

I. Recognizing the Societal Realities and Western Gaze

This project focuses its attention to the discriminatory, stereotypical and manipulative use of language in the novel *Sold* by an occidental writer Patricia McCormick. It seeks to question the writer's project of binarism between the superiority of the Westerners and inferiority of the Easterners. It tries to highlight the political and biased attitude of the writer and deconstructs her ideology of binarism and misrepresentation that is reflected in the use of language. It is meant to say that, though in surface level she seems to be working good for the abolition of women trafficking, establishment of the justice and equality and moreover, she seems to be publicizing the problems and troubles that are been faced by the people of non-western regions. All these things are clearly evident in the novel when one goes through the language minutely.

This present thesis accepts the advancement and modernization of the western people, place and culture. It accepts the concepts and thoughts of the writer Patricia McCormick arguing that she has done something good by pondering over the subject matters and issues of non-western people. It celebrates that the western ideas are practical, systematic, modern and scientific. But the assertion of the thesis is that while gazing over the non-western issues and problems the writer has used the "Americanized lens". While gazing through such lens she has sometimes exaggerated the things and sometimes the things are underestimated as per the intention of the writer.

The fundamental argument of the study is that the novel seems to be informative for people helping them to be aware about the problems of non-western people. It seems as if it acknowledges the readers about the situations and problems of

women-trafficking in rural areas of Nepal. But in reality it does not make any difference in the size of women-trafficking in Nepal as this type of literature is not read or accessed by the stake-holders in the rural Nepal. It is because they are out of reach of such opportunities. All the analysis of the writer about the pitiable condition of the rural Nepal and her representation is no other than an interpretation and it does not make any material change. It does not bring any transformation in order to reduce the problem of women-trafficking. Rather the novel is an expression of writer's perspective and her ideology.

The novel has several inconsistencies in the depiction of the Nepalese and Indian societies, people and realities. The novelist pictures the people, Nepalese mountain societies and the Indian societies as so miserable, slummy and full of pangs and panics. Sometimes, the depiction becomes filmy and imaginative in order to render it exotic. The research tries to answer the question like what are the motifs of the writer behind such depictions and representations. The writer has given the negative and passive role to the Oriental characters and she has activated the Occidental characters. Lakshmi, Ama, stepfather and other characters are shown as "Other", less civilized, more emotional, less active, less rational and traditional characters whereas Mumtaz, American man other Occidental characters are presented as one, more civilized, more rational, more active and modern characters. Not only that, at the end of the novel, Lakshmi who was sold and tortured in a brothel house at Calcutta is rescued by an American. At this point it can be argued that Lakshmi can be shown rescued by some Nepali and Indian since all the other aspects i.e. scenes, places, cultures are taken from east. But at the climactic point McCormick brings an American. So, there is doubt on the writer's use of an American rescuer.

Lakshmi, the protagonist, is portrayed as a dreamy, money-minded, meek and non-resistant woman confined in the traditional norms and values of the society. By taking the case of Laxmi, the writer not only exoticizes the reality of Nepali women but also tries to generalize the issue of the whole Nepali society. McCormick develops her Orientalist perspective by using the American characters to rescue Nepali women from the brothel named 'Happiness House' in the novel. The Americans carry with them the 'burden' of rescuing the victims as they come with promises of safety and freedom. But their project turns out to be a tool of exercising the power over the helpless 'oriental' women, they by creating discourses about them.

Critical Discourse Analysis is the methodological tool that is used to analyze for the investigation of this project. Critical Discourse Analysis provides the critical lens while analyzing any of the discourses. It looks at language items to examine, to evaluate and to judge cultural, social and political items. It intervenes and tries to make change, and so, it is biased. Not only that, most importantly, it presupposes every discourse as political; even the language. Moreover, it endeavours to find the answers of the questions related to discourse analysis in the social, economical and political world. It seeks to explain why the texts are the way they are and why they change the way they do. Critical discourse analysts are aware that every discourse is driven by social, economical and political motives/intentions.

Under the umbrella topic Critical Discourse Analysis, this thesis is based on the theoretical framework of James Paul Gee's "Seven Building Tools and Tasks", and Theo Van Leeuwen's "Social Actor Theory". Gee divides the Building Tasks into seven tools: 1) Significance, 2) Activities (Practices), 3) Identities, 4) Relationships, 5) Politics (the distribution of social goods), 6) Connections and 7) Sign System and Knowledge. This thesis mobilizes these tools minutely and

investigates the use of language in this particular novel. In the same manner, this thesis is centered on the Leeuwen's theory of Social Actor Theory. From this theory, it has selected some models: 1) Exclusion, 2) Role Allocation, 3) Generic Reference, 4) Assimilation, 5) Association and 6) Indetermination and Differentiation.

McCormick projects the central character Lakshmi negatively in her novel *Sold* by the use of manipulative and stereotypical language. In the novel she has tried to universalize the whole Non-western women's issues into 'One'. By taking the case of one woman she predicts the situation of other women as well. To give the negative attitudes of the Orient people or women, she exploits the views, behaviours and thinking of women towards another women. Similarly, in order to exaggerate the situation she uses many orient female characters who are shown envy, jealous, brutal and selfish towards the fellow female partners. They are shown more illiterate and conservative that they give the instructions of 'do's and don'ts' for women. This is the writer's discourse which she presents through characters – "You must carry yourself with modesty, bow your head with the presence of men, cover yourself with the shawl. Never look a man in the eye. Never allow yourself to be alone who is not family" (21). By projecting the culture, tradition, place, and people negatively she reflects the tendency of Western writers to inferiorize the orientals.

Not only that, to show the mysterious condition of the Eastern/third world she talks about the dowry system which reflects the pathetic condition of the common people. Along with that she negativises the women's condition by misrepresenting them. She compares the female with Tali (a female dog). Likewise the protagonist of the novel is given the name 'Lakshmi' which has double meaning: one is the common name of person and other is the Goddess Lakshmi. She names that intentionally either to mystify the Neplease god / culture or to make the self irony of the character.

Throughout the whole story, the writer tries to load the Western discourse by misrepresenting the Non-western culture and tradition.

Throughout the novel, to project the negative picture of the orient as well as to show them mysterious, she presents Lakshmi as dependent, pessimistic, dreamy to a foreigner (American) for her freedom.

McCormick has written a series of novels that marked her as one of the major writers in literary arena. Not only a mere writer she is the lady with multiple facets of talent. She is a bi-weekly entertainment columnist of *'The New York Times'* and a contributing editor of nearly half a dozen of the publication houses. Similarly, she has experience of being the professor of journalism at Columbia University Graduate School. Furthermore she has got the fellowship and honours from New York Foundation on the Arts Fellowship and Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts Fellowship. And she has got more than a dozen of awards in different titles. Primarily, McCormick writes on the social issues in her novel. *Cut* (2002) and *Sold* (2006) are her prominent novels where she presents the female characters as the protagonist who struggle too much to survive in their life. *Cut* is the riveting tale of a fifteen years old girl named Callie who has been hurt so cruelly and takes it out on her own body. It is a compelling and compassionate gaze at young woman's struggle to overcome the impulses that lead her to inflict on herself. Whereas in *Sold*, the main character, Lakshmi undertakes the long journey of India and arrives at 'Happiness House', a brothel at Calcutta, with full of hope. But she soon comes to know the heart-breaking, unthinkable and unbearable truth. It becomes a nightmare for her in that house from where she can not escape. Still she lives by her mother's words – 'simply to endure is to triumph'. Likewise her latest novel *Purple Heart* (2009) is a suspenseful psychological thriller about teenage American soldier. While researching

Purple Heart, McCormick took part in a peace demonstration with veterans from the war in Iraq.

McCormick was inspired to write *Sold* after meeting a young photographer who had been working undercover to document young girls working in Indian brothels. The author then spent about a month in Nepal and India researching the book, talking with girls who had been forced to work as prostitutes. She learns of the horrible abuse they suffered, how they were kicked out of the brothels when too sick to work, and the plight of children born there. As McCormick relayed in her novel, even if the girls somehow get out of the brothel, their families nearly always reject them if they can find them again.

Sold (2006) is Patricia McCormick's third novel for young adult readers and the winner of a 2007 Quill Award. Focusing on the life of Lakshmi, a young girl from a mountain village in Nepal who is sold for prostitution in India, the book is a powerful statement about the sex trade and a girl's ability to survive under desperate circumstances. Written in a series of almost poetic vignettes, *Sold* relays the confusion and immediacy of Lakshmi's situation and her ultimate decision to allow herself to be rescued.

Sold, a Quill Award winning novel written by Patricia McCormick, has instilled a great deal of upheaval in the mind of literary scholars and critics since it was published in 2006. The novel has been perceived from different angles. Commenting on its overall thematic structure and contents, *The National Book Awards*, remarks:

...told in a series of vignettes, *Sold* is a harrowing account of sexual slavery. Alternating lyrical imagery with precise detail, McCormick

gives voice to the terror and the bewilderment of a young girl of childhood but who finds the strength to triumph. (24)

According to this, the novel is an account of the haunting imageries of sexual slavery. It deals with how a naive and innocent girl is trafficked and tortured. But the triumph of the good over adversity is the main concern of the novel as the protagonist becomes able to come out of the hellish brothel house.

Another reviewer, Deepak Adhikari, in *The Kathmandu Post*, views the text from the perspective of the protagonist who suffers the domination of the patriarchy. Comparing the book with the *The House on the Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, he says it is the heart-wrenching story of a girl, mired in poverty, sold into prostitution in an Indian brothel. The characters are thinly veiled real life people. Moreover, he adds:

... in the Nepalese society, during childhood, a son is pampered while a daughter has to follow strict rules in the patriarchal setting. In the story, it emerges that the difference is stark: A son will always be a son, they say. But a girl is like a goat. Good as long as she gives you milk and butter. But not worth crying over when it is time to make a stew. (12)

One of the renowned critics and researchers, professor of University of Missouri-St. Louis named Monika Subi Lakshmanan at this point argues:

Yet, while analyzing *Sold*, I became aware that power circulates ubiquitously, both within the text and in the interpreter. In the book Lakshmi's father, the brothel owner, and the American all exercised power over her identity. In tandem with each of these narratives sites

of power, I too weighed in with the loci of my identities: the independent woman, the Indian-American, the third-worlder, the educator, and the researcher. (89)

In the above mentioned lines, Subi Lakshmanan analyzes the novel *Sold* as site of power circulation. According to her power circulates universally and the same is done by McCormick in the novel. Since the identity of Lakshmi is in stake, Subi Lakshmanan is caught up in the chain of her loss of identity. She further says:

I am acutely aware that the bridge between analysis and interpretation is always suspect. It is difficult position to be in. Yet, it is the awareness of the multiple and frequently conflicting sites of our identities that strengthens how we analyze, learn and interpret. Weaving into the text and out ourselves, we can bring context and complexity to the way we look at the world. (89)

Another critics named Hazal Rochman talks about women that they know no other way than to obey and serve men and their family:

Lakshmi is a young village girl lives with Ama, baby brother and greedy stepfather in family, soon after she gets her first blood/period, her stepfather starts looking her as a thing to sell her for a profit, not as a human being . (52)

Rochman has viewed women in the text as commodification and regarded that female are compelled to sell their body soon after they get their first menstruation period. In the same manner, where Lakshmi feels herself mature, she wishes herself to

share some of the responsibility of her family. She says “I am not a child anymore”.

(78)

Likewise another critics Glantz Shelly says, McCormick reveals her gradual awakening to the harshness of the world around her. Even in their poverty-stricken rural home, Lakshmi finds pleasure in the Himalayan Mountains, the sight of Krishna, her betrothed, and the cucumbers she lovingly tends, and then sells at the market.

After a monsoon wipes out their crops, her dream of going to the city rises, and at the same time her profilgate stepfather sells Lakshmi to an “auntie” bound to the city.

Shelly says:

During her journey, the girl acquires a visual and verbal vocabulary of things she has never seen before: a T.V. soon a hard-one sense of irony invades her narrative , too. Early on, a poem entitled “‘Everything I need to know”’ marks her step into womanhood (after her menstrual cycle); later, “‘Everything I need to know now”’ lists her rules as an initiated prostitute. (77)

For Lakshmi going to the city to earn money is not compulsory if her crops would not wipe out by a monsoon. But McCormick presents her as a dreamy girl, running after money and exaggerates the situation more than they really are. Furthur, again Shelly quotes:

In her village Lakshmi had rebelliously purchased her first Coca-cola for her mother, after her stepfather sold her; later in Calcutta, she overhears two man and realizes the price of a bottle of a Coca-cola at Bajai Sita’s store. That’s what he paid for (in turn)me. (79)

Though Shelly tries to show her as bold and rebellious McCormick shows her as meek, non-resistant and blind follower in the novel.

Though the novel is analysed from the different perspectives by different critics, this present research is projected in digging out the implicit intention of the writer to inferiorize the people, culture, values and place of Oriental region and to superiorize the Occidental region. The writer intends to do so by the use of stereotypical and manipulative use of language. In the surface level, the language used in the novel seems simple and easy to understand but if we ponder deeply over it the writer is trying to impose her Americanized ideology over the readers. As the writer is an American, the text too superiorities the American norms and values; valorization of the supremacy of Westerners. By creating the distortive discourse which stereotypes the Orientals, the writer is focusing on the civilizational development of Western.

The supremacy of the American people, values and place is politically stated in the novel by the use of language. Below is presented an example of that from the novel:

I know this voice. It is my American...

It is an American, I whisper...

The American is shouting something ... he is calling out to me..

I can not go to my American...

But I can still hear the American...

The American calls out... (263)

The above mentioned lines are the words spoken by Lakshmi when she was imprisoned in the Happiness House. It is a year since Lakshmi left her village. After “days of waiting for the American” who had promised to rescue and liberate her. In

the above lines the American is used as an agent. “He”(American) is activated in the above use of language. In every sentences the word “American” is repeatedly used and he is allocated the role of agent. In the words of Theo Van Leeuwen, it is the model of “Role Allocation” in his theory The Social Actor Theory. That’s why the language is used politically in the novel. Not only that, this thesis also tries to reflect the circulation of power in the creation of discourses.

Although this study makes significant use of the concepts developed in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis particularly by James Paul Gee and Theo Van Leeuwen, it does not offer the comprehensive analysis of the discourse beyond that. It completely centers its analysis on “Seven Building Tasks” of James Paul Gee and “Social Actor Theory” of Theo Van Leeuwen. Given the nature of the research, available time and resources does not provide any analysis of *Sold* or the writer Patricia McCormick. It only focuses its attention on the political and stereotypical use of language and the notion of power-politics reflected in the novel.

II. Representation of Non-west and Exploration of Latent Ideology of the writer

Set in the Himalayan village of Nepal and the red light area of Calcutta, India, the novel depicts a tough luck of, a 19 year-old school girl, Laxmi, the protagonist of the novel. The writer exposes the bitter realities of the life of Nepalese village people and the brothel of Calcutta in India to her reader. The writer of the novel, Patricia McCormick, has done something good by publicizing the pains and sufferings of innocent Nepalese women who are bound to be sold for sex trade in India. Not only that, she has also contributed more for the abolition of women trafficking, establishment of the justice and equality and dissemination of the eastern norms and values. But in reality her Americanized version of superirizing the Westeners and inferiorizing the Easteners is reflected in the use of language and in her ideology.

By observing the scenes and situations of the novel minutely, the research asserts that McCormick shows the predomination of western mode of thought, wants to show the supremacy of foreignness over native and approves her position as a western writer. In the novel, the novelist pictures the people, Nepalese mountain society and Indian society as so miserable, slummy and full of pangs and panics. Sometimes, the depiction becomes to the extent that it is filmy and imaginative in order to render it exotic. The research tries to answer the questions related to the motifs of the writer behind such depictions and representations.

Patricia McCormick in the novel writes about Nepali girls sold intentionally into a life of sexual slavery in the brothels of India by their families under the economic compulsion. She examines that many Nepalese girls come from the remote mountain village to the red light areas of Calcutta. In the novel, the author

presents the story of Lakshmi, a thirteen years old girl who lives with her poor family in a small mountain village of Nepal. The novel has several inconsistencies in the depiction of the Nepalese and Indian societies, people and realities.

Lakshmi, the protagonist, is portrayed as a dreamy, money-minded, meek and non-resistant women confined in the traditional norms and values of the society. By taking the case of Laxmi, the writer not only exoticizes the reality of Nepali women but also tries to generalize the issue of the whole Nepali society. McCormick develops her Orientalist perspective by using the American characters to rescue Nepali women from the brothel named 'Happiness House' in the novel. The Americans carry with them the 'burden' of rescuing the victims as they come with promises of safety, freedom and enlightenment. But their project turns out to be a tool of exercising the power over the helpless 'oriental' women thereby creating discourses about them.

McCormick projects the central character Lakshmi negatively in her novel Sold by the use of manipulative and stereotypical language. In the novel she has tried to universalize the whole Non-western women's issues into 'One'. By taking the case of one woman she predicts the situation of other women as well. To give the negative attitudes of the Oriental people or women, she exploits the views, behaviours and thinking of women towards another woman. Similarly, in order to exaggerate the situation she uses many orient female characters who are shown envy, jealous, brutal and selfish towards the fellow female partners. They are shown more illiterate and conservative that they give the instructions of "do's and dont's" for women. This is the writer's discourse which she presents through characters – "You must carry yourself with modesty, bow your head with the presence of men, cover yourself with the shawl. Never look a man in the eye. Never

allow yourself to be alone who is not family'' (21). These are the words spoken by Ama while instructing the social and cultural norms and values of the society to Lakshmi. By projecting the non-western culture, tradition, place, and people negatively she reflects the tendency of Western writers to inferiorize the orientals.

Not only that, to show the mysterious condition of the Eastern/third world she talks about the dowry system which reflects the pathetic condition of the common people. Along with that, she negativises the women's condition by misrepresenting them. She compares the female with Tali (a female dog). Likewise, the protagonist of the novel is given the name 'Lakshmi' which has double meaning: one is the common name of person and other is the Goddess Lakshmi who is considered as the goddess of wealth and property in eastern culture. There is ironical use of the name. She names it intentionally either to mystify the Nepalese god / culture or to make the self irony of the character. Throughout the whole story, the writer tries to load the Western discourse by misrepresenting the Non-western culture and tradition.

McComick tries to characterize the position of the Eastern women in discriminatory, stereotypical and manipulative degree. She has shown Laxmi as well as Ama as the people of lower level and uneducated characters. She has not shown any modernized, civilized and scientific thoughts of the Eastern character rather they are put under the unpractical and inhuman views and opinions. The only intention of the writer behind such representations is to negativise the eastern world.

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lens while analyzing any of the discourses. It looks at language items to examine, to evaluate and to judge cultural, social and political items. It intervenes and tries to make change, and so, it is biased. Not only that, most importantly, it presupposes every discourse as political; even the language. Moreover, it endeavours to find the answers of the questions related to discursive analysis in the social, economical and political world. It seeks to explain why the texts are the way they are and why they change the way they do. Critical discourse analysts are aware that every discourse is driven by social, economical and political motives/intentions.

Under the umbrella topic Critical Discourse Analysis, this thesis is based on the theoretical framework of James Paul Gee's Seven Building Tools and Tasks, and Theo Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Theory. Gee categories the Building Tasks into seven tools: 1) Significance, 2) Activities (Practices), 3) Identities, 4) Relationships, 5) Politics (the distribution of social goods), 6) Connections and 7) Sign System and Knowledge. This thesis mobilizes these tools minutely and investigates the use of language in this particular novel. In the same manner, this thesis is centered on the Leeuwen's theory of Social Actor Theory. From this theory, it has selected some models: 1) Exclusion, 2) Role Allocation, 3) Generic Reference, 4) Assimilation, 5) Association 6) Nomianlization and 7) Indetermination and Differentiation.

James Paul Gee, one of the renowned Critical Discourse analyst talks about the concept of Building Task. According to him language-in-use always performs actions in the world. He further argues that some of these actions and performances are verbal actions in the sense that they require language to carry

them out. This includes actions like promising, asking a question, giving an order, or making a request. Gee's view at this point is that such actions could be done without language, though in most of the cases it is easier to do them with language than without. This includes actions like encouraging people, insulting them, manipulating them, and making them believe certain things.

Gee furthermore says that we continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds, not just through language, but through language used in tandem with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol system, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing. Sometimes what we build is quite similar to what we have built before- action is already done but only the work of continuation is there, nothing new is happened (e.g., sustaining a good marriage); sometimes it is not (e.g., starting a new career).

Therefore Gee asserts that language-in-use is not a tool, not just for saying, but also, used alongside other non-verbal tools, to build things in the world.

Gee quotes while defining his Building Tasks:

Whenever we speak or write, we always and simultaneously build one of seven things or seven areas of "reality". We often build more than one of these simultaneously through the same words and deeds. Let's call these seven things "seven building tasks" of language.

(112)

Significance is the first building task out seven in Gee's concept of Building Task. It is meant to say that the world can be built "significant" and at

the same time it can also be made “insignificant”. That all depends on the intentions of the builder or creator. At this point Gee asserts:

We use language to make things significant in certain ways. As the saying goes, we make “mountains out of mole hills”. Things are not important and unimportant all by themselves. We humans make them trivial or important or something in between. (67)

Here, Gee’s claim is that the things are as they are but it’s we who attribute the high and low significance while perceiving. The things in themselves are not higher and lower but it’s we to treat their level of quality. There are things in life that are, by nearly everyone’s standards, significant. But for many things, we need to use language to render them significant or to lessen their significance, to single to others how we view their significance. So, the only matter of valuing things highly or lowering the quality is no other than the way of perceiving things.

Therefore, the question for the discourse analysis, at this point, according to Gee, is – how is the piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?

In Sold, the writer McCormick has build the world, the reality sometimes significant and sometimes insignificant as her personal intention. All the events and things of the novle are her imaginary creation. So whatever is made more important or less important is the matter of writer’s desire/intention. In the novel, the cover page pictures an image of a girl from the Eastern society and culture.

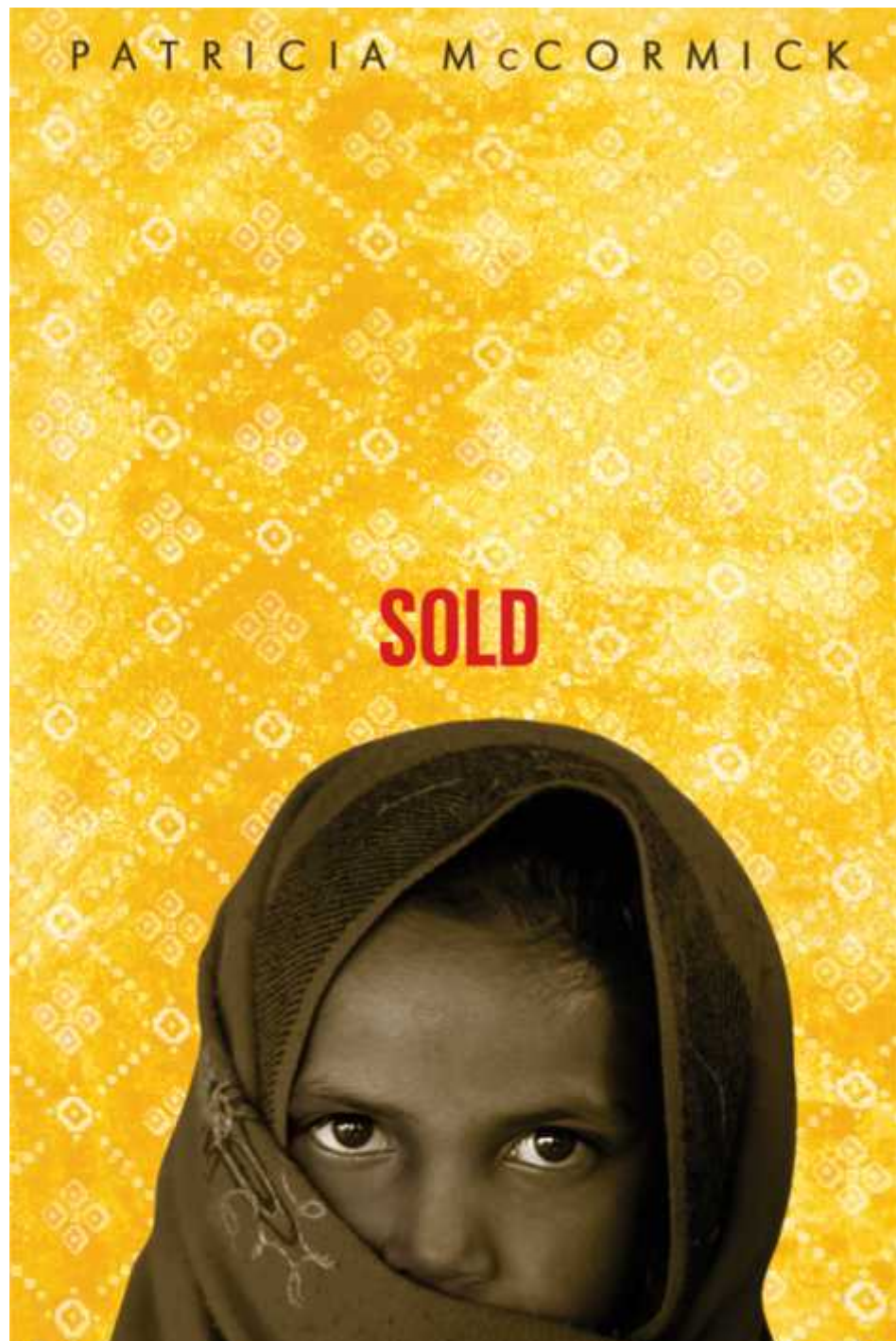


Fig. 1

In the above figure no.1 the girl above is gazing at us with her innocent eyes. Her mouth is covered by shawl, or the end of sari. The bright saffron yellow background, with a lightly printed geometric pattern, contrasts sharply with this sepia-washed photograph. “SOLD”, the capitalized title, hovers in the middle, directly above the girl’s head.

The writer has own her project behind portraying such an image. In doing so, it has to activate a whole chain of conventions, values, and judgements. Therefore, even before we open the book the discourse modals have been positioned to “read” it for the discourses shared in our “community of practice”. The picture gives a kind of negative connotations of the Eastern people. The photo of a Eastern girl has been made significant since it has been given the space in the front page of the book but at the same time the writer has the aim to represent Eastern people and culture in derogative way. The girl is shown as an innocent and uneducated in her look. Not only that she is presentated as covering her face by “burkha” (veil). On the top of her there is written the title in block letters “SOLD”, it means she has been sold. So, the writer has given negative significance for the eastern girls. Thus, the writer has built the picture of eastern girl, eastern culture significant but they are interpreted in stereotypical or negative point of view.

Not only the cover page, but the woman character’s role is also built as insignificant in the novel. They are made lowly, poor, powerless, incapable, submissive and vulnerable. The females in the novel have been shown that they have to preform the task made under patriarchal norms. The writer has signified the concept of eastern people:

If you have a daughter, feed her at your breast for just a season, so that your blood will start again and you can try once more to bear a son.

If your husband asks you to wash his feet, you must do as

he says, then put a bit of the water in your mouth. (17)

In the above mentioned lines the traditional and patriarchal norms are shown working actively in the eastern society. The writer has tried to give significance for the superstitious behaviour of the eastern people. It's her intention to hide the practical and modern ways of thoughts of these people and she only intends to focus on the negative aspects of these people.

Not only this, McCormick shows Ama such a mother who teaches the things which are unbearable for a daughter. The people of modern age surprise and feel strange and impractical when they heard the statements made by Ama while instructing her daughter when she get her first blood:

You must stay out of sight for seven days. Even the sun cannot see you until you have been purified. Don't come out for any reason. If you must use the privy, cover your face and head with your shawl. At night, when your stepfather has gone out and the baby gone to sleep, I will return. And then, I will tell you everything you need to know. (20)

Furthermore, McCormick creates a mother as if she restricts her daughter's freedom from her early age and made submissive towards the male. The writer again adds the commands which should be followed by Lakshmi:

Before today, you could run as free as leaf in the wind Now, you must carry yourself with modesty, bow your head in the presence of men, and cover yourself with your shawl. Never look a man in the eye. Never allow yourself to alone with a man who is not family.

(21)

The novel also has provided insignificant position of the women of eastern world through the main character Laxmi. The major female character of the novel, Laxmi is the victim of patriarchy. The young girl of thirteen years old is not only dominated by male characters, but her whole life turns into nightmare, and the sole cause behind the pitiable position is her step father. McCormick writes that in her playing days, she had to work “Each morning as I go about my chores straining the rice water, grinding the spices, sweeping the yard” (5). The novelist further writes:

All day, she trudges up and down the mountain, a heavy basket braced on her back and held fast by a rope around her brow, she is bent under the weight of her children... By my Ama, with her crow-black hair braided with bits of red and beads, her cinnamon skin, and her years hung with the joyful noise of tinkling gold, is to me more lovely. (7)

Since McCormick has made the Eastern culture insignificant, she has built the Western culture significant in her novel. She presents the city luxury under the title “New World” which makes the non-western inferior and force to be ruled. She expresses those through Lakshmi and generalizes the condition of orient that are emotional to get city luxury. The following lines are evidenced that fact:

A river that runs white.

A man with teeth entirely of gold. It is a new world. But there is one thing constant: the mighty swallow tailed peak. It grows smaller the

farther we walk, but still, it is always there, waiting to guide me back.

(60-61)

In the above lines, McCormick has built significance for her own western things and cultures. Here, the western river is considered to be white. It is meant to say that the people from eastern background believe that the things in western community are good and strange in comparison to them. By creating the difference in the concept or ideology of eastern people, the writer tries to give significance for the western community. In this way, the writer builds the things significance and insignificance as her ideology is constructed.

Activity (practices) is the second building task in Gee's Building Task Model. At this point Gee opines that the function of language is not only to communicate the things but also it makes someone to act the actions. It makes us to do something. Here the things that means to act includes informing, encouraging, suggesting etc. He further says that we humans use language to get recognized as engaging in a certain sort of practice or activity. We use language to carry out actions like promising and engaging and a great many others. However, we humans also enact what Gee calls larger activity, using the word in a special and restricted way. While arguing about the activity, Gee points out:

By activity I mean socially recognized and institutionally or culturally supported endeavour that usually involves sequencing or combining actions in certain specified ways. Encouraging a student is an action, mentoring the student as his or her advisor in a graduate program is a practice. Telling something about linguistics

is an action (informing), lecturing on linguistics in a course is a practices. (45)

The novel opens with the innocence of childhood of the main character, Lakshmi. She is a village girl living in the mountainous region. Everything changes after her “first blood”. Now, a woman, her mother schools her in “EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW”:

Before (italics added) today, Ama says, you could run as free as a leaf in the wind.

Now (italics added), she says, you must carry yourself with modesty, bow your head in the presence of men, and cover yourself with your shawl. (15)

Recalling the shawl-covered girl in the photograph, her look of demand or evaluation is now changed to a downcast gaze of submission. The axis of time (before, now, never) is accompanied by varying degrees of modal verbs. Before she “could”, now she “must” and the future is locked in the assertion of a categorical, unconditional and non-modalized “never”. In this how-to-behave list of rules Lakshmi must:

Never look a man in the eye.

Never allow yourself to be alone with a man who is not your family and never look at growing pumpkins or cucumbers when you are bleeding otherwise they will rot. (33)

Once she is married, the mother's socio-cultural rule book adopts a conditional if/then sentence, in which every activity is conditioned by male. The concept of male ideology is exercised to govern the different practices which are functioning in the society. In this case, the reader knows that the antecedent (if) not hypothetical, nor is the consequence (then) contingent on a previous event. Instead, the conditional clause alludes to a given causality of circumstantial context.

If (italics added) he burps at the end of the meal, it is a sign that you have pleased him.

If he turns you in the night, you must give yourself up to him, in the hopes that you will bear him a son. (15)

After a series of instructions on breastfeeding a son as against a daughter, the vignette concludes with Lakshmi asking her mother:

“Why,” I say, “must women suffer so?”

“This has always been our fate,” she says.

“Simply to endure,” she says, “is to triumph”. (16)

When the mother gives the sequence of instructions that are bounded by the male-dominated ideology, that shows some effect on the activity of Lakshmi.

Because of these instructions, Lakshmi's reaction/involvement is caused. Her engagement is evident in the above lines. In fact, just Lakshmi asked "Why must women suffer so?" the text demands the reader's engagement and evaluation of the codes of behaviour. At this point, Lakshmi's activity is clearly seen since she is engaged in the discourse. The mother's reply becomes emblematic of the book's representation of culturally determined female suffering. The sentence "Simply to endure is to triumph" appears italicized on the inner jacket of the book. Evoking the stereotypical notion of Hindu passivity, determinism and fatalism, temporality (before-now-always) and casuality (if-then) are imprisoned in a socio-cultural system which obliterates the experiential difference between passivity ("to endure") and agency ("to triumph"). This timeless obliteration of the human actor is linguistically endorsed by the statement "simply to endure is to triumph" in which a categorical universality is rendered by the present tense "is" (Said, 1979, 72), and the implicit nominalization of endurance and triumph, shifts the discourse from one of the conditional human agency, to the collapsing of the actor into the action itself (Hodge and Kress 1993, (22-26). In this way, the engagement and the involvement of the characters in their activities can be built by the use of language.

Identity is the third building task in Gee's model. According to this model we use language to get recognized as talking on a certain identity or role: that is, to build an identity here and now. For example, I talk and enact in one way and I am speaking and acting as the chair of the committee; at the next moment I speak and talk in a different way and I am speaking and acting as just one peer/colleague

speaking to another. Even if I have an official appointment as chair of the committee, I am not always taken as acting as the chair, even during meetings. At this point Gee claims:

We often enact our identities by speaking or writing in such a way as to attribute a certain identity to others, an identity that we explicitly or implicitly compare or contrast to our own. We build identities for others as a way to build ones for ourselves. (24)

In the novel, Sold, the writer has biased mentality while building the identities of the characters. She has given a kind of negative identity to female, village life and the whole eastern world whereas the western people and their way of thought is identified as worth and adoptable for human life. The writer in the novel has identified the predicament of the female characters as lowly, poor, powerless, incapable, submissive and vulnerable. Women characters are given the beacon of pathetic and submissive life. They have been shown that they have to perform the tasks made under patriarchal norms. The life of Lakshmi and Ama has been shown in miserable and pitiable condition.

In the novel, the main character, Lakshmi is compared with Tali (a dog); it means Lakshmi is identified as a dog. Not only that, the writer has shown the eastern culture negatively. The name of the protagonist is given "Lakshmi", the goddess of wealth and property in eastern religious culture. But the character Lakshmi in the novel is portrayed as penniless who is compelled to sell even her flesh in order to earn money. Here, the writer provides the degenerated and negative identity to eastern religious culture. Along with that the writer has presented the female of eastern region behaved as the commodity/property to use:

A son will always be a son, they say. But a girl is like a goat.
 Good as long as she gives you milk and butter. But not worth crying
 over when it's time to make a stew. (41)

When Lakshmi was in the brothel, she was treated inhumanly and her suffering was out of her own control. Even at such situation, the writer creates positive image about the western people in her mind and reader. Lakshmi, at this point says:

The American lady is kind. Anita is wrong about the Americans, that they do not shame the children of the brothels. Everyone there is as rich as king. The birds there are as big as men. They eat a sweet treat made from snow. (112)

In the above lines, the writer's project is no other than *identifying* the western people and place superior and to show the eastern people and place inferior. In this way, in each and every part of the novel the writer has *identified* her own people, place and culture superior and others all inferior and outsiders.

Relationship is the fourth building task in Gee's tool. According to this tool, we use language to build and sustain relationship of all different kinds. The language is used to signal what sorts of relationships we have, want to have or are trying to have with our listener(s), reader(s), or other people, or organizations about which we are communicating. We use language to build relationship with other people and with groups and institutions. Moreover, we use language to build social relationship as well. Sometimes the relationship can be built relatively formal and deferential or sometimes relatively informal and less deferential.

For the analysis of *relationship* in the discourse we posit the following discourse analysis question and further the analysis: “what sort of relationship or relationships is the piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?

The novel, *Sold* has got a lot of examples that show the *relationship* between and among the characters, among the characters and writer/narrator etc. The writer McCormick has shown the relationship that is distanced and non-dialogic. On her webpage interview, she says: “It helped that I was as a foreigner on the busy streets of Kathmandu and Calcutta, because I was as bewildered and awestruck by these places as Lakshmi in the novel.” In the novel, Lakshmi, the author, and reader view Nepal and India as outsiders.

Moreover, the relationship between father and a daughter in the Nepali village life is too represented negatively in the novel. The relationship between Lakshmi and her step father is not co-operative, lovely and helpful. The step father who is the representative of whole eastern region is shown as a cruel father who sells his own daughter in order to earn money. The intention of the writer behind showing such relationship between a daughter and father is no other than inferiorization of eastern people. Not only that, the relationship between females too is presented in derogatory way. They are shown as if they are enemy to each other. Lakshmi, the protagonist, in the beginning, was dominated by her mother. Her mother has imposed all the patriarchal norms and values upon her and she instructed her about the different do's and don't's of the society. Lakshmi was sent to jungle to graze the cattle rather sending to the school. In one angle, Lakshmi's mother is the only one in the world who loves and cares her but if we analyze the same case from different angle Lakshmi is found to be dominated even by her mother too. Not only her mother but also

other female characters do not behave nicely with her. While staying in the brothel, many of her own friends have got the sense of envy to each other.

Along with above mentioned relationship, the relationship between the eastern people and western people also has been shown as if these two are opposite to each other. The distance is shown between them. In the novel, when the American comes to have sex with Lakshmi, he does not become much closer with her rather finishes his intended act and moves.

Politics (the distribution of social goods) is the fifth task out of Gee's seven building task. This tool argues that we use language to convey a perspective on the nature of the distribution of social goods, that is, to build a perspective on social goods. Gee uses the term "politics" in a special way. By "politics" he does not mean government and political parties rather he means any situation where the distribution of social goods is at stake. By "social goods" he means anything a social group of society takes as a good worth having. We use language to build and destroy social goods. For example, treating people with respect in certain circumstances is a social good and treating them with disrespect is not. Speaking and acting respectfully and deferentially on these circumstances is to create and distribute a social good. There are other circumstances where people want to be treated not deferentially, but with solidarity and bonding. Speaking and acting toward someone who wants my friendship with solidarity and bonding in that circumstance to create and distribute is a social good.

The novel *Sold* is full with the use of politics. The writer has political motivation in creation of this novel. Though she seems to be doing something good for the abolition of girl trafficking by publicizing the pangs and panics of the trafficked women she has her own internalized intention behind showing such

pitiable and pathetic situation. The representation is not actual rather the things are sometimes exaggerated overtly and sometimes underestimated as per the need of writer's mentality.

The ending of the novel is political. At the end, McCormick brings an American in order to free Lakshmi who has been suffering so inhumanly in the prostitution house at Calcutta. Not only that, the positive attitude of the American is imposed on Lakshmi by the writer. Once, he has come to her for his own business and after fulfilling his thirst of sex he behaves somehow nicely with her because of which Lakshmi is impressed much. At the same time, he promises her to take in a clean place and she waits him eagerly believing that he will rescue her. After "days of waiting for the American" who has promised to liberate her, the book concludes with a raid and Lakshmi's reassurance that "her" American has arrived:

I know this voice. It is my American...

It is an American, I whisper...

The American is shouting something... he is calling out to me

I cannot go to my American...

But I can still hear the American

The American calls out...

My American is leaving...Something inside me breaks open, and I run down the steps...

I see my American. There are other men with him. Indian men, and the American lady from the picture.

"My name is Lakshmi", I say.

"I am from Nepal

I am fourteen years old" (263)

There is political ending in the novel. In this brief concluding episode of three pages, the word “American” occurs nine times. Notably, it is the political Discourse on the trustworthy commitment of the good American abroad, not about the collective or indigenous social change. This liberal humanist focus on individual agency as evidence of a possible challenge to system and its eventual transformation dismisses the context of the social, economic, and historical. Most importantly, the narrative of the American as liberator discounts homegrown movements. The reality on the ground says otherwise; it is opposite to what is represented.

In the book's coda of acknowledgements, McCormick writes:

This book could not have been written without the help of Ruchira Gupta and Anuradha Koirala, who paved the way for me to visit the Maiti Nepal shelter for women and children in Kathmandu; the village for Goldboungha in the Himalayas, and the Deepika Social Welfare Center for Women and Children in the red-light district of Calcutta.

(20)

Outwardly, it seems that McCormick has ranked the human right activists of Nepal and India in higher position and status. But these are only her teeth to show rather she has her own internalized politics behind that. It is unfortunate that considering the courageous work done by several Nepali and Indian women, *Sold* portrays the “third world” women as one whose liberation and identity cannot emerge from within her own society and culture. One can of course dismiss the American presence as a necessary narrative ploy that makes the text relevant to an implied American reader. It can also be read as an instructive narrative about a nation's export goodwill, individual freedom and enlightened modernity. From a humanitarian point of view one may argue that the right to protect is above and

beyond nations, cultures and ideologies. Others may contend that imagination is an artistic licence which should not be conflated with political nuances. Whether the novel's conclusion is a response to an implied market a reflection of political models (not necessarily mutually exclusive), or it is validated by its firm ethical footing, the question still remains as to how knowing and understanding "the other world" finds its resolution in praiseworthy American intervention. It is a root question if one considers the current scenario of international relation.

Critical Discourse analysts do not just use discourse analytical methods, they also work with Critical Social Theory. So, it is based on the idea that text and talk play a key role in maintaining and legitimizing inequality, injustice and oppression in the society. It uses discourse analytical methods to show how this is done, but without restricting itself to one particular discourse analytical approach.

Theo van Leeuwen, a renowned critical discourse analyst, has propounded the Social Actor Theory. Leeuwen argues that his discourse explains Social Actor Theory as a systematic socio-semantic framework of the way humans can be represented in English. Because it also details the way its various categories are realized, the framework provides a clear tool for the analysis of a range of issues in Critical Discourse Analysis. Leeuwen in this theory sets out a framework for answering the question *How can we represent social actors (with a language in English)?*, which includes exclusion as well as other aspects of the representation of social actors, some well known in the CDA literature, some less so.

Exclusion is the very first framework of Leeuwen's Social Actor Theory. While defining this frame he writes:

Some social actors who are in reality part of an action and event or practice, may be left out, and remain unrepresented, excluded. Such

exclusion may be “innocent”- “details” the reader is assumed to already know or which are deemed irrelevant in the context- or problematic, preventing a full understanding of what happens or has happened. (72)

Here, Leeuwen’s point is that in some of the discourses the active participants are not given the proper space rather they are abandoned or left out. Sometimes such exclusion is done intentionally and sometimes it is done unknowingly. Systematic exclusions are always of interest.

In *Sold*, we can see ample of evidences that the writer has intentionally excluded. The role of Nepali and Indian human rights activists or those fighting against women trafficking in rescuing Lakshmi from the brothel is intentionally excluded. In one of her interview, McCormick says:

This book could not have been written without the help of Ruchira Gupta and Anuradha Koirala, who paved the way for me to visit the Maiti Nepal shelter for women and children in Kathmandu: the village for Goldboungha in the Himalayas, and the Deepika Social Welfare Center for Women and Children in the red-light district of Calcutta. (20)

Though McCormick points out that the people from Nepal and India have helped her in writing the novel, she provides negligible role to them. It is more evident when she brings an American to rescue Lakshmi. What would it be if she has shown Lakshmi being free from Nepali human rights activists? Not to show such scenario in the novel is no other than her Americanized belief of superiority of westners and

inferiority of easterners. That's why it is the writer's systematic intention to exclude and belittle the concepts of easterners.

Role allocation is the next aspect in Leeuwen's theory. He says social actors may be "activated", given an Agent role, or "passivated", given a Patient role. It is true that the same thing can be allocated highly and the same thing can be made dependent to others. This all depends upon the intention and interest of the language users.

In *Sold*, different intentional roles are allocated by the writer. The women and eastern characters are given the role of patient whereas the people from western are given the role of agent. In the novel Lakshmi is sold by her stepfather. It means the stepfather has possession over Lakshmi. So, Lakshmi is shown as a passive character and her stepfather is shown as active (perpetrator) one. Later she is rescued by an American or the American is made agent, given the active role. He is shown as a rescuer. But all other eastern human rights activists are not only excluded but also given passive role. In this way, it can be claimed that how social actors are "activated", "passivated" and "valorized" is determined by the discourse.

Assimilation is the next aspect of Social Actor Theory. At this point, Leeuwen argues. "Social actors can be 'individualized', represented as individuals, or 'assimilated', represented as groups in which case a 'they are all the same' effect may occur".

In *Sold*, all the social actors are assimilated or represented as groups; stepfathers, mothers (Ama) aunts, uncles, Americans. Generalization is created by the writer.

Generic reference is the next aspect of Social Actor Theory. In this case, social actors are generalized, referred to as classess of people rather than as specific, identifiable individuals.

In *Sold* social actors are generalized. Stepfathers are presented as if they sell their daughters to brothel. They all are grouped in one and generalized. Actually, it is overgeneralization because all the people do not do that. Not only city aunts but also other men are shown as if they help for the trade of sex slavery. To generalize them all in one category is a mistake because some of these people have helped to end the girl trafficking too. Moreover, Americans are shown as they are the people to rescue and protect others. Lakshmi, in the novel is been suffered much by Mumtaz but at last she is freed by an American. Hence, McCoormick is trying to generalize that the American are the people who rescue and provide freedom for those who are helpless, tortured and suffered much. Thus, the generalization is eviedent in the novel.

Association is the next aspect in Leeuwen's "Social Actor Theory" Associations are groups formed for the purpose of engaging in a common activity or pursuing a common interest. Often they are impermanent, lasting only as long as the foint activity, and text they may and un-form as the text proceeds. In the novel *Sold* all the characters/actors are associated to something. Lakshmi's stepfather, city aunt, a man and Mumtaz are all associated in the process of women trafficking. Lakshmi and Gita are pertaining to the group who work as slaves in brothel house.

Leeuwen's next toolis *indetermination and differentiation*. He argues that indetermination occurs when social actors are represented as unspecified, "anonymous" individuals or groups whose identity does not matter. It is mostly realized by indefinite pronouns such as somebody, someone, some, some people etc.

On the other hand, differentiation explicitly differentiates an individual social actor or groups from a similar actor or group, again creating an ‘‘us’’ and a ‘‘them’’. The dichotomy between us versus them is exercised in the novel. The presentation of non-western people as outsiders and strangers illustrates the differentiation of the writer.

In *Sold*, McCormick has used a lot of examples of indetermination. Mostly unidentified people are involved in the sex trade. She names them as any men, everymen, dirty men, fat men, ugly men etc. By giving the anonymous names she intends to hide the real identity of the people. Not only that, differentiation also has occurred in the novel. She has created ‘‘we’’ for the American and she has identified them as the rescuer whereas ‘‘they’’ are identified for Non-Americans. They are represented as the perpetrator.

Nomination and Categorization is the next aspect in Leeuwen’s Social Actor Theory. At this point, Leeuwen says that social actors may be represented in terms of their unique identity, by being nominated, or in terms of identities and functions they share with others. On the other hand, Nomination is of course realized by proper nouns, which can be formal (surname only, with or without honorifics), semi-formal (given name and surname), or informal (given name only).

While nominalizing the characters, McCormick in the novel, provides only the name to the character, not the surname. For example, she gives the name to the main character as Lakshmi only: she is not given her complete identity rather she is partially identified from her name. Not only that, the nominalization is political one; Lakshmi on the one hand, represents for the proper name of a person on the other hand it also indicates for the goddess of wealth and property in eastern culture. Actually, naming the protagonist as Lakshmi and making her a penniless, poor girl is

the political nominalization. Most of the characters are categorized, known in terms of identities and functions as they share with others and so they are rejected of their unique identity. Why do they need separate identity? They, as individuals, are insignificant. (Ama, stepfather, city aunt, turnip-nose man, uncle husband etc.)

III. McCormick's stance as a Western writer and use of Americanized lens

After doing detail investigation of the novel *Sold* in the view of Building Tasks and Social Actor Theory, this thesis comes to the point that the writer has her prejudiced ideology that is deep-rooted in her mentality at the time of creating the novel. But at the same time this thesis accepts the reality of advancement and modernization of the western world. It does not discard the practical, scientific, humanitarian and systematic ideas of western people, place and culture. The argument of the thesis is that the "lens" used by the writer while gazing over the non-western discourses is coloured with her own intention. She has used the "Americanized lens" while representing and analysing the non-western discourses. The use of language is biased, discriminatory and stereotypical that has indirectly represented the distinction between the superiority of the westners and the inferiority of the easterners. The writer has given the negative and passive role to the Oriental character and she has activated the Occidental character. Lakshmi, Ama, Stepfather and other Oriental characters are shown as traditional, more emotional and superstitious whereas Momtaz, American and other Occidental characters as gentle, modern, intelligent and rescuer. At the end of the novel, when Lakshmi, the protagonist of the novel is rescued by the American, the Americanized notion of thinking of the writer is clearly evident in the novel.

The fundamental point of the thesis is that the creation of this piece of literature is the outcome of McCormick's perspective and her latent Americanized lens. Her work seems to be informative for people but it does not make any difference in the size of women-trafficking in Nepal as this type of literature is not read or accessed by the stake-holders in the rural Nepal. It is an interpretation of the writer and does not bring any material change or transformation. It is meant to say

that the writer does not provide any practical solution to reduce the burning problem of women-trafficking in Non-west.

McCormick has reflected her image as a western writer by representing the female character. She paints Lakshmi as sensual, emotional, submissive and innocent in all parts of the novel. And in the same way, she projects her as meek and fragile a woman who becomes ready to do whatever her stepfather says for improving her family's status. But, due to lack of knowledge and awareness, she does not know about herself being sold to a stranger woman by her stepfather. McCormick presents her as a beautiful and attractive object of voyeuristic male gaze.

On the surface level, McCormick seems doing something good by publicizing the pangs and panics of an innocent, uneducated girl. Not only that, she also seems adding an extra stone to the process of elimination of the burning problem of women trafficking in Non-western region. But the hidden reality is different. McCormick has her own political strategy in the creation of this piece of literature. She is trying to prove the Orientalist version of 'Whitemen's burden' to teach, to civilize and to rescue the uneducated Eastern people. Not only that, it also explores the discriminatory *execution* of the power *politics* i.e. the domination of the powerful one's over the powerless people. All these things are clearly evident in the novel when we go through the language minutely. *The point to be understood here is that by presenting such a prejudiced piece of work nothing can be done for betterment of human rights and girl trafficking. McCormick has done something good but that can not solve the problem in creative manner. Rather it only discourages the people from the Non-western region. At least, if she has shown Lakshmi freed by a Nepali or Indian human right activist, it would somehow help for the encouragement for those people. It is because for the elimination of such problems the people from the*

related region should be activated themselves. To present the active and agent role of any westeners is no other than the act of superiorizing them.

To sum up, the author's representation of Nepal, Nepalese people, families and societies etc. is questionable. The intention is to cater the oriental realities to please the western readers and present as truth. Her representation of Nepali societies is her politics of misrepresentation. Language is used to create a truth about the oriental realities. She misrepresents Nepali and Indian societies in order to show superiority of American world that function as an emancipatory role. Therefore the novel does not become exposition of the social realities rather becomes the product of the western mind through use of Americanized lens.

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