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Critique of Scientific Optimism in Ava Jae's *Beyond the Red*

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Letter of Recommendation

Lokendra Bahadur Khadka has completed his thesis entitled “Critique of Scientific Optimism in Ava Jae’s *Beyond the Red*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2073/03/15 B.S. to 2073/08/19 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Critique of Scientific Optimism in Ava Jae’s *Beyond the Red*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Lokendra Bahadur Khadka has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This thesis entitled “Critique of Scientific Optimism in Ava Jae’s *Beyond the Red*” explores the negative influences of science and technology in human life. People are usually hopeful and positive towards the scientific innovations and innovative ideas. But the same scientific ideas and innovations begin to rule over human life. Advanced science and technology are misused by totalitarian government that has resulted in the sense of loss, misunderstanding, maladjustment, identity crisis, conflict, anxiety and so on. The main aim of science and technology is to assist in the task of human being. Unfortunately, science and technology become more harmful when the authorities use it for their personal vested interests. Technology by itself is not responsible for such harm, it is the power centre who misuses technology and brings negative impact upon society. This novel centers around the political mechanism of Alien Planet. The main character of the novel Eros is the son of the parents who are made to disappear by the state without any reason. The protagonist is made a helpless orphanage. Eros is a half-human and half alien soldier who has lost everything. The main character Eros is trained for combat, joining missions to serve as bodyguard of queen named Kora. Throughout the novel, Eros suffers from hunger, fear, paranoia, and identity crisis. He becomes almost lost in the midst of totalitarian government. Eros follows a young man’s journey through the icy waters, dark tunnels, and strange spy chambers of the world’s most mysterious dictatorship Alien government.

Critique of Scientific Optimism in Ava Jae's *Beyond the Red*

The present thesis analyses Ava Jae's novel *Beyond the Red* in the light of critique of scientific optimism using the theory of dystopia. Modernity project promises for the betterment of humanity throughout the advanced science and technology which is known as scientific optimism. However, scientific optimism results in to the source of destruction of humanity. Anti utopian notions of myopia, fragmentation, destruction, loss of the order and the political disruption in the novel *Beyond the Red* proves it as dystopian in character. This study aims to reveal dystopia as the subject matter of the given novel. *Beyond the Red* has an inherent debate over the change of the approach to science aftermath of the demise of modernity project. Ava Jae's *Beyond the Red* deals with the issue of scientific optimism and its underlying factors. Scientific disciplines like genetic mutation and biotechnology have witnessed fresh innovations and inventions like mechanical hounds, fire machine, manipulation of genetic code and others. These new techniques are supposed to bring relief and comfort in man's existence. Human lives should have been enhanced by the latest scientific inventions. People are usually optimistic about the scientific inventions and innovative ideas. However, the same scientific ideas and innovative concepts begin to rule over human life. Product of genetic mutation are brought up in such a way that they will have to donate their organs to the wealthy business tycoons. Scientifically manipulated being actually no less than human beings are.

Eros is a rebel soldier hated by aliens and human alike for being a half-blood. Yet that doesn't stop him from defending his people, at least until Kora's soldiers raze

his camp and take him captive. He's given an ultimatum: be an enslaved bodyguard to Kora, or be executed for his true identity - a secret kept even from him. *Beyond the Red* demonstrates how dystopian view and disillusionment affect the lives of people in metropolis. The obsessive search for the Western cultural model in modern society resulted in crisis, conflict, and perpetual unrest. The researcher claims that far from doing betterment of Eros, modern scientific development has put the seed of rift and chasm including anxiety, fear and paranoia in his life, so the optimism of the redemptive power of modernity has resulted in to invisibility of Eros in *Beyond the Red*.

The human desire of good society or human fear of bad society can be found in the various modes of literary or non-literary text. The insensitivity of the state and its corollary impact on people's collective lives has been expressed in various in modes of literary texts since the inception of the state. The utopian desire of beautiful and harmonious life dominated the sixteenth and seventieth century literary imagination along with the progress in scientific and material optimism.

However, literary domination of utopian thinking ceases to exist as significant mode of speculative fiction as long with the disillusionment that sophisticated technological advancement and formidable prevalence of media world does not necessarily lead to utopian perfection in the society. Dystopian thought pervades the area once covered by the fertile ground of utopia. Dystopia is new imaginative world in which individuals live gruesome life; the state makes their life intolerably painful.

The characters in the novel are important to preserve the theme of negative utopia. Major character of the novel Eros is living in scientifically advanced but politically shattered Alien Planet society factured by violence and power struggle including loss and betrayal. His reality of life is more alarming and dangerous than he

left behind. The main character of this novel Eros belongs to the youth generation of Alien Planet who is forced to live in metropolitan location of elite and rich people who later on forgets his real name, cultural identity and his own background being lost in the midst of totalitarian government. He becomes invisible inside the maze of political myopia. His identity crisis and loss of agency makes him invisible. *Beyond the Red* demonstrates how dystopian view and disillusionment affect the lives of people in unnamed Alien planet. The obsessive search for the separate political cultural model in Alien Planet resulted in crisis, conflict, and perpetual unrest

The narrative complexity of the novel further proves its dystopian character. *Beyond the Red* is written in the difficult political, cultural and social settings. In Alien Planet society, Eros is lost in emptiness and hollow of modern scientific development. He is deviated and hanged between several problems. *Beyond the Red* reflects the political and social unrest in Alien Planet. *Beyond the Red* is preventative of people's history, a bottom-up rather than top-down view of a society in flux. Ava Jae's work moves back and forth in time and focusing on small events and everyday people, Jae breathes life into history by describing the effects of larger-than-life events on the average citizen.

Scientific development promises for the betterment of humanity through technological advancement. However optimistic dream of science resulted in dystopia and could not boost up humanity due to its manipulation. Dystopia is a general and wide-ranging term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, fiction, culture and politics. Dystopia is largely a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific, or objective, efforts of betterment of humanity. In essence, it stems from a recognition that enlightenment of human kind is not possible, rather, it is grand narrative. For this reason, antiutopian concept is highly skeptical of explanations which claim to be

valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person. In the dystopian understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Dystopia relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal.

Fractions of modernity project are scattered throughout *Beyond the Red*. A selection of those dystopian notions relevant for the upcoming analysis of negative utopia in Jae's *Beyond the Red* will lay the foundation for the reasoning of the paper. Jae seems to be profoundly interested in the counter-enlightenment impulse in the novel, its open anti-rationalism. In *Beyond the Red*, Jae reconsiders the disillusionment of the enlightenment values and the related critique of humanism. *Beyond the Red* concerns itself with the conflict between rationalism, emotionalism, and religion, which are considered different, but equally considerable ways of thinking. The novel's protagonist, Eros, displays model citizenship, he finds himself a victim of the government's calculated whims, including his frequent imprisonment and subjugation. He becomes the victim of betrayal love, war, segregation, racism, homosexuality, forceful sex and loss.

This identification of conflict by Eros between true essence of democracy and perverted strong-government resembles any real-world dystopia in the first decade of the twenty-first century where such warring issue holds its place among the intellectual and socio-political critics. *Beyond the Red* takes the issue seriously and as dystopian method are the major issue of interest in which Dystopian narrative survives. Eros is brought to the capital to make him engage in the violent battle which is senseless. There are other participants who don't have proper names who are

identified by the number. Unlike, other some narratives that glorify war as means to salvage humanity and liberate the people, the narrative of *Beyond the Red* means of war to entertain the capitol audience and thereby disseminates the message of cruelty against anyone who goes against the authority of the state. This is the senseless death.

Different critics have given multiple criticisms to this novel depending on its various aspects that the book touches. Critics have not left a stone untouched to criticize the book which shows the universal recognition of the book. The critic Zadie Smith says:

Beyond the Red opens with a chapter so crafty (and complete as a story), that the rest of the novel must inevitably disappoint, following a kind of thermodynamic law of literature. Chapters two through twenty four (plus appendices) comprise a very long epilogue, reversing Jae's usual trick of making the first two-thirds of a book a prologue of red herrings, whopping you with a left-field climax irrelevant to the buildup. And the trick usually works. (12)

Here, Smith sees the very bonding of the novel. She analyzes the patterning, chaptering and other multiple fractions of the novel. Smith praises the trick of the writer to make the first two-thirds of a book a prologue. Geoffrey Hartmann in his article, "The final Word on Entertainment Mimetic and Monstrous Art in *Beyond the Red*" examines aesthetic aspects of art. He critiques it bringing the Aristotle's notion of art. Aristotle believes in art's power of instruct(ing) and delight'(ing) us. This phrase suggests the knowledge that comes from the entertainment. He acknowledges Aristotle's book on drama, Poetics as 'a Good place to begin reflecting on the theme of art and entertainment in *Beyond the Red*. The objective of any form of mimesis is to offer knowledge that comes from Audience's sense of

association with the suffering the protagonist feels. Hartman views that *Beyond the Red* is:

Cautionary tale about the dark side of entertainment... what if our obsession with tattoos and “extreme sports” kept burgeoning? What if entertainment become whole point of life and appetite for the excitement swept away all of our formerly enforced by our battered moral sensibilities?... Eros’ term freakish seems to express her gut intuition that there is something wrong with altering beyond recognition what nature has given you. He understands that to “make you something special” really means to unmake what you already are and he find this idea revolting. (20-26)

The novel has touched the multiple aspects of modern life. In one vein it displays the characteristic of immortal and true love in other sense it talks about the varieties and change in the nature of love in the span of time. Kermit Lansner is of the view that:

What strikes me about this book is the lasting impression it's left on me. I read it last summer and still find myself thinking about it and talking about it a year later. I recently finished another book and my wife asked me to compare it to any two others as a point of reference. Better than one book we'd both read, I said, but not as good as *Beyond the Red*. For contemporary fiction, this one sticks with you. (13)

Here Kermit believes that Jae does a fine job in painting the lead character Eros, as well as the secondary players. Although all these critics have raised different issues in this novel, the issue of dwindling scientific optimism is totally absent in their reviews and consistent commentaries. Science has robbed man of his manhood.

Science is expected to enrich human comfort and minimize labor. But science has denuded the humanity of human beings as it misused my totalitarian rulers. It has denuded the manhood of man. The issue of scientific optimism and Eros's implicit view on the systematic denudation of manhood is increasingly new and untested issue. Eros's denuded manhood is miserable and heart-rending. That is why the researcher has picked up the issue of the critique of scientific optimism in *Beyond the Red*.

The issues of the life in the dystopian age and society are what these novels are clearly concerned about. The setting of novel carries dystopian features and the writer's descriptions often evoke the accounts of dystopia. Gothic elements including the ubiquitous reign of darkness, forsaken sites, the scenes set at the cemetery and others increase the civilization decadence. Moreover, the whole planet is suffering from misunderstanding, broken family relationships, cultural decadence as well as nostalgia towards past. Selfishness crosses boundaries because they provide love and affection to their children based on their success and achievement.

Eros is degenerated into neurotic and paranoid because of the condition of mixed blood, totalitarian political system and the sadist government head Kora's character. His degraded condition in dystopian world is described as:

My brother just killed me. Again I know, because I wake with a knife to my throat and the cool barrel of phaser pressed against my forehead. Good morning to you too...im tired of day's drill. He Sometimes mock-kills me in six or seven different ways before launching in to his the aliens let you rest spiel-but it doesn't come.
(Jae 1-2)

The critique of Enlightenment universal is central to the thinking of the philosophers

of the post-modern period. *Beyond the Red* happens to scrutinize its main protagonist's rationalist thinking. The novel is a contemplation of the modernity's strategy of betterment of humanity with scientific advancement. The poststructuralist thinker Jean-Francois Lyotard took into consideration both scientific and narrative knowledge. The conclusion he arrived at was that the scientific knowledge was actually marked by a contradiction because "scientific knowledge cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative kind of knowledge, which from its point of view is no knowledge at all. In short, there is a recurrence of the narrative in the scientific" (Sarup 136-7). The scientific knowledge, so to say, can only prove its superiority with the help of the narrative. In other words, "Lyotard showed that science was like all other human activity" (Drolet 25). The dystopia theory considers science's "degradation." Furthermore, Jacques Derrida also stands up against the Western tradition of rationalist thinking and its premise of reason formed by the search for certainty and termed "logocentrism" (Moynlan 77). Logocentrism is, also in the dystopianist vision, seen as invalid and subject to deconstruction. Though *Beyond the Red's* main protagonist Eros primarily affiliates with the logo centric way of seeing the world, his reasoning inevitably simultaneously involves the deconstructive impulse - the tendency to subvert itself.

This research is mainly concerned about the scientific advancement and its connection with the abusive power of state. The research considers that dystopian society projected in *Beyond the Red* reflects Jae's idea on individual and society. *Beyond the Red*, as socio-political dystopia, depicts the individual's struggle for identity against an oppressive Alien Planet powerfully embedded totalitarian government. The research project seeks to prove *Beyond the Red* as dystopia in

socio-political aspects. Applying the dystopian critique propounded by M. Keith Booker, Tom Moylan and others, the research endeavors to explore *Beyond the Red* as Jae' Premonition: how technocratic knowledge in the hands of coercive state, if misused, could be a weapon to torment the people. Those aspects that make *Beyond the Red* dystopia are expected to be explored as the major quest of the research that based on the Tom Moylam's *The Scraps of the Untained Sky* and Krishna Kumar's analyses of theoretical aspects of dystopia seeks to explore *Beyond the Red* as novel of dystopia.

Barry Lewis, trying to identify the dominant features of dystopian literature, proposes fragmentation and paranoia as the examples of dystopian novel. The notion of fragmentation in literary writing concerns the difficulty of the determination of the given novel's theme. "The dystopian writer distrusts the wholeness and completion associated with traditional stories, and prefers to deal with other ways of structuring narrative" (127). An unambiguous completion of this novel's narrative is not accomplishable, due to its dystopian project. The guiding principle of the narration thus becomes distortion. The "uncertainty principle" (127) Lewis comes to mention is undoubtedly part of the style of Eros's narrating strategy, as explained above. Moreover, paranoia, the other prominent concept in terms of the dystopian literature's critique, is a clearly visible ingredient of *Beyond the Red*. "The protagonist of the dystopian novel sometimes suspects that he or she is trapped at the centre of an intrigue, often with some justification" (130). The protagonist is afraid of being engulfed and buried under the boots of despotic ruler

This present research examines the failure of scientific optimism in the novel *Beyond the Red* by Ava Jae. The protagonist of the novel Eros struggles to reconstruct his identity in scientifically advanced but totalitarian society. Through

his narrating, he reveals his suffocation and identity crisis in totalitarian Alien Planet society. The novel begins with the major character's suffocation due to state's strict supervision which has served as the starting point for the crisis in Eros's perception of his own identity, whom looking back at the incident, is now trying to put the fragments together to reconstruct his shattered identity. He becomes like the cog in the machine in totalitarian society. The political life of Alien Planet revolves entirely around the will and whim of Alien Queen Kora who does her ruling in the totalitarian model . She is a total dictator, and in her system, power and wealth are concentrated in a centralized state to keep control over citizens. personal freedom is not a thing. Every aspect of an individual's life—schooling, work, sex, death—is a gift from the state. Eros feels utterly alone in the world outside the city. He supposes his life nothing than the experiment, as a character genetically damaged. Eros suffers through out his life due to his half blood.

The story of *Beyond the Red* projects the precarious society where adult are compelled to engage in the act of entertainment that offers pleasure to the power holders in seeing the battle among the participants, forced, or indoctrinated to killing-ritual. It gives the bleak picture of moral-trodden society which is governed by such principals that believes in coercion and intimidation principle of state maintenance rather than consent. The absence of the moral principal in the corporate government which dares to sell the innocent lives for the sake of blessed few creates the bleaker scenarios in *Beyond the Red*. In this dystopic world of *Beyond the Red*, people have no power to raise voice against the injustice and inequality whereas the government wants more injustice so that it can prolong its power.

Dystopia is derived from the term *Utopia* itself originally coined by Thomas Moore in his book *Utopia* completed in 1516. Utopia is the blueprint for an ideal

society with no crime or poverty whereas Dystopian societies are characterized by dehumanizing and totalitarian governments, environmental disaster or other characteristics associated with a decline in society. Dystopia is described as imaginative society that has gone wrong due to the prevalence of “exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of the humanity” (Moynan 65) and injustice, restriction on freedom, strict punitive legal system. Underlying vision of nightmarish society is to warn the world. Baccolini and Moynan recognize “dystopia as warning”(45) as they find the identical admonitory trope in all cases of dystopian imagination. Observing many dystopia instances, they argue that “dystopia, to greater or lesser extent, has served as prophetic vision, the canary in the cage, for writers with ethical and political concern for warning us of terrible sociopolitical tendencies that could if continued, turn our contemporary world into iron cages.”(Elliot 2)

“Our history is full of instances of such expression of fear and horror or its antithetical desire of harmony, peace, progress and human contentment in the nature Noticing such fictional account of bad political and social conditions” (Mautner 119) or the beautiful imagination of “detailed pictures of society significantly better than that in which the writer lives” (Elliot 110), Krishna kumar asserts the imaginaries of good or bad society “manifest itself in all ages in all manner of guises (Kumar 103). It shows that human endeavors to express good or bad picture of society is perennial in the human history. People express the desire of good society or utopian society where they can fulfill their expectations and longings that they could not fulfill in their contemporary real society. In both of these expressions of good or bad society can be found corresponding to the problematic issues of the society. Whether society is good or bad depends on how one perceives one’s contemporary world, there is yet

some degree of understanding as to what is making that society bad or good .

Beyond the Red demonstrates the fearful account of society created by the abusive power of state with the help of science and technology. What makes the world of *Beyond the Red* dystopian is not simply the scarcity of the food but government's policy to control the people through resources-distributive mechanism. The nature of the governing system in the *Beyond the Red* reflects the feature of totalitarian governance that with the help of technology crushes the lives of the dispossessed. Transgression in individual freedom by the ruling system is marked as a characteristic of totalitarian governance. Totalitarian governance functions in arbitrary way that leaves no stone unturned to confirm its own rule. The situation of Eros is no different than "canary in the cage" (Jae 132). He and the world he belongs to are not different from open prison. They do not have voice to speak against the oppressive rule over them. This state of lack of freedom has become norms or habit in the part of people he represents. His world is so terrible because he is so frightened and helpless due to the difficulties of life. It has no worth to think of freedom if he does not have a food to please his stomach. The most brutal aspect of this lack of freedom begins with one's hunger. The desperation of the society results from the blind policy of restraining freedom. People neither can use their resources nor can they resort to jungle for their survival because an act of entering the jungle is an act of the State's will. The objective of deliberately creating the desperation in the district is to enslave the districts and to use them as their puppet or entertainment. The lack of freedom is background based upon which the state forms structure to use them as their entertainment or amusement.

The state wants to maintain status quo. To pursue this objective state uses any means of control over its population. To control the individual, totalitarian

government uses technology as surveillance-apparatus. Spying over the individual activities and behaviors, totalitarian government gathers information related to individual behaviors necessary to maintain the regime. Secret police as a surveillance apparatus employs terror tactics to control the citizen. In *Beyond the Red*, “not only has the secret police who are raised by the Capitol to do all in the direction of the capitol ordered to control the citizen” (202) but technological gadgetry further intensify the suffering of the people. These secrete police carries out political persecution to those who ignore the state rule. They often do the punishment in public in order to control through their fear. Abuse of state power against the general will makes the life in society miserable.

The dehumanizing use of entertainment as means to terrorize the individual and society what makes the world of *Beyond the Red* dystopian that thrives on the worst treatment of individual. The government’s agents represent such oppressive force of totalitarian principle that does not even allow death against the wish of the individual. Such issues of social-politics that are making this world difficult to live are brought into notice to warn us.

War and violence are the root causes of the evil which engulf the peace and progress. To warn such “policy” of war and violence amid the worst scenario of Poverty and hunger of food, Jae’s narrative self-reflexively warns that if state continues to promote the culture of war and bloodshed, the entire humanity will suffer forever. In order to warn the world he infuses an emphatic voice in his character who shares his pathetic condition as an individual being in worthless battle. How one goes through pain and suffering when he or she loses his nearer and dearer one in the battle that may victimize anyone in the society tells one of the Jae's thematic intentions. The writer seems to impart the lesson through Eros that war and violence is the cause of

individual suffering in the society. Individual does not desire it. They even fear of it yet the frequency of war has not diminished. Eros tells this grim side of battle before his eyes. He expresses his discontent towards violence:

still the quite ...I could easily, but I am not willing to risk a lucky shot to the chest with a phaser blast. the only way for me to escape this would be return their weapons against them. there is no way i'd do that to a bunch of kids...red not white .It is actually set to kill the little star cursed idiots .stretched from their evil roots (Jae 63-79)

With this awareness, Eros for the first time shows his rebellious attitude toward the cruelty made upon them by the state administrator. Eros points toward an urge to demolish such government-“The government that has been threatening ...almost the year” (26). The state wants to maintain status quo. To pursue this objective state uses any means of control over its population. To control the individual, totalitarian government uses technology as surveillance-apparatus. Spying over the individual activities and behaviors, totalitarian government gathers information related to individual behaviors necessary to maintain the regime. Secret police as surveillance apparatus employs terror tactics to control the citizen.

In general dystopia is understood as opposite of utopia a vision of beautiful society or heaven like society where no pain and suffering distress the inhabitants of the society. In dystopian envisioning of society prosperity and amity among the dwellers of that society becomes the matter of fantasy. Dystopian society, where human being becomes a soulless matter in the eyes of those who govern it, obliges then to do what the state wishes him/her to do. There is no freedom but fear of freedom. Projecting such society by one who envisions it has the underlying motif of warning. Where are we heading? This genre of warning warns what if our society

goes wrong like the alternative society that is exaggeratingly bad society.

The strength of *Beyond the Red* comes from the fact that it has employed the dystopian technique of estrangement yet maintains the distressing issue of contemporary society to satirize the modern mass phenomena: how straight is diverting today's youths' attention from social concern. The warning is suggested along with protagonists' awareness of the culprit of injustice that triggers in his the courage to dismantle rubbish government. Jae warns today's society using historical and mythic materials. In this extrapolation of mythic and historical ingredients, and projecting them in the future, readers are sufficiently informed as to how and what makes the society wrong. In the genre of warning or what Moylan called "didactic account" that it emanates from the projection of "the contradiction of the society that is present on the very first page (148).

Beyond the Red as one of many dystopian novels gives an overview of the bleak and terrible account due to the human action itself. Dystopia literature is important to empower the readers to be inspired to make difference to better people. We humans are given the power of choice. This power of choice has the capacity whether our society possesses utopian ideals of peace, progress and harmony or dystopia ideals of disharmony, death and destruction. The conflict of choices creates chaos and social disharmony. The choice of Eros to go against the state's choice to prolong own political system creates conflict. Government controls mass media through censorship and propaganda. Capital controls the citizen through the mass media which are television and books. Eros finds himself entangled in such traumatic torture enforced through governing system. He asserts "communism, you'd threaten a dog into compliance, while in capitalism, obedience is obtained through bribes" (32). The control is further enhanced through the control of the economy. Capital imposed

strict laws in the economic front. Every people should work hard and produce goods for the Capital and left nothing for the people. People in the state are forbidden to consume and enjoy their own production. It causes starvation and poverty that has become common things for people. "I have thought", says Eros, "in our planet, you would have bit more to eat than us. You know, since you grow the food (45).

Surveillance over the individual through the technology has been one of the issues of individual privacy in the contemporary world. Exaggerating this contemporary issues of individual being spied, Jae projected them as means to show how the strict control over the citizen can make the life in the society a hell. The images of high-tech means of surveillance indicate one of the worst ways the state uses to control the citizens. Referring to Amey's discussion on Dystopia, Pat Wheeler says that "unremitting surveillance that in many dystopian societies forces to Internalizes state's regulatory powers so that it becomes the principle of their own subjection"(1).

Ubiquitous media screw, position locator chips injected inside the body and other means of surveillance are used in the horrified *Beyond the Red*. To regulate behavior of the individual and make them obedient the state positions the secret police in standby. The sole objection of this surveillance is to instill in the individual at believe that state can know everything. By this belief state tries to ensure system sustainability. Therefore, utopian vision that state prevalence can bring happiness and harmony has been self- reflexively subverted in the dystopian narrative about the *Beyond the Red*. As Andrew Miller notes that in the dystopian society, the state creates such program to which the dwellers on it cannot resist to the hive-like society. The reason they cannot resist may be that they are even aware of the mechanized mind of themselves. Milner observes in many dystopian works the trope of resistance:

The situation is for different in recent dystopias and novels, films, and stories. In such works, the hive or machines or machine- hive becomes an important feature or the major setting for the work. The hive or machine is to essential condition of human life. To resist to hive or machine is to rebel against the entire social system, and, as often not, the protagonist is crushed, destroyed, or rendered trivial. In such works the hive or machine becomes the symbol for thing in human social life that can render us helpless, insignificant, and inhuman. (49)

In *Beyond the Red*, Ava Jae has created dystopian vision that utilizes creative and political engagement. Jae focus on her protagonist's coming of age in an extrapolated version of contemporary Alien society. In doing so, he expands the dystopian from by drawing on a range of textual influences to enrich the social detail and the narrative conflict of characters. *Beyond the Red* is about comprehending the lengths to which human beings living under the yoke of servitude must go in order to survive. Set against the backdrop of a totalitarian society whose stark realities are reminiscent of science fiction dystopia, this novel attempts to comprehend the lengths to which human beings suffer in totalitarian society. Jae has demonstrated that there is no single factor contributing in Social disharmony but many factors that cause to make the world hell. In Jae's narrative he attributes these evils fundamentally to human choices, pointing toward the human choice's position in human life, he weaves several strand of through that provide evidence how human choices lead to if world would be good or worse. The only choice of sustenance of political system leads it to believe in the curtailing of the individual freedom that might pose as a treat to this choice of system sustainability. The same choice of status quo catalyzes to protagonist an aspiration to go against this system.

One of the brutal aspects of the choice made by the central government is its policy of economic exploitation. The central government manages the resources in such way which benefits only that are nearer to leaders. The capitol enjoys all the system sustainability such economic exploitation .The capitol contributes to further intensifying the misery and predicament of the people. The same choice of status quo catalyzes to intervene in the public life in most tyrannical way that ultimately begets in the protagonist a vibrant thought to go against this system. Eros describes such poverty- trodden state of life in his contrasting it with leader's huge luxury. He describes:

I climb in and glance around the compartment. I am not sure what I'm looking for. It just seems odd that they would have had easy access to port. Nomads never uses ports this large_they ,re too conspicuous.Most of us have sand bikes and we share four beat_up half_dead junker to put the heaviest equipements and animals but they use advanced machine.(Jae 89)

In *Beyond the Red* Jae seems to comment on the same possibilities. Technology itself does not help humanity or create havoc. Its advantage or disadvantage depends on how they are used or with what purpose. The world of *Beyond the Red* is made dystopia because of government's hidden motive to employ these technological gadgetry not to enhance life of the dispossessed but to subjugate them thereby ensuring it own power of exploitation. As Booker notes about dystopian society, "both thought and feeling are strongly discouraged in this society and much of the technology goes into the development and production of goods designed to hedonistic pursuit of pleasure that will prevent buildup of potentially subversive political energies and for this hedonistic pleasure the dystopia government glorifies science as

a main symbol of power” (49). In *Beyond the Red*, technology has been used as an “Inside, I’m assaulted by the evening propaganda broadcasts coming over the apartment’s hardwired loudspeaker. There’s one in every apartment and factory floor in the society” (345). It shows that there is technology not for large humanity but for those who possess it and use it in their benefit.

Beyond the Red also comments on dystopia state of injustice. What is most distressing in life is to endure injustice before the court, which is supposed to curb all injustice and prevent misdoing. However, society of *Beyond the Red* celebrates the inhuman and unjust political game, like reaping days, in front of the “Justice Building” (34) where innocent tributes are selected for their blood in arena that is intended to appease the blood-thirsty capitol audience disregarding the individual suffering and feeling of terror. People are not allowed to exercise their marriage, love and relationship according to their own will. It depends on the mercy of the state. Eros describes the state policy as:

They’re about a woman whose beauty is like a rare flower. There is a man who has a great love for her, a love he’s been saving up for his entire life, and it doesn’t matter that he must make a great journey to her, and it doesn’t matter if their time together is brief, that afterward he might lose her, for she is the flower of his heart and nothing will keep him from her. (208)

Dystopias are negative utopia, images of future so terribly imperfect that given a chance, people would prefer to flee as far as their wherewithal can possibly take them. Such nightmarish vision of future runs through the images of “irreversible intractable bureaucratic administration, and authoritarianism and economic exploitation” (Williams 384). Harold L. Berger identified such images of hardship and horror in

most of the dystopian literary work. Andrew Milner further explores that the dystopia circumstance of the downfall of human species stems from choices human made for their vested interest. He identifies the state regulation and control as the central trope in the recent dystopian works. He observes:

... this we believe, is why so recent works, dystopian and pessimistic, have central scene in which the protagonist is imprisoned or bound or allowed to walk free only on the condition of perpetual surveillance or control. We find literal binding of the protagonist or strong capture or containment imagery, in every major dystopian works. (49)

Beyond the Red demonstrates the some tendency of human deficiency in choice that lead to chaos and disharmony. The social living of characters is nightmarish, freedom is curtailed, people are suffering from hunger, and thirst, identity is under the erasure. Eros states:

I lean against the corner and close my eyes. The air reeks of soot, sweats, blood, urine and vomit. In my mind day collapses, empty dripping in the scarlet...She forced my eyes to be opened. I can't think of them now can't break here in the back of the port with twenty sniffing women...A part of me always wonders observing I'd get chance to leave the camp.(58)

War, genocide, mutation, and genetic experimentation degenerate humanity in the level of machine. The protagonist expresses his dissatisfaction and rebellious thoughts against government of dear Kora that results in the conflict. Government became interested in negating certain genetic predispositions toward undesirable traits in its citizens. These traits – “fear, low intelligence, dishonesty, aggression, selfishness” (123) – were what ultimately led to everything that was bad in society. The

government began to try to correct these negative qualities via genetic manipulation; however, the alterations had disastrous consequences when they took effect, resulting in damaged generation.

Human beings are not machine that can be programmed forever. They have emotions, desires and feelings and desires for freedom. If the state efforts to control the personal freedom of people forever it generates permanent conflict between individual and state. The opening of the novel also casts light upon the conflict and ending also highlights upon the possible conflict. First and foremost, Eros sacrifices his own life at the end of the novel for the good of himself friends and everyone in the city he efforts to challange the totalitarian government. Eros, he goes from being an instrument of the state, Eros is a rare half-blood. Both humans and aliens depose half-bloods, so the majority of the time they are killed at birth, but strangely Eros was not. He was abandoned when he was a baby and was raised by rebel humans in the desert. He had a loving family, but the rest of the humans merely tolerated him out of respect to his adoptive parents. When there is a raid on his village by an alien group, Eros is forced into slavery. He is offered a position as the personal guard to the queen, the woman who ordered the slaughter of his people. Eros agrees to serve Kora but he never expected to befriend her or eventually feel more for her. "The only person who could take away the pain he'd suffered (503)." He swings like pendulum in front of the totalitarian government.

Jae's dystopian attitude towards society can be traced in the use of language too. "Despite the initial silence the counter narrative is often accomplished by way of language" (Moylan 23). Jae does an agile job of combining fablelike elements with vivid emotional details to create a story that has both the boldness of a cartoon and the nuance of a deeply felt portrait. She captures the grotesque horrors that Eros is

involved in, or witness to, even as she gives us a visceral sense of the world that her characters inhabit. It's a world in which anyone may be an informer, and suspicion poisons relationships between parents and children, husbands and wives. Here, even love is considered a liability, an emotion that gives the government leverage over would-be defectors: one more thing it can take away. David Andrews argues:

Frequently sponsored by the urban elites, yet increasingly practiced and consumed by the populace the ancient city skyline became dominated by sporting venues and monuments, perhaps no better exemplified than in the towering structures of the Coliseum and Circus Maximus in Rome. And it was with the emergence of the modern in 18th and 19th century in Europe Sport and urbanization became inextricably entwined. (2)

Jae by using the language related to dystopia wants to focus upon the possible misuse of language by ruling class elites. Like many works of fiction to emerge from troubled or repressive parts of the world, *Beyond the Red* employs the techniques of magical realism to create a hallucinatory mirror of day-to-day circumstances that in themselves dwarf the imagination. Kora is described life in terms befitting a comic-book villain: known as "Dear Leader" (44) in Alien Planet, this dictator, who wore elevator shoes and oversize sunglasses, allowed untold numbers of people to die of starvation during recurrent famines while pumping huge sums of money into the country's purification; she banished citizens deemed disloyal to prison camps and sent assassins after defectors.

Jae casts her light upon the state's cruelty upon the people. The citizens of any state have rights to secure life, liberty, and happiness. Instead of providing security to the citizens, ruling elites in *Beyond the Red* promote mechanism that can benefit only

few people who are under the touch of totalitarian government. A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control. Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system. The narrator criticizes the bleak picture of the society:

The soldiers are shouting and more people are crying now. Screams begin outside and I don't have to see to know what's happening- they're separating mothers from their children. My stomach twists. I wish I could do something. I wish I could stop it somehow. But standing here cuffed in the back of the port never been so powerless.

This children will probably never see their mother again. (78)

Jae emphasizes the sense of the powerlessness of Eros in the face of the oppressive and brutal government run by a massive bureaucratic institution. Paranoia is very evident among the characters who live in fear and who are being monitored, betrayed or manipulated. The standard of living among the classes is lower than in contemporary societies. However, Eros questions society although he is in great suffering. The Bureau decides to brainwash everyone inside of Chicago using a technique called memory serum. Eros and her friends do not want this to happen, because that is equal to just murdering everyone.

From the close analysis of *Beyond the Red* through the critical perspective of dystopia, the research concludes that dystopia thrives in socio-political commentary. Although it is difficult to identify exact intention of the author, Jae's narrative style in *Beyond the Red* indicates her intention to comment on how state has gone wrong in different phase of history. Much literature can be found dealing with individual vs.

state, freedom vs. oppression Dystopia is one of them. It is defined as society characterized by poverty, squalor or oppression. Most authors of dystopia explore at least one reason why things are in that way. Dystopias usually extrapolate elements of contemporary society and are read by many as political warning. Many purported utopias reveal a dystopian character by suppressing justice, freedom, and happiness.

By projecting the precarious world of *Alien Planet*, Jae tries to comment on ideal vision of society itself. State cannot be perfectly good. It is in a way a comment on the utopian vision of the society. Utopian vision of the state portrays such vision in which state act perfectly to make the human living in the society beautiful and harmonious. There are many instances. Plato forwards Ideal State in which categorized the freedom according to the characteristic of the individual. Objective of the categorization was to make the strong and self-reliant. But later the same vision becomes the tool of slavery. *Beyond the Red* comments on the same tendency of the human being. Jae provides several cues as to why and how our living under the advanced state is difficult. The narrative of *Beyond the Red* progresses in such way it let readers guess possible reasons of the perversion in the present time. The story of the totalitarian society in the *Beyond the Red* is no different from the society of the hell. New form of exploitation and torture replace the old form of exploitation and torture. Human beings have come to the point of the time where they can neither have chance to live in society peacefully nor can they to the nomad state.

The main crux of *Beyond the Red* revolves around the dystopian attitude toward the socio-political norms in the totalitarian state. It is said that emergence of the state is for protection of the all people who come under the state. But in reality this utopian vision of ideal state functions only for particular segment of the society. Only the powerful can rip the benefit of the state presence. The world is engulfed by such

disparity. The ruling leaders of the nation do not have anything to do but they can enjoy the world's riches. On the other part of the people work hard yet are vulnerable to the scarcity, hunger, death and destruction. Taking advantage of their vulnerability and state power they make the lives of the dispossessed intolerably painful.

To warn such badly guided subtle policy to subjugate larger segments of state under exploitation and repression, Jae presents the terrible account of totalitarian Alien Society. The human living under the state cannot be perfectly beautiful and harmonious until they do not recognize the principle of equality and co-existence. In order to critique such lapses in the modern political authority Jae uses the dystopia "as it resonates with numerous politically motivated critique of modern society" (174 *The Dystopian Impulse*). *Beyond the Red* is a terrible world because the government in it rules with oppressive forces. It compels the weaker and vulnerable to participate in the battle. The objective is cruel. Such a cruel objective of killing the innocent in the arena and broadcasting it as a deterrent to prevent possible rebellion cannot sustain the political system or status quo. This attitude needs to be reformed.

Beyond the Red criticizes the movement of human civilization towards uncertain complexity. In the novel, human civilization has progressed much but characters have not left their primitive instincts. They have developed technologies but that technology is used not to further humanity but to deteriorate the human condition. Such phenomena are severely criticized in *Beyond the Red*. Likewise, *Beyond the Red* demonstrates how dystopian views and disillusionment affect the lives of common people in metropolises. Jae contends that modern scientific development has put the seed of anxiety, fear and gruesome life. Throughout this novel, Jae suggests that the state should be progressive and life-enhancing rather than a life-denying force. This novel outlines an individual's struggle for identity against an oppressive government.

Oppression and suppression may prove the opposing voice but not forever. With this implication, Jae calls for reform in the stated attitude toward citizens demanding to rise from the ashes of destruction.

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