

I. Edwards as the Spokesperson of Fatalism in *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*

The present research is the analysis of the novel *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* from the perspective of fatalism. In a heartbreaking story of deceit, lies and redemption, we come to know the story of people whose destinies are tangled from beginning to end. In the novel, the lies and secrets that bind the characters together are rooted in one fateful decision that Dr. David Henry made on a winter night in 1964. The ethical dilemmas abound as the characters confront certain events with difficult and impulsive decisions. We come to know how lies and secrets become tools of self-destruction and explore how a person's decision mold his very existence and the lives of people and around him. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* explores humanity, family, decisions, regrets and our capacity to love and forgive. It explores the detrimental consequences of hidden lies and the power of secrets. It also provides us a story of redemption and finding of strength. Kim Edward's novel resonates with a wide range of readers because their descriptions of the emotions and the accompany loss are so intensely real.

The genesis of this story, according to Edwards, was a chance encounter she had with one of the pastors at her church. After Edwards had published her first short story collection to critical acclaim, the pastor approached her a few times with the promise of a compelling story. When Edwards finally decided to listen to it, she learned that the pastor had known a man who discovered late in life that he had a brother with Down syndrome, who was put in an institution and died there. The purpose of the research is to unearth the fatalistic elements inside the text. The major characters, incidents and situations are analyzed to prove the point.

The basic idea of fatalism is "what happens (or has happened) in some sense has to (or had to) happen" (Nietzsche 435). According to this philosophy, all of the

events and mishaps of someone's life are connected to a greater plan the individual has no control over, which would invalidate the notion of "Free Will" due to the fact that the theory supports the idea that every decision made, regardless of intentions and expected results, approaches a person to the key events that are considered inevitable. Fatalism doesn't necessarily imply the necessity of a God, "for notions of fate thrive in many culture (for instance, the notion of *karma* in Buddhist cultures)" (Nietzsche 435) but of some form of universal power which, using various agents that seem to act independently from human will, shape and control the events of someone's life.

The sense of impending doom that impregnates Kim Edward's novels can be pinpointed in the most basic elements of his stories, from character descriptions and depiction of setting to the tone of the narration. Edwards is one of the most celebrated fatalistic writers for expertly using the various angles of fate as major themes in the story. She addresses the idea of Free Will and human capacity to truly make the decisions that will affect the life of the decision-maker, causing the reader to question those notions in novels such as *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*, where Tess is truly rendered powerless when faced with the presence of an inexorable fate. Facets of the theme of predestination can also be seen on *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*, mostly through the narrator's use of dramatic irony (stating that Judge was "the sort of man who was bound to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life should signify that all was well with him again" (15). For instance, Edward's poetry also suggests the existence of an "Immanent Will", and "The Convergence of the Twain" especially comments on the powerlessness of human arrogant actions and conceptions.

Dr. David Henry is a major character to the novel written by Kim Edwards. He gets surprised with the birth of twins. Unfortunately, one has a disability which he

does not want to deal with. He then has to make a very important decision. Dr. David Henry's important decision decides the fate of his new born daughter and the rest of his family. The year is 1964 and there is a blizzard outside. Dr. Henry's wife, Norah, is in labor. He takes his pregnant wife to a private clinic. The only help there is the helpful nurse, Caroline Gill. With only the help of Caroline, David delivers his baby boy named Paul. Then, what was thought to be the afterbirth, a second child is born. This baby is a girl named Pheobe. She looked a little different than the first. Though she is a twin to the first baby, but her unmistakable features are easily seen. Her eyes are cloudy with hair jet black and normal. Her nose is flattered and her eyelids turned up, a classical case of mongoloid. This means that the baby will have a flaccid muscle tone, delay of growth and mental development, possible heart conditions, and early death. When Norah arrived at the hospital she was sedated, therefore, she was completely unaware of the birth of the second child and the fact that Phoebe is born with Down's syndrome. She is also unaware that David made the decision to get rid of it. Norah is completely unaware. Dr. David Henry is not completely heartless and despiteful for giving up his own baby girl, Phoebe. He is struggling with an internal problem. Having this does not make the happy life that he envisioned for his wife and their son. He remembers his younger sister, who died very young because of Down's syndrome and heart failure. This unfortunate event causes his mother a lot of grief and sadness. The birth of his baby girl forces him to look back at his own childhood and come to terms with his past.

On the winter night in 1964, Dr. David Henry is forced by a blizzard to deliver his own twins. His son, born first, is perfectly healthy. Yet when his daughter is born, he sees immediately that she has Down's syndrome. Rationalizing it as a need to protect Norah, his wife, he makes a split-second decision that will alter all of their

lives forever. He asks his nurse to take the baby away to an institution and never to reveal the secret. But Caroline, the nurse, cannot leave the infant. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child herself. Thus, this story unfolds over a quarter of a century-in which these two families, ignorant of each other, are yet bound by the fateful decision made that long-ago winter night. Norah Henry, who knows only her daughter died at birth, remains inconsolable; her grief weighs heavily in their marriage. And Paul raises himself as best he can, in a house grown cold with mourning. Meanwhile, Phoebe, the lost daughter, grows up from a sunny child to a vibrant young woman whose mother loves her as fiercely as if she were her own.

Fatalism is a philosophical doctrine stressing the subjugation of all events or actions to fate. The view that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do. Included in this is that man has no power to influence the future, or indeed, his own actions. This belief is very similar to predeterminism. Friedrich Nietzsche named this idea with "Turkish fatalism" in his book, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*. Those actions are free, nevertheless work towards an inevitable end. This belief is very similar to compatibility predestination. That acceptance is appropriate, rather than resistance against inevitability.

Both fatalism and predeterminism, by referring to the personal "fate" or to "predetermined events" strongly imply the existence of someone or something that has done the "predetermining". This is usually interpreted to mean a conscious, omniscient being or force who has personally planned-and therefore knows at all times – the exact succession of every event in the past, present and future, none of which can be altered. One of the most famous theological interpretations of this idea is the Calvinist Christian notion of predestination, in which all occurring events have been already willed at the beginning of the universe by god. Contrarily, determinism

does not usually imply the existence of such a supernatural being; many determinist models fall under scientific rather than religious or mystical philosophies.

Fate, personified by the Greeks under the name of Moira, signified in the ancient worlds the unseen power that rules over human destiny. In classical thought fate was believed to be superior to the god. They were even unable to defy its all-encompassing power. Fate is not chance, it may be defined as the absence of laws, but instead a cosmic determinism that has no ultimate meaning or purpose. In classical thought as well as in Oriental religion fate is a dark, sinister power related to the tragic vision of life. It connotes not the absence of freedom but the subjection of freedom. It is the transcendent necessity in which freedom is entangled. Fate is blind, inscrutable and inescapable.

Christianity constituted for the Hellenistic concept of fate the doctrine of divine providence. In contrast, fate is the portentous, impersonal power that thwarts and overrules human freedom; providence liberates man to fulfill the destiny for which he was created. Fate means the abrogation of freedom: providences mean the realization of authentic freedom through submission to divine guidance. In contrast, providence is the direction and support of a loving God, which makes life ultimately bearable; fate is the rule of contingency that casts a pall over all human striving. Likewise fate means the future precarious and uncertain; providence fills the future with hope. Fate is impersonal and irrational. However, providence is supremely personal and super rational. Fatalism was present among the ancient Stoics. It pervades much of the thought of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Modern philosophers who have entertained ideas of fate are Oswald Spengler, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and Arthur Schopenhauer.

In addition to the criticism leveled at the arguments put forward for fatalism, another criticism of fatalism in general is its assumption that truths do not conflict with each other. The twentieth century developments in theoretical and experimental quantum physics, specifically the concept of complementarity, seem to show that there exist the pairs of statements, only one of which can be true at any given time, for example, Heisenberg's "Principle of Uncertainty Theories" that if it is true that a subatomic particle will be measured to have a well-defined position, then it is not true that the particle will be measured to have a well-defined momentum and vice-versa. In other words, a maximum of one of the two statements has a well-defined position and momentum that can be true of a given subatomic particle at a given time.

Another noteworthy criticism comes from the novelist Davis F. Wallace, who in a 1985 paper "Richard Taylor's *Fatalism* and the *Semantics of Physical Modality*" suggests that Taylor reached his conclusion of fatalism only because his argument involved two different and inconsistent notions of impossibility. Wallace did not reject fatalism *per se* as he wrote in his closing passage, "If Taylor and the fatalist want to force upon us a metaphysical conclusion, they must do metaphysics, not semantics" (87). And this seems entirely appropriate. Willem devries and Jay Garfield, both were the advisors on Wallace's thesis. Expressed regret that Wallace never published his argument. In 2010, the thesis was, however published posthumously as *Time, Fate, and Language: An Essay on Free Will*.

Different critics have analyzed the novel from the multiple perspectives which preserves the universal nature of novel. The novel has been analyzed from the perspectives of thematic, technical and technical aspects since the time of its publication. Though the novel is claimed to be one of the truest stories of the world but many critics like Spencer (1997) have given skeptic eyes on its trustworthiness.

For Spencer the novel has the greater degree of efficiency to present the notion of the truth and reality in relation of the society. He says:

Throughout the book and the author describes how courageous protagonist is and how much she works for the rights of women. However, I didn't really see any evidence of this- as far as I could see Sultana was driven by her selfish self-interest and nothing else. In fact she comes across as selfish and not very pleasant person.(94)

Thus, novel is rich in mirroring the real feature of the social and political reality. The intact representation of the social and political reality in the novel adds the efforts of social realism which is one of the features of Edwards' writing.

Another critic Eagleton (2003) makes the feminist reading of the novel. For her, the novel is the exact representation of the feminine subjugation. The exploitation of the females in the novel tempts the feminist critics. As claiming for the feminist tone Eagleton makes a point:

It doesnot matter whether you are a feminist or not, if there is a crime committed against humanity then as a human being you have to seal the fate of the oppressor and feel and try to assuage the pain of the oppressed. But while many victims can be rescued, reinstated or taken care of, for the woman of Saudis Arabia it's a whole different ball-game whatsoever.(101)

Thus, the novel is rich in the preservation of the feminist tone. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* has touched the multiples facets of the history and culture. The feminist criticism in the novel questions the contemporary patriarchal society.

Similarly, the novel is also discussed from the viewpoint of multiculturalism and multilingualism. The novel becomes the melting point of different culture that proves the relevance of the multiculturalism. For this Mill (1995) claims:

The biography leads us from Heroine's childhood to adulthood, and with that we witness the horrors experienced by women through her words, and the terror develops as we realized that despite being in the royal family, even Princess are mistreated, so think about the regular female. We get a real insight of what the princess saw, and this book does teach you a great deal. There isn't really a plot? As such for the novel, for it is a biography, so of course it just records her life. But her experiences are extraordinary for the western readers that this book was aimed at. It is difficult to say much about the biography itself and pick out some examples of her experiences because these should be left to be discovered, by the reader. However, the biography covers aspects of her childhood, her family, her married life, and all the other important periods of woman's life. With each case emphasizing the horrific sense of Male Dominance in the East.(75)

Thus, the amalgamation of different cultures and languages in the novel provides the polyphony and heteroglossia. It is one of the qualities of Desai's novel with rich in its technical aspects; different critics have analyzed it from the viewpoint of structural aspects. A critic named Oswald (2002) finds the following features of the novel:

The complex narrative structure, with layers of flashback, quantum shifts of location, and recurrent imagery make this a book that repays re-reading. More importantly, protagonist's exploration of the universal yearning for meaning in life is carried out with an intelligence,

generosity and a total lack of pretension that make her book exceptional.(91)

In this way, the novel seems technically sophisticated and structurally maintains the unity of the plot in the novel. Likewise, the novel has been interpreted from the viewpoint of modernity. Tyson (1999) finds the elements of modernity on the basis of the monolithic notion of modernity became problematic by the end of the two world wars and with the advent of post colonization, postmodernism and post structuralism. She puts:

The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards is a sad story, but not in the way you might expect when you hear that the novel is about two twins, one of whom is born with Down's syndrome. In fact, Phoebe, the daughter with the intellectual disability, is a symbol of hope and joy in the midst of a novel where almost all the other characters are struggling not to drown in sorrow, secrets and regret. (1)

Thus, it is proved that the author (an Indian who writes in English) is most successful when dealing with his countrymen, either among themselves or in their hit-and-miss relationships with the English or Americans. The travel journal excerpts seem an irrelevant and slightly arbitrary "frame" for stories lost in the never-neverland between allegory and reality. They don't quite explode with the momentous themes; rather they always seem on the verge of revealing.

Schopenhauer (2005) views the title of the novel "*The Memory Keeper's Daughter*" as interesting and masterful. Each of the stories is about what people choose to do with the freedom which is the, Edward's great theme in the novel.

Schopenhauer states:

The phrase "free state" has meanings in politics, African history, physics and social science. One tribe uses its freedom from colonialism to massacre a different tribe. Santosh uses his freedom to fashion a better life while dimly comprehending his new country. Bobby and Linda choose expat lives where the locals view them as privileged outsiders and their colleagues back home view them as mediocrities who couldn't succeed in London. (23)

But the stroke was probably Naipaul's idea for collecting five different stories about travelers and convincing people that they formed a novel. Next thing you know, some band might cobble together a series of single and claim that it's a rock opera about a deaf, dumb and blind kid who sure plays a mean pinball.

Taylor (1962) views that there is the notion of freedom as a scientific metaphor. The reference here is apparently to the random notion around the atomic nucleus of electrons whose speed and position can be measured, but never at the same time. They are said to be "in a free state" since their movement is impossible to plot exactly. The accidental and unpredictable travel of particles is comfortable to that of the book's characters. Taylor claims:

Even though *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* is sad, it is not overly so. Hope, redemption and love move the story along even as sorrow dominates many parts of the characters' lives. One of the strengths of the novel is the way Edwards creates characters who seem very real. They are characters with good intentions, with selfish desires, with hope and with heartache. As their lives unfold, you will find yourselves rooting for each of them even as they act in ways you wish they wouldn't or hurt other characters who you have come to love. (21)

These are superficially linked by abundance of arbitrary plot connections, parallel incidents, and echoing motifs: the characters' American involvements; the motif of the journey which removes people from their normal surroundings; shifting alliances of the strong against the weak; the scapegoat-victim seeking refuge from freedom in a locked space; personality breakdowns and outbursts of groundless anarchic violence. But none of these amounts to a single unifying framework or principle of organization, and it is finally difficult to say exactly what kind of structure or unity, if any they constitute, or what kind of logic it is that carries the narrative from the hounding of the old tramp in the Prologue to the beating of the Egyptian boys in the Epilogue. The narrative's movement has a roaming, associative kind of logic that invites any number of possibly spurious correspondences between its episodes and, like the erratic progress of the subatomic particles, is finally unplotable.

II: Fatalism in Edwards' *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*

This study discovers the fatalism in Kim Edward's *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. In the novel, when Norah, the wife of Dr. Henry gives a birth of two children, the first one is son who is healthy. And the second one is daughter, who is abnormal in the eyes of Dr. Henry. Thus, he makes a fateful decision that he keeps it secret to his wife and delivers it to his private nurse, Caroline. When he asks his private nurse to keep his daughter in the institution, she accepts in front of him. However, she does not keep the child in the institution; rather she leaves the place with the child. This secret is also unknown to the Dr. Henry's family over a quarter of the century. Thus, two families are unknown each other due to the fateful decision made by Dr. Henry that long-ago winter night.

As Dr. Henry looks at his tiny daughter, he immediately realizes that she has Down's syndrome which spells a grim future. Within no time, he takes a crucial decision to give away his infant daughter to a care home. He does not want her malady that affects their picture of perfect world. He asks Caroline to take her to a home which is little away from the place he lives in. Caroline finds herself in a difficult situation where a part of her rebels and another part agree. Torn between love and duty she goes away with the infant on that fateful stormy night.

Dr. Henry tells his wife Norah that they have twins but one of them is a still born. Meanwhile Caroline takes the baby girl away to the home; however, she decides not to admit her to that place. While coming back her car breaks down near the gas station, and then she meets a stranger who helps her to return to her home. Caroline takes two days to think and decides on a plan to relocate with the baby. At the last minute, she takes a chance to meet Dr. Henry and finds a memorial service

for the still born daughter. She goes away to another city as fate carries her. What follows is a tale destiny weaved.

A powerful novel which explores human relationships as life takes unexpected turns. It captures the drama of life as it is the photographs. Uncannily, Dr. Henry is also an amateur photographer who loves to click interesting pictures. His pictures speak the silent words in the novel. Family ties help in surviving tragedies as long-buried secrets become known.

In the book *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards, a doctor and his wife have twins and the first child is a healthy boy but then the second child that comes out is a little girl with the signs of Down syndrome. He asks his Nurse to take the baby away to an institution while he tells his wife the baby girl died. Throughout the entire book it is a struggle for Dr. Henry's wife Norah to have closure with the fact that her baby girl is said to be dead and she never saw her, held her, or cared for her. Edwards shows through the whole book that we are only the human: the major themes that life is beyond our control and through the connection between suffering and joy. Edward uses plot to set up a sort of life schedule. It goes in order into the future but occasionally skips years ahead. She also cleverly sets the book up so that each year or "chapter" has both sides of the story, that of Caroline who is raising Phoebe and then the life of Norah and David raising their son Paul. As the book starts off it is that of a happy tone with Norah giving birth and then leading to a depressing and melancholy tone as Dr. Henry lies to his wife telling her that their daughter has died, to save her from the pain of their daughter having Down syndrome. Norah gains more and more depression as the years go on. She always wonders "what if". With all the depression going on in the story line of Norah, there is a gain of strength in Caroline's story line as she raises Phoebe. This

shows the theme of suffering and joy. The characters are in the story suffering as well as they are the one with the most joy. Norah Henry has it all: the doctor husband, money and a healthy son but still wants what she never had; her daughter.

This novel reveals that people will act in unusual ways out of love, which can lead to the destruction or the creation of relationships. Edwards shows this theme through both the tone and the conflict in the story. Throughout the story, Edwards uses the tone to show how the two different families are very different. Whenever the author is writing about the Henrys, she also uses a very sad and morose tone to show how the family is falling apart. In one part, while Norah is talking, she says, "It's not only about you," Norah said. "You're hardly home anyway. Maybe it's me who misses her, David. Sometimes, honestly, I feel like she's so close, just in the other room, and I've forgotten her. I know that must sound crazy, but it's true" (116). This just shows how lonely she is and how she feels the loss of her daughter. She is striving to fill the emptiness in her life, but she simply cannot. On the other hand, while Edwards writes about Caroline and Phoebe's life, she shows how happy they are and creates a tone that is joyful and cheery. When Phoebe learns to grab on to things for the first time, Caroline shows her joy. As Edwards writes, "Caroline touched her own neck too, feeling the quick burn of joy. *Oh yes*, she thought. *Grab it, my darling. Grab the world*" (105). Edwards shows this theme with the conflict within the story. Caroline shows this when the author writes, "What he had asked of her—that she takes his infant daughter away without telling his wife of her birth—seemed unspeakable," (22). This just shows how Caroline felt about the whole situation.

At the beginning of the novel, Dr. David Henry's wife Norah is in labour. She gives birth to twins being unconscious. When the second child is born, Dr. Henry

discovers that she has Down's syndrome. Therefore, he sends her away, telling the nurse to put his baby girl into an institution for those who have intellectual disabilities. Dr. Henry's motivation for abandoning his daughter is that she is different from that which he considers to be normal, moreover, he associates her disability with inevitable pain. Dr. Henry, therefore, believes that keeping his daughter is not worth all the effort that it will entail.

Contrary to David's instructions, the nurse Carolyn Gill decides to take care of the little girl herself. She names the girl Phoebe and moves to another city to raise her. Throughout Phoebe's life, Carolyn is continually fighting for her daughter to have equal rights with other children. Carolyn goes to court and protests that the public school system does not allow children with Down's syndrome to attend public schools. The main reason behind this exclusion is that these children are "mentally retarded" and will not fit in with the rest of the "brighter" children (Edwards 161-162).

Difference should not be looked upon with the disdain or judgment, and should not result in the unfairness of marginalization. Equity needs to be the basis of our perspective of others. If students are taught to develop an equity lens at an earlier age, they have greater potential to make a difference in this world. As a result, they can share their newfound perspectives with their peers and their families. High school students have had less time than adults to be indoctrinated with the societal mindset that disregards equity. Therefore, it is best that students have the opportunity to unpack and dissect their perspectives at a younger age, in order to ensure that they develop their own equity lens.

When Caroline Gill is battling the public school system and claiming that her daughter should be allowed to attend a public school just like any other children,

Caroline's lawyer states, "The best hope for their growth and development, as for all children, is an educational environment without predetermined limits. We only ask for equity today"(162). The lawyer also realizes that he is fighting the never-ending battle for equality. This same battle is one in which countless people fight every day, and for which teachers need to equip their students to fight. Each of my students should feel that in my class they are all provided with equal opportunities, equal access and equal results. I want my students to learn the importance of equity in their daily lives so that they can in turn practice this important principle in their interactions with others.

This novel is an excellent choice for individual reading projects or for a Literature Circles assignment, but it is probably not the best choice of text for a class project. There are a few textual challenges that might prohibit learning for some students. The four hundred pages of the book may be too daunting for reluctant readers and for students who have difficulty reading; whereas, the fact that the book is quite long it also provides so much material to analyze which may be very appropriate for avid readers.

The text might not be appropriate as a class project is that the text may be viewed as boring or confusing to those students who do not engage with it. Because of the fact that throughout the novel, there are numerous occurrences of flashbacks which lead the readers to jump back and forth to different time periods during the characters' lives. It is at times exhausting as a reader to be present in one moment but to exist simultaneously in many different times, and to seek to follow the through-line of the story when it is so disjointed. For example, Kim Edwards writes: "Jack played with his truck. You should tell her. He shook his head. After he'd sat watching Caroline's house like a voyeur, he'd called a lawyer in Pittsburgh and set

up those beneficiary accounts Rosemary came back, smelling of Ivory soap” (319). The story is told with so much memory hopping, that it can be exhausting to the reader. Although the frequent flashbacks have the potential to be problematic for less interested readers, they can also keep the avid reader engaged, holding his or her attention because of the multiple meanings and the sheer multiplicity of each moment.

Furthermore, this novel appears to cater more to the female perspective and will therefore be more likely to interest female readers. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* follows the inner narrative of four women and two men. The four women are Norah Henry, Norah's sister Bree, the nurse Caroline Gill, and Phoebe, a charming young woman with Down's syndrome who is nurtured and raised to adulthood by Caroline. But she is actually Norah's daughter. The two men at the center of the novel are Dr. David Henry who is married to Norah, and his son Paul Henry. The female perspective is at the forefront of the novel. In chapter one of this novel, Kim Edwards writes:

Kay was the sort of mother Norah had always imagined that she herself would be, handling every situation with a relaxed and instinctive calm. Norah admired her, and she envied her too. Sometimes she even caught herself thinking that if she could be more like Kay, more serene and secure, her marriage might improve; she and David might be happier. (126-27)

In this passage, Norah is engaged in a female fantasy to become her society's ideal type of mother who is calm and secure. The fact that the story focuses on the inner narrative of more women than men may cause the novel to be less interesting and less relevant to young male readers, who will read only out of duty or compulsion.

Furthermore, this novel is also written by a female who understands more fully the female mind and can therefore more easily fulfill the reading needs of woman with a similar perspective and similar interests to her own.

The social issues which may be difficult to deal with and discuss with the students when teaching this text are Norah's rampant affairs, the constrained role of women in the 1960s and 1970s, and the societal implications of the binary opposites of poverty and affluence. It may be challenging to talk about Norah's affairs with the students, because it is a very provocative topic which they might not be able to handle with maturity. This novel demonstrates the illusiveness and fragility of love, because with one wrong action, love can be destroyed, and connection between two lovers can be forever lost. David's wrong action was to send away his daughter at birth and to lie to his wife, saying that their daughter was still-born. This action led to the destruction of his wife and of their once healthy relationship. Norah's wrong action was to have an illicit affair with Harold, because once she started having affairs, she could not stop. Thus, affairs became like an addiction to her. The complexity of this situation and the provocative nature of the subject matter will be a challenge when teaching this text.

Furthermore, another social issue that this text raises is the way that, in the past, women have been stifled and have been pressured to fulfill the demure role that society has created for them. This topic has the potential to incite a heated discussion about how gender inequity and gender biases exist even to this day in our modern and progressive society.

The final social issue which this text addresses that may be problematic for the students is the tension between poverty and affluence. Some students may feel like they cannot relate to certain characters because of that character's association

with poverty or affluence. An interesting aspect of wealth is introduced to the conversation, answering the age-old question: "Can money buy happiness?" David Henry is a very wealthy doctor who is incredibly successful, and yet even with all his money, he cannot recover from the emptiness of losing his daughter and from the deception which he willingly creates in order to protect himself and his family. But he ends up destroying himself and his family. The subjects of a character locked in poverty in comparison with a life of privileged wealth may be a problematic for certain students as a result of their previous and present economic status.

Dr. Henry is an orthopedic surgeon with enough experience to handle the situation. Under the partial influence of gas, Norah gives birth to a healthy baby boy, but as David tells her the happy news, another series of contradiction begins. He quickly sedates his wife again, and she gives birth to another child, a girl with Down syndrome. Later, Edwards writes, "when he considered this night --and he would think of it often, in the months and years to come: the turning point of his life, the moments around which everything else would always gather --what he remembered was the silence in the room and the snow falling outside" (257). In that quiet, terrifying moment, the grief and resentment caused by his sister's death at the age of 12 washes back over him, and he acts to preserve their vision of a happy future. He hands the baby to his nurse and asks her to take it to a home outside the city for handicapped children. When Norah awakens a few minutes later, he tells her that their second baby was stillborn. "He had wanted to spare her, Edwards writes, "to protect her from loss and pain; he had not understood that loss would follow her regardless, as persistent and life-shaping as a stream of water. Nor had he anticipated his own grief, woven with the dark threads of his past" (279). Edwards has trouble maintaining the electrifying atmosphere of this long opening scene, but David's

fateful decision that night is enough to power the novel through the next 25 years. The story runs along parallel tracks that don't converge until the very end: The first follows the picture-perfect Henry family, three healthy, talented people separated from one another by the secret that only David knows. The other track follows David's nurse, Caroline, who couldn't bring herself to follow his instructions that night. Instead, she left town with his baby, struggled through a series of part-time jobs, battled an unresponsive school system and managed to hammer out a joyful life. As a single mother at a time when special-needs accommodations are unheard of or considered naively radical, Caroline would seem to have a far more difficult path to travel.

Edwards does nothing to minimize or romanticize that struggle, but Caroline makes her humble way in the world through sheer determination and with the help of like-minded activist parents who are beginning to argue that children with disabilities should be raised at home and attend regular schools. Those two sets of lives make for a thought-provoking contrast, a study in what really determines a family's happiness. With a successful, lucrative career, David can give his wife and son everything, except candor. As Edwards points out --probably too many times -- the effort to conceal what he's done with their daughter poisons the atmosphere of their home with a colorless, odorless gas of deception.

Dr. Henry throws himself into photography, a poignant attempt to freeze perfect moments and crop life just as he wants it. Barred from her husband's heat, Norah turns to alcohol, then to a series of affairs, trying to deaden or distract herself from a sense of loss that she can't fully understand. Some ominously saccharine moments indicate that Edwards can slip into the treacle trade --"The love was within her all the time, and its only renewal came from giving it away"--but these gaffes are

relatively infrequent, especially considering the presence of a handicapped character, who would, in less disciplined hands, be used to generate a waterfall of sentimental tears. The episodic structure allows Edwards to survey these two families through the '60s, '70s and '80s, but frankly she's best when she moves slowly. The middle section skips through the years, obscuring the characters behind Significant Historical Moments: Women's Lib, Vietnam, Disability Rights. The novel begins to look as though it's been planned by a divorced dad: Every alternating weekend encounter has to be packed with a major activity. This structural tendency may be the effect of Edwards's experience as a short story writer. We drop in on these characters only on important days --separated by years that included all the minutiae of real life. They're reduced to saying things like, "The last few years have meant so much to me." I kept thinking, No, show the true nature of these people on a few ordinary days. Edwards is entirely capable of doing that, as the opening and closing sections of her novel show. This tragedy of a man who thinks he can control how lives are redirected is as moving as the story of his nurse, who knows that her love can bless a damaged life. In the end, it's not just that David made a mistake in a moment of crisis; it's that he never realized that parenthood is an infinite series of opportunities for redemption. Years after the choice he could never forgive himself, for, as Caroline tells him, "You missed a lot of heartache, sure. But David, you missed a lot of joy" (249).

The nurse is obedient and in love with her boss. Thus, she drives for hours in the snow. When she arrives, the institution is a dreary place, full of lost souls. It's a warehouse for the feeble, a place where dignity is an unaffordable luxury. She carries the baby back to her car, drives towards home. She stops to buy supplies and gets

stranded in the parking lot of the grocery store. She is lucky, rescued by a cross-country trucker. Safe back at home, she decides to raise the baby herself.

These two decisions are at the core of Kim Edwards' debut novel, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. The book leaps from that moment to other parallel moments in the lives of twins Paul and Phoebe, and those involved in the choices that made those lives so very different. There is spiraling structure, each moment that is revealed moving us closer to the character's interiors, until you've wound your way into their cores. Each time Edwards chooses to show us, there are echoes of those decisions, reflections upon them, leaving the reader to deduce the causes and effects that have lead to each scene. In some ways, as time marches on, we're really seeing the same moment, over and over, played out in new ways.

One gets the sense that the question Edwards was asking when she wrote this book was "how could anyone live with himself if he did this?" The answer she seems to come up with is, not very well. From the moment of the birth forward, all of David Henry's success is superficial. His relationships, with the lie at their core, are doomed. His marriage is doomed. His son is foreign to him. Meanwhile, his former nurse, Caroline, only comes to life with her decision to save Phoebe. The two parents are at study in opposites. As one family's life grows older and smaller, the other's blossoms into something almost idyllic. The snow at the beginning of the book is permafrost on the lives of David, wife Norah, son Paul; for Caroline, it is a snow that nourishes the earth in anticipation of spring.

That might be a bit of a heavy-handed metaphor there. Edwards uses nature repeatedly in her story, describing the weather and the flora and the songbirds. The book, though not as ham-fisted as this summary might suggest, is occasionally too

flowery, veering into the clichés. An early passage describes Norah breastfeeding Paul:

Norah pulled her son into the warm curve of her body, opened her nightgown. His small hands fluttered against her swollen breasts like moth wings; he latched on. A sharp pain, which subsided in a wave as the milk came. She stroked his thin hair, his fragile scalp. Yes, astonishing, the powers of the body. His hands stilled, resting like small stars against her aureolas.(87)

Interestingly, this is one of Caroline's few moments of happiness. Her husband's actions take her daughter from her, but they also cost her him, too. Their relationship suffers, as David puts up emotional defenses to protect her from the truth, to protect himself from her reaction. The distance between them grows, and Caroline's world shrinks, and her misery manifests itself in inevitable acts of self-destruction.

Through Caroline, Edwards revisits the history of feminism. I thought, for a while, that it was really going to be a book about feminism above all other issues. Norah and Caroline both start the book waiting to be defined, Caroline by romance, Norah by motherhood. After the birth, Norah wants to see her dead baby, but she feels guilt at her hesitancy to follow her husband's advice to let it go, to be grateful for what they do have. She ultimately agrees "because it was 1964 and he was her husband and she had always deferred to him completely." Years later, the couple argues when Norah takes a job at a travel agency "Well, what do you expect?" he said, trying to keep his voice even, for Paul's sake. "It's hard not to see this as criticism" (23).

Award-winning writer Kim Edwards's *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* is a brilliantly crafted family drama that explores every mother's silent fear: what would happen if you lost your child and she grew up without you?

Dr. Henry is not happy with the second child named Phoebe because she is taken as the abnormal child. However, Dr. Henry as the father does not reveal this secret to his wife, Norah. Rather he makes a contact with the nurse, Caroline. Then, he makes the conversation with her about his abnormal daughter and asks her to bring the abnormal child and to put in the institution. After having such conversation, Caroline accepts and brings the child. However, she does not place the child in the institution; rather she moves towards Pittsburg with the child. This is unknown by the Henry's family. Thus, due to the fatalistic decision of Dr. Henry, the secret about the child between two families is hidden.

A rich and deeply moving page-turner, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* captures the way life takes unexpected turns and how the mysterious ties that hold a family together help us survive the heartache that occurs when long-buried secrets burst into the open. It is an astonishing tale of redemptive love. Fatalism may apply to all events, or may take a more restricted form. It may be consistent with determinism, the belief that every event, including everything we do, is caused by something other than itself. On the other hand, it may be consistent with indeterminism, the belief that not every event has a cause, and that some events cannot be explained by universal laws or principles. Fatalism may conflict with determinism if it asserts that we cannot effectively change our actions, or cause a change in the outcome of events. On the other hand, fatalism may conflict with indeterminism if it asserts that we do not have the freedom to choose our own actions.

Determinism may allow that, even if our actions are caused by forces which we cannot control, our actions can still be effective in changing the outcome of events. On the other hand, indeterminism may allow that, even if there are events which we cannot control, we have the freedom to choose how to respond, without

being compelled to respond in a certain way by forces beyond our control. Fatalism may take the view that, if all our actions are caused by forces beyond our control, then we are not responsible for our actions. If we are placed in situations beyond our control, then we may not be free to choose how to respond. This may be in conflict with the theory of free will, that we are free to choose our actions, and that our actions are not predetermined by a force independent of our own will.

Fatalism is in conflict with the theory of free will if it asserts that we are not free to choose our own actions. If we are free to choose our own actions at any given moment, then the future is not determined simply by fate. If we are free to choose our actions, then we could have done something other than that which we did, and the present events could be different from what they are at this moment. This would mean that the present is not determined simply by fate.

On the other hand, fatalism may take the opposing view that, if events can never be predicted with complete certainty, then we are free to choose our own actions, because nothing predetermines that events will happen the way they do happen. Fatalism may consist of two components: 1) the belief that events are beyond our control, and 2) the belief that we cannot change the outcome of events. Each of these components of fatalism may or may not be justified by reality.

Fatalism is negative if it is a pervasive attitude. It may be associated with pessimism, hopelessness, and despair. But, to the extent that acceptance of events beyond our control is in accord with reality, and is not accompanied by the feeling that we can do nothing to change events, the acceptance of reality may be positive. Acceptance of reality may be a form of insight that may resolve inner conflict. Fatalism thus consists of both acceptance and denial. Fatalism may have a

positive aspect, insofar as it is an acceptance of reality. But fatalism is negative, insofar as it is a denial that we can do anything to change reality.

Fatalism is not only a belief that events are determined by fate, but is an acceptance of or submission to fate. This may be based on a perception that some events are inevitable and cannot be changed. If certain events are inevitable, they cannot be avoided or escaped. The acceptance of these events as determined by the fate involves recognition that they cannot be avoided or escaped. It is possible to be fatalistic, and yet not to be totally fatalistic. Individuals who are fatalistic can still believe that some of their actions may change the outcome of certain events.

On the other hand, fatalism may be a belief that we can do nothing to change our destiny, because our future is inevitably determined by the fate. Fatalism may be consistent with a belief that events are caused by a determining principle or force in the universe, such as God. Fatalism may be included in some religious beliefs. Fatalism may or may not be based on belief in God. Fatalism may be consistent with pre-determinism, a belief that all events have a predetermined outcome. Fatalism may also be a form of realism, an attempt to view events as they are, without rational explanation or idealized interpretation.

Fatalism is different from a belief in predestination. It is possible to be fatalistic, and yet not to believe that all events are predestined. It is possible to believe in predestination, and yet to reject fatalism. Fatalism may be consistent with a belief that everything is determined by God. Every event, good or bad, may be seen as a part of God's plan. We must accept what happens to us, because it is the will of God. Nothing happens without God as the first cause of the events that led other events to happen. Whatever happens to us is based on the God's will to happen. We can accept whatever happens to us, if we have faith in God. On the other hand, fatalism may not

be based on belief in God. Fatalism may be based on a belief, because events are determined by forces beyond our control, and because we have no power to change our fate, therefore life has no meaning. If life has no meaning, this may lead to the belief that there is no God.

Fate may be defined in a number of ways. It may be seen as an inexplicable, arbitrary, and impersonal force that determines the outcome of certain events. It may be seen as related to destiny, a mysterious and unalterable force that moves events toward a predetermined outcome. Fatalism may be understandable in some situations. Fatalism can be a way of preparing ourselves for all the bad things that happen in our lives. Fatalism does not always have to be negative. It can be a way to acknowledge that there are good and bad things in life, and that sometimes bad things happen without a reason. Bad things can happen to good people (e.g. a loved one can get cancer, or an innocent person can be the victim of a crime). Good things can happen to bad people (e.g. dictators gain political power; a criminal can go unpunished for his crime).

Things happen that cannot be explained (e.g. senseless acts of violence). There may be no way to explain why good or bad things happen at a particular time, in a particular place, to a particular person. Sometimes, the good or bad things that happen to a person, at a particular time or place, may just as easily have happened to another person, at another time or place.

There may be no other way to accept something bad that has happened, without being somewhat fatalistic about it (e.g. when one's house has been damaged by a flood, or one's belongings have been stolen by a thief, or one's car has been damaged by another vehicle that ran a red light).

Fatalism can enable us to accept that we are unimportant, and that we occupy only a small part of the universe. What happens to us as individuals may not affect many other individuals, and the final course of history may not be changed by whatever good or bad things happen to us as individuals. Fatalism may enable us to accept our own finiteness and powerlessness. It may also help us to overcome our self-centeredness, so that we can look at how events affect others, and not just at how these events affect ourselves.

When we are fatalistic about the future, and accept the possibility that bad things may happen to us, we may feel that much better when good things happen to us. Fatalism can be a coping mechanism. It may be a way to avoid disappointment. Fatalism does not have to mean that we should not try to change things that can be changed. Nor does it necessarily mean that we should not do things that should be done. But it can enable us to accept things that cannot be changed.

On the other hand, fatalism can have many negative implications. Fatalism in ethics may be a rejection of personal responsibility. Fatalism may take the view that our actions are predetermined by causes for which we are not responsible. Ethical choices may be seen as caused by external forces over which we have no control. Thus, we are not responsible for our personal choices, because there is no freedom of the will. We are not free to make our own decisions, because we are subject to forces which we cannot control. This may be used as an excuse for passivity, inaction, and failure to try to change those events over which we do have some control.

Fatalism can also be a way of trying to avoid or escape blame and guilt for unethical conduct. It can be a way of trying to avoid duty, obligation, or commitment. It can be a means of excusing oneself for failure to exercise self-control, self-restraint, or self-discipline. Fatalism may be used as a rationale for not caring about what

happens, or about how other people are affected by what happens, based on a feeling that our efforts will be futile. This is translated as a feeling that ‘Whatever I do will not make any difference, because it is my fate not to be able to control what happens. Nothing that I can do can change the world. Things will happen the way they happen, anyway. ‘Fatalism may deny that our personal choices have meaning, based on the belief that we cannot ultimately change the outcome of events, because the universe is seen as governed by chance, randomness, and uncertainty. The argument that ‘events are determined by fate’ can be used to justify acceptance of injustice and evil.

Fatalism can be used to justify acceptance of, or complicity with, many forms of social injustice. Fatalism can be used to justify failure to prevent personal injury; failure to prevent death; failure to prevent injustice; failure to prevent discrimination, failure to prevent damage to property, failure to prevent damage to the environment. Fatalism can be used to justify failure to oppose crime, injustice, violence, war, genocide, tyranny, oppression, and other moral or social problems. Thus, the basic flaw in fatalism is that it can become a form of nihilism. It can become a belief that nothing has meaning, nothing can be known, and nothing that we do makes any difference. It can become a belief that nothing is worth fighting for, that nothing is worth living for. It can become a rejection of any personal commitment.

This multifarious life experience of over thirty years has been distilled into this book, which is an attempt to give a portrait of a society. It attempts to diagnose Nepal's ills through the eyes of a sympathetic yet critical insider. It has something of the flavour of other such attempts; De Tocqueville's *Ancien Regime*, Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, Taine's *Notes upon England*. It is worth considering at some length because of its insights and because Bista, as an insider, can say things which no

outsider could say. The Nepalese are a proud and sensitive people and the kind of analysis Bista (1991) makes striking at the heart of many cherished institutions, could not be borne from an outsider. But these things need to be raised, and only Bista can do so.

Bista starts with the same problem, namely the patent failure of Nepal to make substantial progress. He approvingly cites Pandey, writing that "enormous financial resources are devoted to bureaucratic planning with very little demonstrated results. A former high level bureaucrat has even commented that in spite of almost four decades of foreign assistance, agriculture has not benefited; the poor have been by passed; the needs of women have not even been understood; the relations of production and distribution have become worse; and technical assistance has not contributed to the improvement of administrative capability. "He points to the "snowstorm of statistical wizardry" embodied in numerous reports "without any inkling of how these abstract figures relate to the conditions of the bulk of the people"(71).

Bista provides the plenty of instances of waste and corruption. For instance, in relation to education, he gives a very useful survey of educational development up to the present. The expansion in the 1950's led to a "certificate orientation" and in the 1950's and 1960's "education was becoming quickly a symbol of status, as high school and college degrees were used simply for the purpose of acquiring higher status positions." An attempt to reform the system in the National Education System Plan had collapsed by 1979; "students sabotaged the examination system through widespread and large scale cheating, which was largely ignored by supervisors and teachers"(117). He notes that figures of educational expansion are "impressive", "but they belie the abuse and misapplication of educational qualifications. . ."(142).

Education is not directed to any practical ends, but merely to enable people to get a job where they will be able to do as little work as possible.

In the field of agricultural development, he cites the Pokhara Crop Development Project as an example of a total waste of time and resources. Those who are trained as agricultural specialists "loathe agriculture and hate soiling their hands with the earth. What they learn is never applied." the picture is a familiar one. What is novel is Bista's explanation of why it is. Thus, although Bista concentrates on the internal, cultural and social context; he does also refer to the external pressure of foreign aid which "reinforces a sense that Nepal is basically a weak and helpless country". He notes that massive foreign aid has helped to mask widespread economic abuse and corruption and points to the ethno-centricism of foreign advisers, who are "often insensitive to the peculiarities of the cultural system in Nepal". But it is this cultural system that he wishes to expose. For while others, such as Lohani point to "powerful external others" as the root cause of Nepal's problems, Bista considers this as yet another example of that evasion of responsibility and fatalistic attitude which itself is "the root cause of the problem"(216).

The complex has a number of castes and a number of manifestations. At its heart there lie two inter-acting principles, namely fatalism and caste. The most important feature is fatalism, the belief "that one has no personal control over one's life circumstances, which are determined through a divine or powerful external agency." This partly arises from the Hindu notion of karma, that one's fate is written on one's forehead at birth and there is nothing that can be done to alter it.

This fatalistic belief undermines personal responsibility, "under fatalism, responsibility is continually displaced to the outside, typically to the supernatural. There is a constant external focus for the individual. The individual simply does not

have control"(257). Bista contrasts this to the situation in western societies and Japan where people have an internalized sense of responsibility. "The current dominant value system does not teach people to accept responsibility for their failures or to accept defeat with dignity and grace"(312). They characteristically blame others. "Altruism is suspect. Similarly, one is never obliged to anyone for anything because everything occurs as it should. No sense of obligation is instilled." The second main thread is hierarchy, or caste. Bista argues that the caste principle is not intrinsic to Nepal; "Nepal's native Hinduism has not included a belief in caste principles...only in the last 135 years has the caste system gained any kind of endorsement..." But now it pervades all parts of the elite, who feel themselves superior to the majority of the population. In particular, it makes the elite identify with the anti-practical, non-work, ideals of the Brahmin priests, who abstain from all physical work and depend on the charity of others. This ideal has been secularized and re-directed through education, so that "as a career objective in modern Nepal, every Nepali tries to have a Jagir, a salaried job where one does not have to work but will receive a pay cheque at the end of each month." In Brahmin belief, the material world is maya, an illusion, hence "there is no dignity in labour. High caste people have always despised physical labour and are accustomed to believing, as well as teaching others to believe that while despising those below them, the hierarchic mentality produces sycophancy and dependence on those above; "whenever Nepalese receive good treatment from anyone and become comfortable, they begin to identify that individual as a father figure". The institution of Chakari, or institutionalized sycophancy, is one important manifestation of this hierarchical tendency.

Chakari, originally "to wait upon, to serve, or to seek favour from a god", was institutionalized in the nineteenth century court of the Ranas. As in all despotism,

whether in Rome or Versailles, a court system was instituted whereby potential over-mighty subjects were forced to be constantly visible, and constantly spying on each other by attending daily on the most powerful rulers. Later, "government employees had to perform Chakarito ensure job security and in order to be eligible for promotion"(351). The system has flourished behind the facade of modern bureaucracy; the vast expansion of the salary, which feeds off foreign aid, merely exacerbates the tendency. "Though it will be commonly denied, today Chakari remains a solid fact of social life, and is evident at all levels of government." It is a way for information to pass informally through the organization, endless gossip and back-biting is encouraged as each morning junior officials wait around their seniors, "paying court" and offering small presents. This leads to widespread paranoia, as each person maligns others whom he thinks may be gossiping behind his back; an alternative to the anonymous poison pen letter which is so prevalent in India. The Chakari system also interferes with the development of a Weberian 'rational' bureaucracy, by warping appointments and decisions. The superior is forced to recognize some of the chakariwalas and receive their gifts and servile courtship. This "leads to a point where the patron is forced into actions that he would not normally perform, and that are not in the best interests of his higher obligations to the organization of which he is a part", in other words, corruption. Decisions are often made on the basis of the needs of chakari.

Bista concludes that chakari is a "built-in guarantor of incompetence, inefficiency, and misplaced effort". Chakari is a vertical relationship, a particular manifestation of those widespread, personalized, dyadic, ties, called patron-client relations, which anthropologists have widely documented in Mediterranean, South American, Indian and other societies. The description by Bista fits well with

these accounts, which adding the special courtly feature of bureaucratic organizations, namely that the main service of the client is tradition and ritual are the only important things. "provide information, and his main duty is to spend long periods of time attending on his patron. Complementing chakari and flowing from it, but lying on a horizontal rather than vertical social axis, is the other main institution, *Afnomanchhe*. There is a strong distinction made between "us", who are trustworthy, loyal, to be helped, and "them" to whom one has no responsibilities, and who deceive and are to be deceived. In Bista's words, "*AfnoManchhe* is the term used to designate one's inner circle of associates - it means 'one's own people' and refers to those who can be approached when need arises" (322). Almost every activity is influenced by it: the length of time it takes to cash a cheque, whether one receives a permit, the treatment one receives in hospital, one's child's success at school, all are influenced by *Afnomanchhe* connections. "*Afnomanchhe* is a critical institution. It is integrally connected with the smooth running of society." Sometimes it is institutionalized into Rotary Clubs, Leo Clubs, Lions Clubs and the numerous equivalents of western masonic-type associations. But usually it is just a circle of mutually-supporting associates, whose personal ties cut across and through the supposed impersonalities of bureaucracy.

The workings of a combination of fatalism, hierarchy, chakari and *afnomanchhe* are examined in studies of education, politics and government and foreign aid. We have seen that education becomes apathetic to non-manual jobs which are secure and work-free. In the burgeoning bureaucratic and governmental system, "the practice of chakari is so ingrained in the modern situation that an attempt to bypass it or eliminate it is treated as an act of social deviance..." In the growing Ministries based on an Indian model "Chakari was rapidly institutionalized as an

integral part of all the ministries"(281). There is a ritualized use of "meetings" and "conferences" and "seminars" to cover over the fact that nothing much is being done, just a lot of talking. One central feature is the fear of decision-making and the taking of responsibility. "The level of responsibility increases within the administration, the fewer the decisions actually made. Making decisions can be a risky business...In a fatalistic society people are not thrown out for not making decisions but for making bad decisions...People do not really expect things to happen...But doing something means taking responsibility for it" (297). Anyone who has tried to get anything done in Nepal will know how true this is. Requests are passed from place to place and years may pass before a simple decision, to release some corrugated iron or bridge-building cable or cement, which has been agreed in principle, can be taken. "A variety of not doing work, which might entail risk, is to pass it on to a higher level." Often this means that the simple of decisions on small matters goes right up to the top, to be decided by the King or a senior Minister. Passing the buck is an endless, and often infinitely circular, game.

Fatalism and hierarchy also influence the impact of foreign aid. Firstly they heighten the sense of powerlessness and dependency which such aid on such a huge scale is in any case likely to instill. Foreign aid donors "are seen as father surrogates; the only active agent of development becomes the foreign party" (272). The infatuation with speculative, abstract, non-practical and ritualistic thought deadens action. Those who go abroad and see alternative systems are soon defeated by the fatalistic attitude when they return. Often they leave the country; those who remain "become cynics and adapt to Chakari and *Afno manchhe* culture." With this corrupt and corrupting system there is a massive squandering of resources. Putting it charitably, "the Nepali foreign aid civil servant operates from Kathmandu, and is oriented to

the Kathmandu valley as the real hub of national life. The welfare of ethnic villagers in remote places is hard to identify with" (317). Thus the many dangers of foreign aid, the political motives of donors, the over-paid and ethnocentric advisers, the high degree to which aid is 'tied', the absence of any involvement or consultation with those for whom the aid is supposedly designed, are compounded by the administrative system through which the development effort is filtered. It is not surprising that, as Bista writes, the National Planning Commission's five-yearly planning document "is worth very little", since it has little power; "roads and schools get built, but most often in areas not designated by the NPC (328)."

Development is uncoordinated and ill-planned, reflecting the random interests of donors and local patronage networks. "The size of such administrative machinery requires a vast amount of resources for its maintenance", but, Bista writes, "the contribution of such an apparatus to real development has been negligible (218)." It is a brave man who reveals these characteristics; it is an even braver one who honestly tries to explain the source which he believes is poisoning a potentially viable development. Bista locates two main causes, which are again interconnected. According to Bista, the root cause of fatalism and hierarchy is 'bahunism' or Brahminism. 'Bahunism' is a cultural configuration combining caste and fatalism. To demonstrate this, Bista provides an overview of Nepalese history from ancient times, showing the gradual spread of Brahminic values. Caste principles began to be seriously introduced into Nepal in the fourteenth century, and were strengthened by Jung Bahadur Rana in the nineteenth. An overview of caste principles in each region of Nepal is provided. Various features of priestly Brahminism are stressed; it's dislike of manual labour, its hierarchical view of the

world, its dependence on ritual and magic as opposed to practical behaviour. For instance, in relation to education:

Being educated, then, has a superstitious connection with high caste, and the act of being educated becomes the magical act that draws forth a sympathetic and supernatural supported result of being treated as a Bahun [. . .] education is another form of ritualistic behavior [. . .]. (186).

The belief in fatalism arising from the idea of dharma, the chakari system arising from the seeking of favour from a god, the strong distinctions between 'us' and them in a *manche*, all stem from priestly Brahminism.

One needs to add the adjective 'priestly', because Bista is not talking about the majority of Brahmins, hard-working farmers who do not practice as Brahmins and who work alongside the other ethnic groups in apparent harmony. It is a small stratum, which also includes higher-class Chhetris and some Newars and Thakuris, of whom he is writing. Bista examines how the upbringing within such 'Bahun' houses contributes to the fatalistic and hierarchical attitudes. Young children are brought up without much discipline; long breast-feeding on demand, an absence of any parental control or strong standards lead, he believes, to an absence of an internalized morality. "There is no moral pressure or guilt feeling regarding immoral acts, because there is little sense of morality instilled in children: a sense of social responsibility is simply not internalized and social sanctions are only effective in an external form." Only fear leads to good behaviour, and fear can be mitigated by building up a network of friends, a *manche*, and a dependency on outside forces.

Bahun's grow to adulthood "being self-righteous but without an ability to be self-critical". Much of this picture of relaxed child-rearing applies to most ethnic

groups in Nepal. What differentiates Bahuns is their attitude to women. "Women in Nepal generally have equal status except among Bahun-Thakuri and some middle and upper level Chhetri" (312). In contrast, Gurung women, for instance, control their husband's purse, are consulted on all major decisions, are not considered inferior or impure, work at similar jobs to men; none of this is true of the Bahun culture. Bahun women are part of the hierarchical system, impure and inferior, given no control of money, often badly beaten, often carrying huge loads while their load-free husbands walk ahead of them. This applies to hill Brahmins as well.

III: Free Will in *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*

Determinists generally agree that human actions affect the future but that human action is itself determined by a causal chain of prior events. Their view does not accentuate a "submission" to fate or destiny, whereas fatalists stress an acceptance of future events as inevitable. Determinists believe the future is fixed specifically due to causality; fatalists and pre-determinists believe that some or all aspects of the future are inescapable, but not necessarily due to causality.

Fatalism is a looser term than determinism. The presence of historical "indeterminisms" or chances, i.e. events that could not be predicted by sole knowledge of other events, is any idea still compatible with fatalism. Necessity (such as a law of nature) will happen just as inevitably as a chance: both can be imagined as sovereign. Likewise, determinism is a broader term than predeterminism. Predeterminists, as a specific type of determinists, believe that every single event or effect is caused by an uninterrupted chain of events that goes back to the origin of the universe. Determinists, holding a more generic view, meanwhile, believe that each event is at least caused by recent prior events, if not also by such far-extending and unbroken events as those going back in time to the universe's very origins. Both fatalism and predeterminism, by referring to the personal "fate" or to "predetermined events" strongly imply the existence of a someone or something that has done the "predetermining." This is usually interpreted to mean a conscious, omniscient being or force who has personally planned—and therefore knows at all times—the exact succession of every event in the past, present, and future, none of which can be altered. One of the most famous theological interpretations of this idea is the Calvinist Christian notion of predestination, in which all occurring events have been already willed at the

beginning of the universe by God. Contrarily, determinism does not usually imply the existence of such a supernatural being; many determinist models fall under scientific rather than religious or mystical philosophies.

In addition to the criticism leveled at the arguments put forward for fatalism, another criticism of fatalism in general is its assumption that truths do not conflict with each other. Twentieth century developments in theoretical and experimental quantum physics, specifically the concept of complementarity, seem to show that there exist pairs of statements, only one of which can be true at any given time. For example, Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty theorizes that if it is true that a subatomic particle will be measured to have a well-defined position, then it is not true that the particle will be measured to have a well-defined momentum and vice versa. In other words, a maximum of one of the two statements 'has a well-defined position' and 'has a well-defined momentum' can be true of a given subatomic particle at a given time.

Another noteworthy criticism comes from the novelist David Foster Wallace, who in a 1985 paper "Richard Taylor's *Fatalism* and the Semantics of Physical Modality" suggests that Taylor reached his conclusion of fatalism only because his argument involved two different and inconsistent notions of impossibility. Wallace did not reject fatalism pre se, as he wrote in his closing passage, "if Taylor and the fatalists want to force upon us a metaphysical conclusion, they must do metaphysics, not semantics. And this seems entirely appropriate." Willem deVries and Jay Garfield, both of whom were advisers on Wallace's thesis, expressed regret that Wallace never published his argument. In 2010, the thesis was, however, published posthumously as *Time, Fate, and Language: An Essay on Free Will*.

Works Cited

- Abhrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 6th ed. Banglore: Eastern Press, 1985.
- Bista, DorBahadur. *Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggle for Modernization*.
Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1991.
- Eagleton, M. *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.
- Edwards, Kim. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. London: Penguin Books, 2005.
- Mill, JohnStuart. *A System of Logic*. London: Peter Lang Publishing, 1995.
- - - . *Ethics*. London: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Wanderer and His Shadow*. Turkey: Turkey Press, 1880.
- Oswald, Splengler. *A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University
Press, 2002.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *On Human Nature*. South Australia: University of Adelaide
Library, 2005.
- Spencer, Herbert. *Modern Philosophy of Fatalism*. Boston: Gregg Press, 1997.
- Taylor, Richard. *Fatalism: The Philosophical Review*. Duke: Duke University Press,
1962.
- Tyson, Lowis. *Critical Theory Today*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1999.