So, he is lamenting over the loss of these things but at the same time he feels pride to regain his strength which helps to show the regime of its failure, “I fought and regained my strength” (156). He also deals with his personal problems which exposes that his subjectivity dominates this whole book.

Thus, Rijal describes his life and his painful experience of torture through mind control throughout the book. He writes in great detail about the consequences of torture upon him, his physical and mental condition and his journey to many countries for medical treatment. While focusing upon his own life and experiences he foreshadowed other issues related to the refugee and their problems. As a refugee leader and a human rights activist he has his public life as well which he fails to

recognize by dealing only with his private life. So, he fails to address the problems of more than one hundred thousands of Lhotshampas (people of Nepali ethnic origin) while bringing his subjectivity to limelight.

IV. Conclusion

Bhutanese human rights leader Tek Nath Rijal, in the book *Torture Killing Me Softly* recounts the tale of torture that was applied on him during his decade long incarceration in Bhutanese jail. The book revolves around self aggrandizement than shining some light on the Bhutanese democratic movement that is now fast waning. So, while describing his own pain and sufferings, Rijal foreshadows the sufferings of more than one hundred thousand of Bhutanese refugees who were wrongfully evicted from their country and living their painful lives in other countries. In the book, Rijal describes how his successful political career came to an end and was removed from his position due to his support of marginalized Lhotshampas people and the vicissitudes of his relation with the then Bhutanese king Jigme Singe Wangchuck. He also writes how his strong stance to point out the corruption carried out by the officials made him criminal and antinational. Similarly, he gives the long details of torture that he continued to suffer in the Bhutanese jail, the consequences of torture and his visit to different countries for medical treatment. Thus, while focusing upon his own sufferings he foreshadowed the other's sufferings.

As the book is about the life and experience of Rijal, it includes his thoughts, feelings and opinions. He has presented himself as brave and fearless person which in turn reflects his own incorrigible, introspective authority. Moreover, due to his contingent self and discursive practices he tries to build up his strong personality. Hence Rijal exposes his endeavor, and his ability to endure which helps him to remain intact through all sorts of torture despite being inhumanly tortured and brutally persecuted. He is more concerned with his family life and political career which according to him is totally disturbed due to the infliction of mind control devices upon him. So, Rijal's emphasis of torturous experience and his claim of being one and only

person fighting against the barbaric regime is evident that he wants to bring his subjectivity on limelight.

Thus, Rijal excludes the marginalized Lhotshampas people whose one and only hope is Tek Nath Rijal as a refugee leader and a human rights activists. But he has foreshadowed the problems of those refugees by keeping aside their issues and highlighting his own sufferings. He fails to chart the problem regarding the repatriation of Bhutanese refugees back to their motherland while describing the efficacy of mind control devices upon him. As a refugee leader he becomes successful to divert the attention of international community who helped him to ensure his release from the Bhutanese prison and provide him the free medical service. But it is unfortunate that the over emphasis of his painful torturous experience overshadowed other political prisoners who suffered from the same torture. Similarly, he deals more with giving evidence of such hitherto little heard techniques in order to justify his claims and arguments.

Though there is no point raising questions regarding the claims of torturous experience of writer as they are purely his experiences and ordeals. But his revelations of self importance and self aggrandizement trigger several curiosities. So, it can be argued that Rizal wants to regain his power back by bringing his subjectivity on limelight in front of the international community, as he fails to discuss the human rights situation of Bhutan.

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