

Tribhuvan University

Rewriting Self in Contemporary Nepali Short Stories

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, TU

For the Approval of Graduate Research Committee, the Requirement for the Degree

of Master of Philosophy in English

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Kirtipur, Kathmandu

June 2024

Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

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Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to my respected internal supervisor Dr. Komal Phuyal, and my external supervisor Dr. Bal Bahadur Thapa at Central Department of English. This research paper would not be possible without their scholarly guidance, inspiration and consistent encouragement. I express my sincere gratitude for his kind cooperation and support on this project.

Likewise, I express my deep respect to Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota, Head of the Department and respected professors of the Department for suggestions while conducting the viva of the proposal. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my professors from the M. Phil program: Prof. Dr. Abhi Subedi, Prof. Dr. Anirudra Thapa, Prof. Dr. Dhruva Karki, Dr. Shiva Rijal, and Dr. Tara Lal Shrestha. I would like to remember Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma for his suggestions and feedback during the proposal viva.

This research is also dedicated to my parents Mr. Yam Bahadur Chhetry and Mrs. Ganga Devi Chhetry and to my wonderful wife Mrs. Haree Kala Thapa Chhetry. It would not have been possible without their consistent support and encouragement. I would like to remember my beautiful daughter Divyajyoti and my son Samrat for their love and inspiration. My heart would not be full of love and calmness without their presence in my life.

June 2024

Suresh Bahadur Chhetry

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Abstract

This study examines the idea of the Nepali self and claims that contemporary Nepali short stories have rewritten the self by taking departure after the People's Movement II in 2006. Before 2006, Nepali short stories attempted to present a unilinear self, meaning a coherent Nepali self-seeking within the national borders. The Nepali short stories focus on Nepali identity more than the self. A person wearing Nepali clothes, staying in Nepal, having fair skin, and belonging to certain castes, religions, and regions was more important than how much love and affection the person has for Nepal and Nepali. Because of this, people living in Terai, people from lower-caste communities, indigenous communities, and people beyond the Hindu religion were considered less Nepali. However, contemporary Nepali short stories have carried the stories of marginalized people and they have claimed new selves in Nepali. The research paper examines a few popular contemporary short stories like Bina Theeng's "Aani Pema" (2020), Ramlal Joshi's "Khel" (2016), Kumar Nagarkoti's "Timro Mirtyuko Samachar" and "Metaphysic" (2018), Nayan Raj Pandey's "Janani" (2021) and Durgaa Karki's "Kumari Prasnaharu" and "Chaumin" (2020). The ideas of Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Robert Howell, and Richard Rorty have been used for developing a theoretical framework to examine self in contemporary Nepali short stories.

Keywords: self, diverse, elusiveness, power, freedom, indigenous, confusion

Chapter I. Introduction to the Nepali Self in Selected Contemporary Short Stories

This dissertation paper takes the Nepali self as a subject of study. Different countries root for an ideal self. The mainstream people influence their ideal selves like community. This dissertation studies the Nepali self in contemporary short stories. William James in his book *The Principals of Psychology* (1980), defined self as "the total of all that a man calls his own" (19). His definition emphasizes the idea that the self includes not only one's physical possessions but also mental attributes and personal experiences. So, other's perspectives towards you can be defined as an identity that may not be true to one's own identity. In the last century, being a Nepali was a tough business. Even the literature focused on the mainstream Nepali people and characters. All the other people who were marginalized or considered less Nepali used to be in the supporting roles in their day-to-day lives and also in the literature. This research paper takes these contemporary short stories to see the Nepali self in the short stories.

Contemporary short stories like Bina Theeng's "Aani Pema" (2020), Ramlal Joshi's "Khel" (2016), Kumar Nagarkoti's "Timro Mirtyuko Samachar" and "Metaphysic" (2018), Nayan Raj Pandey's "Janani" (2021) and Durgaa Karki's "Kumari Prasnaharu" and "Chaumin" (2020) rewrite the self in new Nepali context. These short stories represent different Nepali communities from the Himalaya region to Terai. These characters in the short stories appear as a rampage to the social change in Nepali society. Some of the characters are the cause of change in society while some others are static, and some remain in confusion.

These stories not only represent contemporary Nepali people but also represent contemporary short fiction and likewise represent the 'Nepali self' in

contemporary short fiction. These short fictions show the change happening in Nepali society not only on the social level but also on the fictional level. Those shifts can be seen in different levels like religion, gender roles in fiction, caste roles, and use of language. So, the shift has been seen from the pure Hindu, upper cast, urban, male, and Nepali speaking character to the development of non-Hindu characters, female-led characters to non-urban characters.

This study derives from Foucault's 'Subject and Power', Lyotard's 'Rewriting Modernity' Howell's 'Subjectivity and the Elusiveness of the Self', Atkin's 'Self and Subjectivity', Rorty's 'Contingency, irony and solidarity' and Pratyoush Raj Onta's PhD. dissertation *The Politics of Bravery: A History of Nepali Nationalism* to develop a theoretical framework to analyze the self in these short stories mentioned above.

Statement of Problem

After the change in 2006, the literary response to the formation of the self-appeared differently as the socio-cultural norms were laid down differently. Nepali could get citizenship without a Dhaka Topi, The Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) community had influences in the community and was more open to the world. Who is a Nepali in the true sense? How do Nepali short stories respond to this phenomenon? What does Nepali short fiction have to say about it? This study centers on the problem of self in the changed context in which literature records the change in its expression. Thus, this research examines changes in the self in the Nepali society.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study is limited only to a few chosen short stories because of the research time limitation. The study focuses on "Aani Pema" from the novel *Yambunera* by Bina Theeng, "Khel" from *Yena* by Ramlal Joshi, "Timro Mirthuko Samachar" and "Silbhya" from *Mokshanta Kathmandu Fever* by Kumar Nagarkoti, "Janani" from

Jiyaraa by Nayanraj Pandaey and “Kumari Prashnaharu” and “Chaumin” from *Kumari Prasnaharu* by Durgaa Karki. This qualitative study will be based on the interpretation of stories and theories. This study does not claim to study the overall change in Nepali short fiction.

Significance of Study

In recent times there has been discussion about who is a true Nepali. Nepali was thought to be a brave person, (not afraid of death), a Gorkha, from Chhetri cast, Nepali was thought to be a person wearing dhaka topi, Dauraa surwal, Guneu Choli and living in Hilly region. This research paper studies who is a Nepali or what is Nepali self, the Nepali self is the same as they thought or not? This study studies various Nepali identities in contemporary Nepali short stories. It is even more important in the present context as new political system have emerged in Nepal. This study redraws the ‘Nepali self’ in the present context and how far we have gotten.

Rewriting Self

This research paper has taken this topic of debate for centuries where one Nepali is considered a less Nepali and the other more Nepali because of the identities created by the people in power. Because of these identities, even the Nepali literature focused on the Nepali self which was full of biases. With time it is important to study the Nepali self and see how far we have gotten. This paper takes a few contemporary short stories to examine the selves presented in the short stories. Astonishing progress in self is found in the study. The short stories took the characters from the margin, Madesh, Himalayan region, and hilly region as well. Most of the contemporary stories took the main characters from marginalized communities.

Like, in “Janani”, the main character Jamayanti is from Madesh but also a woman. Like this, Aani Pema is the main protagonist from the Himalayan region and

Janajaati. Some short stories like “Kumari Prashnaharu” portray the stories of virginity which were kept private in Nepali communities. A woman writer talking about virginity in a short story can be considered a change in the Nepali perspective and thus Nepali self. Likewise, some stories like “Khel” from *Aina* are a bit progressive but they are nostalgic about the loss of the old self. Last, but not least, “Timro Mirthuyuko Samachar” from *Mokshanta Kathmandu Fever* dismisses the concept of self and brings the narrative of various people towards a single character. This character has different selves for different people. This paper studies various selves in contemporary Nepali stories. Rewriting self can be justified with this study paper as new selves are emerging in Nepali short stories.

The Rationale Behind the Selection of the Texts

The research paper examines contemporary short stories and takes five of the short stories from different books. The study includes “Ani Pema” from *Yambunera* by Bina Theeng, “Khel” from *Yena* by Ramlal Joshi, “Timro Mirtiyu ko Samachar” from *Mokshanta Kathmandu Fiver* by Kumar Nagarkoti, “Kumari Parsnaharu” from *Kumari Prasnaharu* by Durgaa Karki and “Janani” from *Jiyaara* by Nayana Raaj Panday. These short stories bring the stories from the Himalayan region to the Terai region. Likewise, the texts bring the stories of marginalized people to people who are from so-called upper caste people. These stories are one of the most read short stories in contemporary times. Some of these characters like Anni Pema from “Ani Pema”, Basudaa in “Khel” and Jamyenti in “Janani” are the few characters going against the social norms.

These characters develop themselves as a progressive and revolutionary force in the society. Like this, in the story “Timro Mirtiyuko Samachar” most of the narrators are static and follow the social norms but the dead character “U” is a

mystery to everyone and has been living in his way. In the story "Kumari Prsnaharu" the main character "Manju" mostly stays static but tries to revolt against the norms, however, comes back to the old character and lives in confusion. Ani Pema from the story "Ani Pema" has been a character who can be seen as the agency to change the society. Likewise, Basudaa from "Khel" rewrites herself as a character who goes against society to fulfill her desires. However, Raghu from the same story stays in the past and rejects being a pervert. Jamyenti from "Janani" is seen as a developing character, who goes through ups and downs in her life at last she frees herself from the social norms and lives the way she wants.

One of the stories in this research paper "Aani Pema" by Bina Thing starts with the moral of Aani Pema and the young boy coming to the monastery and they develop intimacy with time. The young boy, Padam, hands a book which is about the material world and love. Like this, Padam shared that Aani Pema looks like his departed girlfriend. Aani feels for him. Aani Pema gets into self-struggle whether to meet Padam or not. At last, she leaves the monastery to be with Padam. Aani Pema is a character who questions the norms and follows her heart. Like this, "Khel" by Ramlal Joshi starts talking about Raghu and his childhood friends. Raghu has loved Rupa since his childhood. Rupa does the same but Raghu goes to study in India and later in Madesh. Rupa gets married but Raghu is still in love with Rupa. After a few years, he went to see a girl but the girl agreed to marry him in one condition that is she will still meet her boyfriend after her marriage.

He rejects the marriage and comes to Kathmandu, where he sees Malla Kaka from his village having an affair with a very young girl, younger than Malla Kaka's daughter. Likewise, his house owner Basudaa Vaaju tries to seduce him and have sex with him but he rejects her and goes to the village. Raghu in this story stays moral

and lives in the past. In the story "Timro Mirtyouko Samaachar" the character U is a mystery to everyone who is a compassionate and loving person who leaves a legacy behind him. The character U is reported to be dead but he lives in the memory of different people in different ways. He supports various people. All these people have various stories about the character U. In this story, the character U does not follow the social norms and lives the way he wants but this character seems to know people and life.

In the story "Kumari Prashnaharu" by Durgaa Karki, the main character Manju is static and wants to stay in the social norms and tries to stay a virgin before her marriage. She falls in love with a struggling musician and singer Aasim but as she cannot give time and physical pleasure he falls for another woman. Manju has mixed feelings towards him love and hatred as Aashim falls and probably sleeps with her. Her heart stays in the past but her body moves on.

In the story "Janani" by Nayanraaj Pandey Durgaalal gets married to a beautiful girl named Jamyanti whose initial name was Alingajamaa. She was in love with a boy called Aphataaba but as she was from a Hindu family her father and brother killed the boy and were married to Durgalal. Durgalal died because of his sickness. After that Jamyanti was used by many people but at last she changed her religion and became Muslim. In this story, Jamyanti becomes a change agent. So, these stories are seen to rewrite the history of short stories.

Methodology

This research paper takes the ideas of Foucault, Lyotard, Howell, Kim Atkin, Pratush Raj Onta, and Rorty as theoretical insights to look at these short stories. The research is a qualitative study, which analyzes the texts from the aforementioned theoretical glasses. Michel Foucault talks about power and subject and how humans

become the subjects of power. He talks about human subjects in the beginning paragraphs as he writes, "My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects" (777). Foucault talks about how human beings are made subjects by various things culture, power, or situation. Michel Foucault aims to trace the historical development of how individuals in our society are transformed into subjects through various processes of objectification. He identifies three modes of objectification that operate to turn human beings into subjects within our cultural context

On the other hand, Richard Rorty, in the book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, reflects:

One will not have impressed one's mark on the language but, rather, will have spent one's life shoving about already coined pieces. So, one will not have had an I at all. One's creations, and one's self, will just be better or worse instances of familiar types. This is what Harold Bloom calls "the strong poet's anxiety of influence," his "horror of finding himself to be only a copy or a replica. (Rorty 24)

In this excerpt, the writer is explaining that the self is not stable. It can be either better or worse, it cannot be the same. Even if someone tries to write about him it will not be the exact rather it will be a replica. So, it is hard to find an exact self. Even the contemporary Nepali short fiction the self seems to be unstable and impossible to objectify it.

It is interesting to see Howell's perspective about self as well as how he talks about a philosophical friend who asked 'Where am I' and goes on asking where he is. He tried to observe and look into himself but he has not been able to find himself.

When his friends talk about place and point his body, he says that that's my body but I cannot find myself. That shows the elusiveness of the self.

To sum up, these stories carry stories from the Terai, Hilly region, and Himalayan regions and bring characters from different castes, and ethnic groups. The characters in these stories are diverse and represent most of the characters that are seen in Nepali society. This research paper brings a fresher perspective to Nepali short stories while looking at them from the perspective of the self and how the self is changing. With the changing times, this paper provides an opportunity to see Nepal as diverse as it is. However, contemporary Nepali short fictions are not found to be taking the characters from LGBTIQ communities. It is found in the research that the self is like fluid and it changes according to the time. So, there is no fixed self. Now, it is more so. The Nepali self has always remained a heterogeneous one.

Pratyoush Onta on his PhD dissertation asserts about nationalism: “Caplan mentions that soldiering in foreign armies continues to be "stigmatized by articulate voices from within the dominant groups . . . as a betrayal of national honour" (53). Soldering in the foreign lands was considered as anti-nationalist because the nationalism was only limited in Nepal. But with the political change and recent developments people living abroad can vote in Nepali elections as well.

Like this, Pratyoush Onta and Michael Hutt, in their book *Political Change and Public Culture in Post-1990 Nepal*, assert:

The setting of this book, Nepal, is regularly described as being an 'a country in transition, and Nepal has indeed undergone radical political change since 1990 when a 'People's Movement' led by the Nepali Congress Party and an alliance of communist parties forced the king to dismantle the Panchayat structures under which Nepal had been governed since 1962. The political changes that

occurred between 1990 and 2013 include the establishment of a multi-party parliamentary system, the ten-year Maoist insurgency from 1996–2006, and the stymieing of a 2005 'royal coup' by a popular movement for democracy in the spring of 2006. (2)

These lines describe Nepal's significant political transformations from 1990 to 2013, highlighting its status as a country in transition. The pivotal change began with the 1990 People's Movement, led by the Nepali Congress Party and communist alliances, which pressured the king to dismantle the Panchayat system, a centralized, party-less governance structure in place since 1962. This movement led to the establishment of a multi-party parliamentary system. Subsequently, Nepal endured a ten-year Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006, which sought to overthrow the monarchy and establish a republic. In 2005, King Gyanendra's attempt to consolidate power through a royal coup was thwarted by a popular pro-democracy movement in 2006, resulting in the restoration of parliamentary democracy. Additionally, the Madhes/Tarai region witnessed significant unrest in 2007 and 2008, driven by demands for greater political representation for the Madhesi people. These tumultuous events culminated in two elections for the Constituent Assembly, aimed at drafting a new, inclusive constitution, marking a critical phase in Nepal's ongoing democratic transition. This shows how Nepal was before 1990. This talks about political change occurred in the history of Nepal. This study studies how this political change and other affects Nepali self. Onta also asserts that "Gurkhas are known all over the world for their bravery and skills as the finest soldiers in the world. However, in the country of their origin, Nepal, their existence has hardly been officially acknowledged" (ix). Nepali living in abroad are more Gorkhali than people living in Nepal. However, Nepali people do not

acknowledge as such officially. This also raises a question of Nepali self. Who are Nepali selves?

Plan of Dissertation

This dissertation begins with Chapter I, which introduces the topic and outlines the theoretical framework, grounding the study in relevant theories and literature. Chapter II delves into the primary text, offering a comprehensive review of existing texts, discussing the relevance of the study, and exploring the nature of the self from various perspectives. In Chapter III, the focus shifts to contemporary approaches to understanding the self, analyzing its current state and implications within the Nepali context, considering cultural, historical, and social influences. Finally, Chapter IV synthesizes the findings, drawing conclusions about the self, discussing broader implications, and offering recommendations for future research. The dissertation aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the concept of self, particularly within the cultural framework of Nepal.

Chapter II. Contemporary Readings of Nepal Short Stories

2.1. Introduction

This research discusses the empirical and textual reviews of the short stories. The research paper takes the contemporary short stories “Aani Pema” from *Yambunera* by Bina Theeng, “Khel” from *Aina* by Ramlal Joshi, “Timro Mirtyuko Samachar” from *Mokshanta Kathmandu Fever* by Kumar Nagarkoti, “Janani” from *Jiyaara* by Nayan Raj Panday and “Kumari Prasnaharu” from *Kumari Prashnaharu* by Durgaa Karki. These short stories rewrite self in the new Nepali context. These short stories represent the Nepali society from the Himalayan region to the Terai region. The researcher takes the reviews of the abovementioned texts from different available sources from the internet and their perspective while reading the texts. Likewise, this chapter discusses the different modalities of studying social relationships, power, subjectivity, and classes from various philosophers'/ writers' perspectives. These modalities consist of writers like Michel Foucault, Lyotard, Rorty, Howell, and Onta.

2.2. Texts and Contexts: Some Interpretations

This section reviews the secondary sources of the short stories that I have used in the study. I have primarily gathered sources from online and internet sources as a substantial body of literature has not yet been primarily gathered in contemporary Nepali short fiction. The fictions that this study has chosen for analysis are also comparative sentences. Also, I have translated the sections quoted from the source that is currently available in Nepali language.

Since major studies as the selected stories have not yet been available, I have depended on online reviews and general opinion pieces published in newspapers, online portals, and the like.

One of the newspaper reviews done by Jiwan Chhetri in KantipurDaily discussed the story “Kumari Prashnaharu” and how the writer has presented the stories and sensitivity of a virgin girl and how saving her virginity resulted in the separation of her love affairs. The reviewer discusses "writes the story of broken relationship because bad relationship she also writes the story of Kumari which is broken saving the virginity" (n. pag.). The reviewer also discusses the other stories and sees that in most of the stories the patriarchy is playing a main role. The reviewer claims, "In most of the stories the situation has been the strong foundation. However, some characters are seen as connected with the incidents. The characters, who raise their voice against patriarchal society, do strongly but like in the society they had to face the consequences" (n.pag.). In these excerpts, the reviewer analyzes the obviousness of the patriarchal-based stories, and he further claims that the characters who are going against the social norms are also getting victimized in the stories like in the society. However, he further appreciates the ending in one of the stories called "Sanghar". It is hard to change self when society believes otherwise. Passive revolution can be seen in the story.

Another reviewer is Pranik Koyu in *Seto Pati*. Pranik Koyu in a letter form for one of her relatives is looking from a feminist perspective as she uses sentences like "you might slide like Manju in the sweet talks of a boyfriend like so-called social agents or who those who want to be boyfriends" (N.pag.). She further states "You might be happy with the sweet and slippery words of so-called social agent boyfriend or those who want to be boyfriends" (n.pag.). She goes on to criticize society and people for being two tongues people: "These stories are the stories of teenagers and youths. There is also the color of sex touched by social feelings, economic, social and

political ways which is not yet accepted by the two tongues society" (n. pag.). In this way, she asks, "Is it a necessity for you to be with a man to live your life?"

Do you need men to live life? The reviewer went on to write about the social thought process and shows how biased for women. If a widow marries a man after her husband dies then people criticize her and if the woman's husband cannot satisfy the needs of the woman and if the woman has a physical relationship even then society talks bad about woman's character. The reviewer also talks about the criticism when on the first night, if there is no blood in the bed sheets. At last, the reviewer asks a question: Why did she name the book "Kumari Prasnaharu"? So, the reviewer doubted the writer was in the trap of the market. Sabita Acharya writes in *Annapurna Daily* that although the book is the writer's first book she is impressed by the quality of the writer. The reviewer writes that even she questioned if she had been in the right relationships in the past. She writes that the stories in the book represent society in its real face: "People become different after falling in love as is said in the story titled "Kumari Prashnaharu." Becoming happy in small things, and then becoming sad in a moment. Cannot stay still, cannot do any work, immersing in imagination... this is only a story but this story has carried the whole world and lives in it" (n. pag.).

The reviewer writes that being in love is a different feeling that makes people happy and sad in no time. People won't be able to think much. Although, that is just a story that story has carried all the realities of the world. She further talks about how the love of parents is in the same story. The reviewer feels that the stories are awesome. Finally, she writes that it will be a pressure for the writer as her first book is wonderful, so she has to come up with better stories next time around. Agyat Luitel writes in *Shilaapatra* that the reviewer did not know the writer at first but later realized that she was the review writer of "Parsad". The reviewer does not seem to be

impressed by the first story and the use of a couple of main characters but liked the story called "Chaumin". Luitel reflects, "The story shook my brain after reading Chaumin. The story was more like the story that one has experienced rather than the imaginative story. It makes anyone think while reading the wife taking the responsibility of the house after the husband left the wife and its impact on the daughter" (n. pag.). In these lines, the reviewer writes that the story Chawmin shoots her brain as the story represents the stories that the reviewer has seen where the husband leaves the wife and the wife takes the responsibility of upbringing the daughter and the impact on the child. The reviewer believes that all the stories are the same but with different characters. "It felt like a lot of stories which needed to be covered are not covered because of repeating different characters in one plot." Like this, Agyat Luitel did not like how sexual life is being presented. She writes, "If sexual content comes in any story, it should be presented artistically. Otherwise, it looks like a sex story of the market rather than a literary piece. We have to think on that matter." Most of the time the reviewer has been critical of either the writing of the writer the plot, or the characters. In one instance, the reviewer appreciates the writing of Karki and calls her characters revolutionary. She argues, "It does not suit to say exactly revolutionary but as I did not get another word which justifies the word unconventional that's why I want to say revolutionary" (n.pag). As she does not have other words for unconventional characters she calls revolutionary.

As Shushil Babu Basnet writes, "In this collection of stories, there are thirteen stories. In each story, it is seen that women characters' experiences, thinking, and life struggles have been expressed. The reviewer finds that most of the stories have almost women's thoughts and life struggles. He also thinks that most of the characters are young and revolutionary. The reviewer writes about various stories in the book. In

one of the stories, he becomes curious about the thief's perspective about right or wrong. He questions, "Is there a right work in the eyes of a thief? How will the ethical society regard his/her right work?... Can a thief have the right to love?" (n.pag.) The reviewer questions the integrity of a thief for his good deeds. Like this, he also feels that almost all the plots are the same as he writes, "If we look in the whole most of the stories are like followers in a garland which are connected" (n.pag.). Like this, he likes the teenagers' communication and love affairs being in some of the stories. He writes, "It is a beautiful thing to show in some stories the real side of love while presenting the teenage relationship and love. For example; the characters' language which is used in Facebook, style, and similes. The writing is so realistic which is written mentioning the excuses for a fight." The reviewer likes the clarity even in the first book of the writer. At last, the reviewer left the evaluation of the story in the hands of the targeted youth group.

Ram Chandra Shrestha writes a review of *Yambunera*. In the beginning, he begins to write the review by saying "How does it look while looking at the center from the margin?" then he talks about North America and Europe. He talks about the role reversal of developed countries and developing countries because he believes that nothing is stable. He believes that Bina Thing's *Yambunera* adds more to that center and margin role reversal. The reviewer explains the meaning of 'yambunera' which means near Kathmandu in the Tamang language. The writer mostly looking the stories from the perspective of center and margin. As he asserts:

The Centre likes to move; it does not stay silent. The margin has to bear the consequences of the change at the center... Kathmandu Valley wants to save the jungle in the nearby hills because it filters the dust, smoke, and pollution. That's why it was declared as the reservation forest under the guise of

authority and power. The center does not care the lives depended on the jungle living in the margin. (n. pag.)

In the excerpts above the reviewer talks about how the center likes movement and when the center moves people around the center are affected by it. Kathmandu produces dust and pollution and the jungle nearby is used to purify the pollution but they did not think about the lives that depended on the jungle. He further writes about the how army is sent to confiscate the sickle of Sommaya: "Sommaya used to cut the dried firewood. She used to make alcohol out of carrying firewood Then Sommaya would manage medicine for mother and copies and pen for sisters." Sommaya arranges all the things using the sickle arranging medicine for their mother copies pens for sisters and food for her family but Kathmandu does not like what she does.

The writer asserts about how the center plays a role in most of the stories of *Yambunera*. He gives an example of "Aaitimaya", "Sikofive" and "Byand Bhaale" which are affected by the center and its power. He writes, "But in this, the center and the margin is unseemly present" (17.) The relationship between the center and the margin is hidden. "The relationship of center and margin also appears in the patriarchal society. The men with Inequality in gender relationships, property, power, and authority are the center and the margin is the women. The center feels that margin is for the center to have. It can have the margin at any time" (20). Here, Shrestha writes about how patriarchal society is also a center and women are margin. Centre thinks that margin is for them. The Centre can use the margin whenever it wants. He claims:

Blind tradition is the center whereas desire for freedom is the margin. The blind tradition has obstructed the desire for freedom. Margin has to move for

the center, for its desire. That's why the relationship between Ani Pema and the tradition of the Gumba is another kind of relationship. It might be felt that sending into Gumba can be because of poverty, culture, and other elements as well. But if it is minutely looked at, these elements are also created by the center, not self-developed. (n. pag.)

In the excerpt above the reviewer writes that the blind tradition is the center but uncontrolled desires are the margin. The blind tradition tries to tie the uncontrolled desires. The margin has to move according to the center. That's why Ani Pema is the margin and the tradition around Gumba is the center. Although it can be felt that because of poverty, people are sent to Gumba or because of faith. But if we look into it in depth all these things are made by the center. The writer ends his review by restating that most of the stories show the relationship between the center and margin. So, struggles between the marginalized self and the centralized self can be found in the review.

Gyanu Adhikari, in *Shilapatra*, writes about the book *Yambunera*. She claims that:

The chosen characters and situations in this collection of the story effectively present one marginalized class, society, culture, and their life experience and the fate of living in the darkness under the lamp. The story does not have big events. The stories have presented the stories of the detailed reality of common people which are seen by society and feel ordinary, all the people have seen it but act like never seen it. (n.pag.)

In the excerpts above Ganu Adhikari talks about the stories have day to day-to-day characters in the margin of the city and how their lives have been impacted.

According to her, the stories do not have huge events happening but how things are

changing with small actions. The actions are seen by people but have not noticed their impacts. So, she likes the way the stories are presented and how the laypeople are the main characters.

The reviewer has also quoted a few lines from the book stating that the writing represents women and shows the perspective of society towards men and women. Like this, the writer talks about how the story is presenting the caste system and inter-castes marriages. The reviewer goes on to write about how the change is affecting the lives around Kathmandu but also talks about how some of the people like Sommaya are not affected by the change in time. Like this, the writer also talks about culture and a few short lines of Tamang language presented in the stories. She concludes her review by writing that the stories represent the lives around Kathmandu and the women and youth lives uniquely.

Prakash Thamsuhang makes the following claims about *Yambunera*: "The story does not have a revolutionary side and political overdose but things which need to be said and things needed to be heard is said in artistic ways. This might be the power of creativity" (2). In the excerpts above the writer talks about the stories not being revolutionary and also not having a political overdose. But the stories have been able to convey what they wanted to share artistically. The writer talks about the writings about local stories and also quotes Gavitri Sivaak, "The voice of voiceless should be spoken" (2). He writes further that nowadays even the voiceless are speaking in various artistic ways. He sheds light on, the "need to gather the courage to fight for one's interest and existence. He adds, "*Yambunera* is a creative revolution by the community which is kept as endangered caste by the state and considered as the people who cannot speak" (2). These excerpts mean the voiceless people are

collecting the bravery to speak. The stories are about the revolution by the people who are listed as the cast about to extinct.

According to the reviewer, Bina Theeng has used most of the characters from the Tamnag community as other writers like Nanayan Raaj Pandey uses from western Terai and R.K. Narayan uses characters from Tamilnadu. Bina Theeng has used characters like Aani Pema in her first story:

This story is written on the ritual of staying Aani in the Buddhist religion...

That story shows the psychological conflict between love and responsibility, Gumab's daily ritual, and Buddhist philosophy. When the youth who wants to study the Buddhist religion comes into the life of Aani who has left the family life and is devoted to Buddhist religion then the love overshadows the religion.

Love is also a human right although religion and culture are in their places.

(n.pag.)

In the above excerpt, the reviewer talks about how the first story talks about the Boudha religion culture, and routine but it also talks about the love story between Aani Pema and the boy. The reviewer recognizes the importance of religion and culture but also talks about the right love. At last, the reviewer writes that although one or two stories are more dramatic like the film overall *Yambunera* is the latest story in the Nepali literature which has depth in it.

Like this, Gauri Tamu, in *Global News* reviews the book *Yambunera* where she talks about how women's freedom is not about earning for survival or being free in menstruation. As the reviewer claims:

Yembunera proves surface understanding and notion wrong which says that indigenous women are independent, free, and economically independent.

Women's freedom is not only about ordinary property and discounts in

mensuration. This is also a right to live as equal to males and live like male humans. The hills of pain of Tamang women are hard to explore as they are marginalized by the state and also by their community. (n. pag.)

In the excerpt above Gauri Tamu writes that the stories presented in the book have proved that this ethnic group's women are self-governed, free, and economically independent is surfaced understanding. She writes women's freedom is not only about getting a discount in mensuration, it is also about living life as humans like males. The Tamang women are double marginalized by the state and their community so they have mountainous pain which is hard to find all.

Khim Lamichhane Kaaji reviews *Jiyara* he begins his review by talking about the writing style and ingredients in stories of the writer how the writer is presenting stories and how the writer has included diverse characters and situations in a single story. Likewise, he also talks about the use of colloquial language in the stories. "The first story has begun with "Janani." This has put forward a main story of a woman who is frustrated because her love was made a failure." The reviewer begins with the first story itself and talks about the pain of the woman who is frustrated as she is separated from her lover. The reviewer most of the time talks about what is in the story and quotes what the writer has written in "Daimaara", "There is no friend who is close like books. We do not only understand the characters or the situations but we understand ourselves as well. Reading a book is also a meditation as well. It is also searching oneself in the letters." This can be translated as there is no other close friend than the book. Reading books does not only provide knowledge about characters or events but we can understand ourselves. Reading a book is a meditation. It is also finding oneself in the letters.

The reviewer talks about how different stories bring up various problems from Madesh. Some talk about domestic violence, poverty, and injustices on the base of religion. As the reviewer says,

“Jiyara” is the story of the innocent women who are burnt by the acid, who are forced to die of injustice and violence and live with domination and exploitation as bride parents could not give dowry and other stuff in marriage...At the end of the story, it is shown the flick of women's movement against the domination of women when a woman says “ I don’t want move knife through my heart.” (n.pag.)

In the above excerpt, the reviewer talks about one of the stories in *Jiyaara* called “Jiyaara” and talks about how the story presented the story of women and their painful stories of suffering either their parents not being able to provide enough dowry or in other matters. At the end of the story one of the women saying 'I don't want to put weapon on my heart' is also taken as revolutionary. The reviewer writes, "The collection of stories has almost covered all the stories of Madesh. Some of the stories are presented as the catalyst between imaginary, fantasy, and realistic stories. In some of the stories, it is shown that the interrelationship between tradition and present situations. Many sub-stories have been woven in the single title of the story." Here, the reviewer talks about how the stories represent the stories about Madesh. Some stories are in the middle of imagination and reality. Some of the stories are connections between traditional and present situations.

Nepal Live Today reviews, in the storyline Nepal Live Today have written that "the stories are said to have combined reality and myth to tell the tales of political corruption, patriarchy, and social injustice. Then the writer talks about the writing

style and what is been presented in the stories according to the publisher. The writer also quoted the writer himself,

I have tried to create a distinct atmosphere for each of my stories where one can find multiple avatars of the same character, multiple plots in the same story, and multiple settings,” Pandey said. “The readers can expect to find themselves in a carousel following the characters to different dimensions in time and space. The characters aren’t rigid, nor are their arcs. (N.pag.)

In the excerpts above Pandey has shared about the settings of his stories and talks about what the readers can expect from the stories. Like this, he talks about his characters which are not rigid and nor arcs.

Himali Khabar reviews *Jiyara's* writing about curfew because of the coronavirus pandemic and quotes the writer when the writer is excited and nervous. The review further writes, "The writer Poudel has referred that many characters in one character, many stories in one story, various situation and mixture of reality and myth have tried to make "Jiyaraa" unique literature. He states that by reading the stories of "Jiyaraa" the readers at once would reach the reality and dreamlike world." In the excerpts above, the reviewer reports the writer where the writer talks about his character's multiple faces, multiple stories in a single story, diverse environment, and a mixture of myth and reality in a story. So, Jiyaraa is joining different realities. While reading Jiyara readers will reach reality and dream state at once.

Renuka G.C. reviews *Jiyara*, the writer explains “Jiyara” as “Jiyara is the inner immortal authority where there is clear knowledge of what is right and wrong, heart.” That means Jiyara is that immortal authority that knows what is right and wrong. That is heart. She further writes that the thirteen stories that are included in "Jiyara" do not only touch hearts about also poke hearts and compel us to see

ourselves in the mirror and analyze ourselves. The writer talks about a few stories that impressed her "Jiyara", "Daimaraa" and others. The writer states about Janani:

"Janani" is the story of Niphisaa aka Jamayanti. "Janani" is a simple story that talks about composition in comparison to other stories in the collection. How simpler the story the harder the experience of Jamayanti Jamayanti had become Niphisaa in her interest but her parents made her Jamayanti from Niphisaa and married her body to Durgalal with a lot of dowries. Jamayanti became calm and numb for the time being but looked like a person who had a sea in her womb. That's why she says I came here not as Durgalal's wife but as the dead body. Neither the corpse is loved by somebody nor the corpse loves somebody. (N.pag.)

In the excerpts above the reviewer talks about how Jamayanti turned into Nishipha in love how she became Jamayanti again because of family pressure and how they got her to marry Durgalal who was weak and ill, giving him dowry. And quotes Janani was saying that I am not here as Durgalal's wife but as a corpse. The dead body doesn't love anyone, and no one loves the dead body.

At last, the reviewer talks about how different characters go around in Kathmandu, Nepalgunj, Baluwaatar, and Singhadarbar but they come back to Madesh and are regarded as Madeshi. She talks about how everything changes when they reach to hills all the vegetables have different names when they reach the hills but the Madeshi is always uneducated and uncivilized. As she narrates,

There are people from Pahaad, and here people from Madesh. Their boss and her servant. There are white color people and here are poor and necked. There are people with voices and living beings and here voiceless, numb. They are strong people and they are weak. There are civilized citizens, here uncivilized,

rustic. Even now although there is no physical fence the invisible Dusdungaa of discrimination has made and excited since the past. That Dusdhungaa is there still today. (N.pag.)

In the excerpts above the reviewer quotes those lines to show how the writer presents Madeshi's problem in the stories. Mostly, the lines talk about the narrative of looking at Madeshi people from the mainstream or the so-called people from the hill. Madeshi people are seen from a binary perspective as others, as slaves, uncivilized, uneducated, and voiceless. And also talks about the invisible Dashgajaa which was created in the past and is still there.

In the last few lines of the review, the reviewer talks about the writing style of the writer and grammar and book color. In a nutshell, the reviewer seems to like the writer and says that the book is readable.

Aina is one of the books which the researcher took into consideration while working on a thesis. Here are some of the reviews of the short storybook. Yagyan Raaj Joshi writes that Ramlal Joshi *Aina* is the voice of far western region. In the beginning, the reviewer talks about Ramlal Joshi how the book was released, and how it has been received well. The reviewer thinks that the storybook has been able to bring the stories of the far western regions into the mainstream:

It seems that the objective of the story being published by the writer Joshi is to showcase the actual lifestyle of far-western throughout the country with his story collection *Aaina*. *Aaina* has presented the geography of far-western, social situation. *Aaina* has presented Doteli and Thaaruu communities' problems and also the folk cultures of Doteli and Thaaruu communities interestingly and realistically. (n.pag.)

In the excerpts above the reviewer talks about how the writer presented the problems of far far-western region of Nepal. It has presented the geography of far western, social settings, Doteli and Thaar community. Like this, the storybook has been able to present the problems of the Doteli and Tharu communities, realistically, writes the reviewer.

Later in the review, the reviewer talks about what other people say about the book. According to the reviewer, Badrinaat Binaadi said in a program that the book has entered post-modernism in the far western region. Like this, he also writes what another speaker says about the book in the program. Keshab Lamsaal writes in his title that the storybook *Aaina* is a representative of marginalized people. The reviewer writes "The book *Aaina* making the treatment of subaltern in the society as the main story, Joshi has emphasized how the youths look at the social, cultural scenario of the present situation." Here the reviewer writes that in the storybook, Ramlal Joshi is trying to represent how the youths look at culture in the present scenario where the stories are representative of the subaltern class.

In the beginning, the reviewer writes about the object "Aaina" and how it represents without biases as it is a lifeless object and goes on to say that the book *Aaina* also is a reflection of society in the literary form. The reviewer mostly talks about how the book has been a reflection of society and a true "Aaina" for society. Around the last section, the reviewer ends his review by saying:

The collection is excellent because of the subjects raised by the Joshi. The presentation style is alive. Joshi's skill is to include sociology, culture, and the language of the subaltern, etc. Joshi's *Aaina* which put the local subjects at the center of the collection has presented the social reality, objective presentation, and characters' inner pictures in the stories. (N.pag)

The reviewer talks about how the storybook has been able to present the subaltern's stories at its core. The reviewer mostly looks at the book through his subaltern spectacles.

In *Prashaasan*, Wishwaash Kumar Sejuwaal, under the title "Hilomaa Phulekaa Ramlal Joshi ra Aina" argues that Ramlal and Aaina are both the flowers of dirt. Here the reviewer talks about his life and how he slept and could not sleep after two and later checking the news he got to know about Ramlal Joshi and his book *Aaina*. This review does not look like a reviewer but rather a fan of Ramlal Joshi talking about him and his writings: "The stories are from the remotest places! I have not been able to read but I have heard some of the importance of the book" (N.pag). Here the reviewer talks about the stories that are from remote places but he has not been able to read them but has heard about a few important things. In the writing, the writer also talks about politicized awards where an ex-winner of Madan Puraskaar says that the writer is from the 'Congress' party. The writer ends his writing by wishing all the best to the writer.

Himal Khabar writes in the Title "Sangarsako Pratibimba", Reflection of Struggle. In the beginning, the reviewer writes about the abject mirror and how it reflects things and then goes on quoting Ramlal Joshi himself where he says:

Those who lost doing all the struggle throughout or those who can defeat the time. Those who came to the theater of the world could touch the lives of many. Those who went through heart and shook the heart. Those who were reflected in the heart's mirror and have been reflecting, those characters are there in my small world. This is their story. (N.pag.)

Here the writer talks about who are his characters. Here he explains his characters are those who were defeated while struggling or those who won the time. Here the

reviewer mentioning about heart's mirror and self-reflection which conveys about self rather than identity.

Himal Khabar presents how the novel carries the smell of the far-western region. Then gives a summary of various stories. "In "Khel" shirakako story the newspaper shows the size of the dream of people and the friction of the situation and also repeats that it is also art to live in the theater of life." Here, the reviewer says in the story "Khel", the writer talks about the size of the dream and friction whereas in "Rangamanch" he talks about the art of living life. Then the reviewer talks about how the writer can pick the reality in his book. Like this, the reviewer criticizes the writer for not being able to pick the right words even for the people whom he is writing for. "The words are found which will poke the people on whose side the story has been written. More than necessary use of Doteli and Tharu language might freak out readers from the Nepali language." Here, the reviewer talks about the use of the Doteli language and Tharu language more than necessary making Nepali readers irritated. The writer also talks about being more imaginative for twists and turns. At last, the reviewer ends his writing by talking about the smoke and how a heart would ooze with the smell of the smoke: "After the long draught when there is raining, when a drop of the rain touches the land their smoke of the dust blows. If you are walking at the same time the smell of the smoke will make your heart ooze. While reading Joshi's story, the fragrance mixed with the struggle from the far-western region oozes in the same way" (n.pag.). Here the reviewer talks about what happens when there is rains after a big draught and when the rain touches the dust there is a smell. If you are walking and smell the smoke of the dust which oozes your heart. You will feel the same smell of struggle of the far western region while reading the stories of Joshi.

Another reviewer Sanskriti Rijal writes on *Fresh Nepal News* with the title "Nepali Samaajko Aina", a mirror of Nepali society. The reviewer begins by talking about the country and its multi-caste, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural country. She writes; "Aaina" is the story of a person who lived and experienced sorrows and happiness while living the life. The root of illiteracy still exists in Nepal's far western region. Where women are living the life with sorrow and violence." Here, the reviewer writes that the "Aina" is the story of pain and happiness which can be seen while walking and passing by. There are strong roots of lack of education in the far western region of Nepal till present. Where women are in the maze of pain and violence. The reviewer further writes that the stories are trustworthy while looking at the Western situation of Nepal. The education that is provided in the community is that studying is not important and what is important is to earn a living whether is it selling sand or grinding stones. "The illiterate society in the story has given the education to the children not to study but to work on gravel and sand to live life. The illusion can be found that life can only be lived selling gravel and sand in the children from the illiterate place not with the bright light of education." Her, reviewer talks about how the children are being taught to do work on sand and grinding stones instead of studying and getting the knowledge. The reviewer further talks about human trafficking and also talks about women looking for men to make their daughters sex workers and men looking for men for their wives. In the last part, the reviewer talks about how the writer writes about various literary fields and talks about the book winning the Madan Purashkar.

Another book is *Mokshata: Kathmandu Fever* one of the researchers and reviewers wrote a review of a couple of Nagarkoti's books and a long review indeed. Manoj Wishwkarma writes in a sub-title "hajaarau Kathmandu Hajaarau Phibhar",

Thousands of Kathmandus and Thousands of fevers. The reviewer begins with “In Mokshanta: Kathmandu Fiver emotions, beauty and philosophy are collapsed/ they are dissolved. The story of Kathmandu fever would run through Kathmandu/ throughout the plot but one could not find the central idea because of the decentralization of the stories.” The excerpts above can be read as emotions, beauty, and philosophy are collapsed/ dissolved in *Mokshanta: Kathmandu Fever*.

Kathmandu’s Mokshanta Fiver's story would make a run throughout Kathmandu/ throughout the plot but because of the decentralization could not get the central idea. He goes on to write, "The colors of Kathmandu were like this when reading seven times, they would feel splendid all the seven times. I had not found the model of such storytelling before." The colors of Kathmandu fever are as such which would feel wonderful seven times when reading seven times. I have not found such a rare-style story storytelling anywhere.

The reviewer writes “Usko Mirtyuko Khabar is a long story with a design to be read holding the heart.” (N.pag) Usko mirtyuko khabar” dil thaam ke padhnu parne lambetaan tathaa lobh laagdo dijaain ho. 'Metaphysic' is the story phase out with the father who is dying because of cancer in front of his own eyes." These excerpts read that "Usko Mirtyuko Khabar" is a long and tempting design that is out to be read with patience. The metaphysic of one's dying father because of cancer in front of eyes. Then the reviewer talks about the prostate poetry of Nagarkoti and quotes a poem itself a long one with music and all. Then at last the reviewer writes “In the Mathiko Something Like Poetry Kumar Nagarkoti who wants to bury Nagarkoti has brutally murdered six Kumar Nagarkotis in “Ghatmandu” other addiction, with a pistol. Is there no connection between my poetry and his addiction’s murder..?” (np.) In the excerpts above the reviewer in the above, something like a poem showing how Kumar

Nagarkoti has been able to murder six Kumar Nagarkotis in “Ghatmandu” and also asks whether there is a connection between his poetry and Nagarkoti’s addiction to murder.

Relevance of the Study

These reviewers are looking at the primary texts from different spectacles some of them have looked at the ideas of feminism, subaltern perspectives, patriarchal domination, center and margin, castes, classes, geographical perspective, religion vs free, reviewers talking about writing style, language use, and also about love-hate relationship, women being typical on saving their virginity, religious dogmatic believes dowry system. Some of the reviewers have talked about metaphysics, stream-of-consciousness writing techniques, and others. They have focused on life struggles, the struggle of women and their pain, and culture.

But they have not addressed the Nepali self. Why are Nepali short stories written in such a way and why they are writing stories of the same culture and same people? What changes have contemporary short stories brought? This research paper studies different types of selves and sees how these selves are present in society now, how they are evolving, how the dominant selves in the past are not prominent anymore, and also the journey of the self itself. All the discussions and perspectives that are mentioned in the reviews talk about gender, patriarchal norms, center, and margin, religious perspectives vs freedom, love vs culture and religion, feminist perspective, class struggle existing in the society, religious views versus atheist views, and traditional perspective vs modern perspective. It is interesting to discuss the different self-existed in the society and no one has talked about various selves. Writers and theorists have talked about various perspectives but have not talked about the various self-existed in the societies. While observing these stories one can observe

selves and their struggle like Madeshi self vs Pahadiya self, male self vs female self, within the female self, there is higher class women self vs lower class women self. Looking from a resistance perspective, these selves are also static self, progressive self, revolutionary self, traditional self, religious self, atheist self, and other selves.

2.3 Contingency of the Self at Present

Studying the self needs a theoretical basis here the researcher brings some of the best writers who explain about self. This research paper takes Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', Jean-Francois Lyotard's "Rewriting Modernity", Robert Howell's "Subjectivity and the Elusiveness of the Self" and Richard Rorty's "Contingency, irony, and solidarity" as a theoretical basis to study self in the contemporary short stories. These are the theoretical basis for interpreting the self (s) in contemporary stories.

Michel Foucault talks about power and subject in the *Chicago Journals*, "The Subject and Power". He talks about human subjects in the beginning paragraphs as he writes, "My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects" (777). Here Foucault talks about how human beings are made subjects by various things culture, power, or situation. He further talks about power relations:

And, to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations. As a starting point, let us take a series of oppositions that have developed over the last few years: opposition to the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine overpopulation, of administration over the ways people live. (778)

In the above excerpt, Foucault talks about recognizing the voices of resistance to bring changes which been developed in the last few years. He mainly talks about the power opposition to men over women and opposition to parents' power over children, psychiatry over mentally, and so on. This also means that people are not only subjects they can also become power to change things.

They underline everything that makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand, they attack everything that separates the individual, break his links with others, split up community life, force the individual back on himself, and tie him to his own identity in a constraining way. These struggles are not exactly for or against the "individual" but rather they are struggling against the government of individualization. They are an opposition to the effects of power which are linked with knowledge, competence, and qualification: struggles against the privileges of knowledge.

Foucault talks about the individual self as in opposition to power. He does not use the word 'self' however he uses the word individual. It also shows the different selves of individuals when he writes "which makes individuals truly individual." He recognizes individual opposition as a practice to form power. The uniqueness of individuals is crucial, but some forces try to separate people, isolate them, and limit their freedom. The struggles we witness are not necessarily about supporting or opposing individuality itself, but rather about resisting a system that tries to control and standardize individuality. These struggles also challenge the privileges that some people enjoy due to their knowledge and qualifications. In essence, the importance of individuality is emphasized while simultaneously fighting against the constraints imposed by systems of control and power associated with knowledge and expertise.

He goes further and says that power is not only within the individual groups and society but power is more dynamic and is in social relationships and structures that individuals play power as well within the strictures,

At every moment the relationship of power may become a confrontation between two adversaries. Equally, the relationship between adversaries in society may, at every moment, give place to the putting into operation of the mechanism of power. The consequence of this instability is the ability to decipher the same events and the same transformations either from inside the history of struggle or from the standpoint of power relationships (794).

Foucault talks about the power and struggle are closely connected. They have a back-and-forth influence on each other. Power refers to the ability to control or influence others, while struggle refers to the conflicts and efforts made by individuals or groups to challenge or change existing power structures. Power and struggle are not fixed or stable, but rather constantly shifting and evolving. At any given moment, a power dynamic can turn into a confrontation between two opposing sides. Similarly, within a society, adversaries or opposing groups can also use power mechanisms to gain an advantage over each other. This constant interplay between power and struggle leads to instability. It means that the same events and transformations in society can be interpreted and understood either from the perspective of ongoing struggles or the standpoint of existing power relationships.

Richard Rorty talks about the contingency of the self in his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Self or I cannot be found in the art as it is interpreted by the readers. In the beginning paragraph of the second chapter, Epicurus said, "When I am death is not, and when death is I am not", thus exchanging one vacuity for another. For the word "I" is as hollow as the word "death." To

unpack such words, one has to fill in the details about the I in question, specify precisely what it is that will not be, and make one's fear concrete. (23)

In the excerpt above, Rorty says that one emptiness or lack for another. He suggests that both the concept of 'I' and the concept of "death" are inherently empty or hollow. To truly understand the meaning behind these words, Rorty argues that we need to delve into the specifics of the individual referred to as 'I' and precisely identify what it is that they fear or anticipate. By making our fears and concerns more concrete and specific, we can gain a deeper understanding of our experiences and transcend the abstract emptiness of general terms like 'I' and 'death'. Rorty's emphasis lies in unpacking and grounding our language in personal experiences and concrete details.

His father goes on to explain that I as self am different than others and so each one is different. No poetry has a self although romanticist believes in subjectivity. So, there is a replica of I. He argues:

Since the example of the Romantics, since with Hegel, we began to think of self-consciousness as self-creation, no poet has seriously thought of idiosyncrasy as an objection to his work. But in this poem Larkin is presenting that blind impress, those particular contingencies which make each of us "I" rather than a copy or replica of somebody else, do not really matter. (24)

Rorty talks about how since the time of the Romantic era and the influence of philosophers like Hegel, poets no longer consider individuality or uniqueness as a problem in their work. They believe that each person's distinct experiences and circumstances, which shape their individuality, are not something to be disregarded. However, in this particular poem by Larkin, the poet is presenting the idea that these unique and specific aspects of our lives that make us who we are, don't hold much significance or importance. In other words, Larkin is suggesting that our

idiosyncrasies and personal contingencies are not crucial factors in the grand scheme of things.

Richard Rorty further says, "It was Nietzsche who first explicitly suggested that we drop the whole idea of "Knowing the truth." His definition of truth as a "Mobile army of metaphors" amounted to saying that the whole idea of "representing reality" using language, and thus of finding a single context for all human lives, should be abandoned" (27). Rorty essentially talks about Nietzsche's belief that the traditional notion of truth as an absolute and universally applicable concept was flawed. Instead, he argued that truth is subjective and influenced by our perspectives, experiences, and the metaphors we use to understand and express it. Therefore, he suggested that we move away from the pursuit of a single objective truth and embrace the diversity of interpretations and contexts that exist in human lives. Further Rorty talks about Nietzsche, Bloom, Wittgenstein, and Larkin to talk about how contingent the self is. According to himself is progressive and always in a follow and you cannot capture the self in its true sense.

Another writer Robert J. Howell talks about the elusiveness of the self in a journal titled "Subjectivity and the Elusiveness of the Self." He starts talking about the self in the beginning paragraph itself. He bluntly writes while talking about a philosophical friend and his self:

If he persists, insisting that he is not really lost, but only cannot find himself no matter how hard he looks, we might reasonably suspect that we are dealing with a peculiarly incorrigible academic explorer, the philosopher. When he hesitantly points to his body, we hear him explain, exasperated, 'No, don't you get it? That's my body, but I'm looking for myself! And I cannot find it!' (459)

In the excerpt above Howell talks about a philosophical friend who asked 'Where am I' and goes on asking where he is. He tried to observe and look into himself but he has not been able to find himself. When his friends talk about place and point his body he says that that's my body but I cannot find myself. That shows the elusiveness of the self.

Further, the writer states, "The Elusiveness Thesis: from the first-person perspective one's self is particularly unavailable to one's own awareness" (460). Here, he talks about the mind as an object and the body as a part of the self so, we cannot find self. It is difficult to find the self even for a person himself or herself. Where is the self? Is it in the mind or is it in the body? So, from the first-person perspective, one's self is unavailable to the person himself/herself/themselves. He goes further "Two features of this thesis are worth noting at this point. First, it maintains that the self is particularly elusive. The thesis fails, therefore, if the only construal of awareness according to which we are not aware of a self leaves us unaware of other things we would expect to be aware of." (460) Howell talks about Firstly; it posits that the concept of the self is inherently difficult to grasp or comprehend fully. It implies that understanding the nature of the self is a complex and elusive endeavor. However, the thesis argues that if the only interpretation of awareness is one where we are not conscious of a self, then it would fall short. In other words, if a particular understanding of awareness negates our ability to be aware of other things that we would typically expect to be aware of, it would not adequately explain the full scope of human consciousness. This highlights the need for a comprehensive perspective on awareness that encompasses both the self and other objects of awareness.

Howell writes, "for my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light

or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.” (462) In the excerpt the individual speaking acknowledges that when they deeply reflect on what they consider to be their self, they find that it is closely tied to specific perceptions or experiences. These perceptions can include sensations like heat or cold, qualities like light or shade, emotions like love or hatred, and feelings of pain or pleasure. The speaker asserts that every time they engage in introspection, they are aware only of these perceptions or experiences. They do not encounter a separate, distinct self that exists independently of these perceptions. This observation suggests that their sense of self is intimately connected to the ever-changing stream of perceptions they experience.

Like this Onta in his PHD dissertation asserts that "It is my argument that the Nepali identity thus effected in Nepal could not accommodate a Gurkha identity within itself" (37). So, the all the Nepali selves are not accommodating in Nepali nationalism back then. Now, with the present political change and perception anyone living any part of the world can be a Nepali and can have Nepali self. Onta argues, "As it was not annexed . . . Nepal's nationalist rhetoric instead celebrates the above-mentioned war as the story of Nepali bravery at work" (41). Pratyoush Onta's critique of Nepali nationalism focuses on how the dominant hill-based Hindu upper-caste culture has historically shaped the notion of the Nepali self, often excluding other identities within the country. In his dissertation, Onta argues that the Nepali identity, as it has been constructed, particularly during the formation and consolidation of the nation-state, could not accommodate diverse identities such as the Gurkha identity. This form of nationalism emphasized a homogenous cultural identity rooted in the

traditions, languages, and practices of the Hindu upper-caste communities from the hills, marginalizing various ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups.

For instance, the valorization of the Gurkha soldiers in Nepali nationalist rhetoric is celebrated not as a unique cultural identity but rather as an extension of the Nepali bravery narrative that fits within the dominant cultural framework. This rhetoric overlooks the distinct cultural and historical experiences of the Gurkha communities, subsuming them under a homogenized national identity. However, Onta notes that with recent political changes and evolving perceptions, there is a shift towards a more inclusive understanding of Nepali identity. Contemporary political movements and reforms are increasingly recognizing the multiplicity of Nepali identities, promoting the idea that anyone living in or having ties to Nepal, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or geographical background, can claim a Nepali self. This broader, more inclusive notion of nationalism seeks to celebrate the diversity within Nepal rather than imposing a monolithic cultural identity.

To undertake the study of self in selected stories, integrating insights from theorists like Foucault, Rorty, Howell, and Onta is essential for a multifaceted exploration of individuality, power dynamics, and identity formation. Foucault's examination of individuality against the backdrop of power structures highlights how societal forces shape and constrain personal identities, revealing the tensions between uniqueness and standardization. Rorty's discourse on the contingency of the self emphasizes the fluid and constructed nature of identity, suggesting that personal experiences and interpretations are central to understanding the self. Howell's exploration of the elusiveness of the self underscores the complexity and often elusive nature of self-awareness, challenging simplistic or static notions of identity. Onta's

analysis of Nepali identity illustrates how national and cultural narratives shape and redefine selfhood, particularly in post-1990 in Nepali contexts. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive framework to analyze how characters in the selected stories navigate, resist, and construct their identities within various socio-cultural and power contexts.

Chapter III. Rewriting Self in Contemporary Nepali Short Stories

3.1. Approaching the Self

Studying the self needs some theoretical basis, here, the researcher brings some of the best writers who talk about self. This research paper takes Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', Jean-Francois Lyotard's, 'Rewriting Modernity', Robert Howell's 'Subjectivity and the Elusiveness of the Self' and Richard Rorty's *Contingency, irony, and solidarity* as a theoretical basis to study self in the contemporary short Nepali stories. These are the theoretical basis for interpreting the self in contemporary stories.

Traditional Nepalese writings have put 'Nepali self' who lives in the hilly region and especially from upper caste Brahmin or Kshetri wearing Nepali Topi and Daura Surlwal. However, in this research paper, the researcher is trying to understand whether the Nepali self has remained safe or changed in the literature, especially in contemporary short stories. Other characters were used to put in the margin or as supporting characters, unconsciously or consciously. But contemporary writings seem different. So, with this research, the researcher is trying to find the Nepali self in the story.

This story "Kumari Prashnaharu" brings the discussion of a girl's virginity which was not discussed before. However, it also seems that the patriarchy is playing on her mind because she could not do it although she wanted to do it and remained confused throughout her life. "There is not a single day, I do not remember him in a year" (75). Manju is a confused self between traditional values and modernity. Manju is a subject of culture and tradition as Michel Foucault writes.

Michel Foucault talks about power and subject in the Chicago Journals, "The Subject and Power". He talks about human subjects in the beginning paragraphs as he

writes, "My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects" (777). Here Foucault talks about how human beings are made subjects by various things culture, power, or situation. He further talks about power relations.

In the story "Janani", Damayanti known as Jamenti is a revolutionary character. She lived as a wife of Durgalal and suffered a lot but at last, she became a Muslim and identified herself as the wife of Aftab: "I am Nafisaa, wife of Aftaab." (10). She Changed her identity and her name. At the end of the story, she listened to her heart and lived and identified herself as she always wanted. She is a force that changes the situation. She is a form of power for Foucault. Foucault identifies the power in an individual or what he calls "a form of power" and he believes that sometimes even individuals become a form of power and support to change the idea.

However, every individual cannot become the power of change like Manju in "Kumari Prashnharu", and Raghu in "Khel" Some of the selves want to be part of the change but they end up being in the old self. Here Raghu says, "I understand looking at Rupa's son and My daughter's innocent face, even today in the dust half Rupa and half me are building an incomplete house of love" (19). He goes further and says that power is not only within the individual groups and society but power is more dynamic and is in social relationships and structure but the individual plays power as well within the structures. According to Foucault, it's important to note that there isn't a single all-encompassing principle of power that controls every aspect of society. Instead, we start with the idea that everyone can influence the actions of others to some extent in their social interactions. Because people have different goals and use power differently on themselves or others, and there are varying levels of formal or

informal structures that govern power, we can identify different types of power. These types can range from individual differences and specific objectives to broader institutionalized systems and organized efforts.

In the contemporary stories, it is found how the power is distributed because of caste and religion like "Janani", "Ani Pema" and other stories included in the research. However, "Timro Mirtiu Samachar" tried to be different but it cannot go outside the social influence. This story is a little different in that the writer is talking about metafiction, but it seems like the character "U" is searching for identity: "I accept my stupidity for trying to talk about the authenticity of death using the words" (38). The writer does not give the identity of the character and also talks about the topic of death which is considered taboo.

Around the end of the essay, Foucault talks about the reciprocal relation appeal, a perpetual link and perpetual reversal in a relationship. Foucault asserts that power and struggle are closely connected. They have a back-and-forth influence on each other. Power refers to the ability to control or influence others, while struggle refers to the conflicts and efforts made by individuals or groups to challenge or change existing power structures. Power and struggle are not fixed or stable, but rather constantly shifting and evolving. At any given moment, a power dynamic can turn into a confrontation between two opposing sides. Similarly, within a society, adversaries or opposing groups can also use power mechanisms to gain an advantage over each other. This constant interplay between power and struggle leads to instability. It means that the same events and transformations in society can be interpreted and understood either from the perspective of ongoing struggles or the standpoint of existing power relationships.

In the story "Aani Pema," the main character is a Buddhist monk and she is in monkhood leaving everything dedicated to the god. But as love enters in her life she is ready to leave behind herself of monkhood and go into another self which is to live the material life. "On that morning in the dawn, I carried my clothes wrapped up in a sack and went in the path shown by Padam to Kathmandu, leaving the monastery forever" (27). There the character, Aani Pema, left the monastery for freedom and to live the life she wanted.

Richard Rorty talks about the contingency of the self in his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Rorty Rorty says that one emptiness or lack for another. He suggests that both the concept of "I" and the concept of "death" are inherently empty or hollow. To truly understand the meaning behind these words, Rorty argues that we need to delve into the specifics of the individual referred to as "I" and precisely identify what it is that they fear or anticipate. By making our fears and concerns more concrete and specific, we can gain a deeper understanding of our experiences and transcend the abstract emptiness of general terms like "I" and "death." Rorty's emphasis lies in unpacking and grounding our language in personal experiences and concrete details.

The Nepali self in the contemporary short story seems to be different as stories bring various characters from different scenarios and different castes and regions. "Aani Pema" stories bring the story of the Himalayan region and from Buddhist religion. "Janani" is a story based on the Terai region and the main character "Nafisha" tells the story of not only Hindus living in the Terai region but also Muslim religion. Another story "Kumari Prashnaharu" tells the story of a girl who is confused between tradition and modernity. Here the main character is a teenage hilly region girl. Another story "Khel" brings the story of a childhood love story between a boy

and a girl and how people are stuck in the past. "Timro Mirtyeuko Samachar" brings the story of a dead person and the various selves "U" narrated by different people. "I will tell you, for me, he was like an eternal season. For me he was like Greek civilization" (18). But for another person "He was just like a wild animal" (14). In another conversation, he was not a good person. "What to talk about him. He was a bad person. He lived and did things which were unethical and false existence" (7). The character had various identities from one narrator to another.

He further goes on to explain about I as self is different than others and so each one is different. He talks about Romanticists and their spontaneity in literature. He goes on to talk about it: Rorty talks about since the time of the Romantic era and the influence of philosophers like Hegel, poets no longer consider individuality or uniqueness as a problem in their work. They believe that each person's distinct experiences and circumstances, which shape their individuality, are not something to be disregarded. However, in this particular poem by Larkin, the poet is presenting the idea that these unique and specific aspects of our lives that make us who we are, don't hold much significance or importance. In other words, Larkin is suggesting that our idiosyncrasies and personal contingencies are not crucial factors in the grand scheme of things.

In contemporary stories, we cannot see the identity of Nepali as such as 'one' rather it seems it is multiple and at times it is hard to get hold of the identity. Although in conversation Nepali may still be recognized as people living in hilly regions and mainly from Khas, and Chhetries in contemporary Nepali short stories the Nepali self can be found different, however, society plays an important role in the identity as Richard Rorty writes. But credit to writes covering various stories from marginalized castes, regions, and religions and bringing the characters from the same

as the main characters. Rorty essentially talks about Nietzsche's belief that the traditional notion of truth as an absolute and universally applicable concept was flawed. Instead, he argued that truth is subjective and influenced by our perspectives, experiences, and the metaphors we use to understand and express it. Therefore, he suggested that we move away from the pursuit of a single objective truth and embrace the diversity of interpretations and contexts that exist in human lives. In the contemporary short stories, if one tries to find one Nepali self, it will be impossible. If one tries to find the Nepali self in "Aani Pema" one will find a Buddhist girl who is going against culture and tradition for the sake of her love. In "Kumari Prashnaharu" one can find a girl who is confused between either saving traditional values or moving with time. Like this, "Khel" tells the story of a middle-aged man who was deeply in love and still loves to be in his old self. "Janani" tells the story of a Hindu girl who changed her identity and became a Muslim. In Nakarkot's story "Timro Mirtuko Samachar" it's hard to find the identity of the main character because his identity is different in different conversations.

Furthermore, Rorty talks about Nietzsche, Bloom, Wittgenstein, and Larkin to talk about how contingent the self is. According to himself is progressive and always in a follow and you cannot capture the self in its true sense.

Another writer Robert J. Howell talks about the elusiveness of the self in a journal titled "Subjectivity and the Elusiveness of the Self." He starts talking about the self in the beginning paragraph itself. He bluntly writes while talking about a philosophical friend and his self. Howell shares about a philosophical friend who asked 'Where am I' and goes on asking where he is. He tried to observe and look into himself but he has not been able to find himself. When his friends talk about place

and point his body he says that that's my body but I cannot find myself. That shows the elusiveness of the self.

As Howell says, it seems impossible to get the Nepali selves because contemporary Nepali short stories do not cover the story of one group caste or creed. Even in one story, there are multiple selves of a person. In "Khel" Raghu and Rupa have two different selves as a child and as a grown-up man. These characters are from hilly regions. In "Janani" Damayanti has three names and two different selves. As Jamenti she lived the life of Durgalal's wife and as Nafisha she lived the life of Aphtaab's wife, although he was killed.

Further, the writer states, "The Elusiveness Thesis: from the first-person perspective one's self is particularly unavailable to one's own awareness." (460 pp) Here, he talks about the mind as an object and the body as a part of the self so, we cannot find the self. So, from the first-person perspective, one's self is unavailable to the person himself/herself/themselves. He goes further "Two features of this thesis are worth noting at this point. First, it maintains that the self is particularly elusive. The thesis fails, therefore, if the only construal of awareness according to which we are not aware of a self leaves us unaware of other things we would expect to be aware of" (460). In the excerpt Rorty talks about Firstly, it posits that the concept of the self is inherently difficult to grasp or comprehend fully. It implies that understanding the nature of the self is a complex and elusive endeavor. However, the thesis argues that if the only interpretation of awareness is one where we are not conscious of a self, then it would fall short. In other words, if a particular understanding of awareness negates our ability to be aware of other things that we would typically expect to be aware of, it would not adequately explain the full scope of human consciousness. This

highlights the need for a comprehensive perspective on awareness that encompasses both the self and other objects of awareness.

As Rorty explains it's impossible to find the self of a person. Trying to find the self of Nepali as absurd. Nepali people are known as brave "Gorkha" but all the people may not be as brave as described by the western people. In the contemporary stories, the researcher cannot find a single Nepali self.

Rorty writes, "For my part when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception " (462). In the excerpt, the individual speaking acknowledges that when they deeply reflect on what they consider to be their self, they find that it is closely tied to specific perceptions or experiences. These perceptions can include sensations like heat or cold, qualities like light or shade, emotions like love or hatred, and feelings of pain or pleasure. The speaker asserts that every time they engage in introspection, they are aware only of these perceptions or experiences. They do not encounter a separate, distinct self that exists independently of these perceptions. This observation suggests that their sense of self is intimately connected to the ever-changing stream of perceptions they experience.

In contemporary short stories, the traditional Nepali self seems not to be true rather Nepali self is multiple. At last, Rorty ends his essay by saying that the self is elusive and you cannot hold it. The author presents an argument against the notion that our mental states, such as perceptions and experiences, act as a barrier or veil that obstructs our understanding of the external world. The author suggests that if our mental states were indeed a barrier in this way, it would be similar to the concept of a

"veil" put forward by modern philosophy, such as the idea of the "way of ideas." This would essentially hinder our ability to think and comprehend the world, and it would undermine the very essence of being a "subject" with the capacity for knowledge and awareness. As Rorty writes finding a single self of a person is hard but finding a self of a country is impossible.

Otna in his PHD dissertation claims that "To sum up then we should say that Kathmandu's intellectual class responded to the participation of Nepali soldiers- both the Gurkhas and the Nepali Contingent in India during the first world war- by cheering them from a distance as embodiments of Gorkhali bravery. They memorialized the war and the sacrifices it entailed on the part of the participant soldiers as if it were blood sacrifice that added glory to the motherland" (142-43). Here, in the excerpt above Nepali glorifying the death of the armies as they spill the blood on the ground but also not recognizing them as Nepali self rather seeing them as foreign self or not being truly Nepali. But Nepali self-acknowledges everyone who loves Nepal and Nepali.

3.2. Changing Contours of Nepali Self

The Nepali self has been evolving. It is not as it was thought before. However, the traces of the old self can be seen in contemporary short fiction. Sometimes, it seems that there is a huge struggle between the old Nepali self and the new Nepali self. The traditional self tries to dominate the new self and the new self tries to go against the old self and bring the new self ahead. The clash of the old self and the new self can be found in contemporary short stories. The story "Janani" has the clash of the new self and old selves as selves of Jamayanti and her family members and the society. Jamayanti represents the new self whereas her father, brother, and society represent the old selves. "One day, looking for the opportunity Jamayanti fled from

home. She changed her religion and married Aphtaab. Jamayanti's family got a big wound which had to heal with time but did not." (3). Here, Jamayanti is okay with marrying a Muslim boy Aphtaab although she is a Hindu but her family is against her. They cannot accept a Hindu girl marrying a Muslim boy. Jamayanti even changes her religion for her love.

In this story how the old self tries to control the new self is shown. After the marriage, Jamayanti's family make various about Aphtaab and his family. They also said that the "Abtaab family slaughtered the cow and ate." They made a lot of other hoaxes. As the Hindu government was ruling the area it was easy. They used to think that they should chase the Muslims to Pakistan. "One day while coming back from reciting the Nawaaj from the nearby Masjid. A huge crowd of RSS cards caught Aphtaab. Aphtaab continuously pleaded not to be guilty. The crowd did not want to listen to him. He was beaten to death. In that crowd, Jamayanti's father and brothers were included." (3) It seems that the old self is static and wants to protect the unjust system and culture even if it needs to kill people. They don't want to let their daughter marry a Muslim boy.

After the death of Durgalal society made various stories of Damayanti. Many men claimed that they had sex with her and they claimed that her "Maal" was good. It also shows how society and the old self see women as "Maal", an object. Many men tried to use her. "I met a saint while going to Shiva Tempel and shared my pain and hurt. The Jogi (saint) drugged and used me for his sexual pleasure." (9). The traditional self is using women as an object and using them for their benefit. Damayanti's voice was silenced by her family and married a person who was old and sick. At last, the new self seems to be victorious. When an old man asked Damayanti who are you, I have not seen you here. She said, "I am Aphtaab's wife. Nafisha." (10)

The struggle of the selves can be seen in the short story "Aani Pema" can be seen clearly. When Aani Pema falls in love with Padam then she starts to question whether love is important or religion. When she starts reading the books gifted by Padam the old self's representative Aani Dolma starts questioning her. As she said, "Aani Pema, is there have been any obstacles in your daily chores?" (21). Here, the old self is trying to control the new self because it is static and does not like any changes. When Aani Dolma shared that she has seen Aani Pema distracted and also shared that Rimpoche is sad to see that. Aani Pema shares that she and Padam just talk a little bit and that should not be a problem. Then Aani Dolma shares that "yes, it's not a problem for common people." "This is Gumba, Aani Pema. We are Aani. Moreover, there are comments because of your age and your beauty" (22). It looks like the traditional self believes singularly and it thinks whatever they have been saying is right.

One of the interesting things shown in this short story in the last chapter talks about "Nirvana". Nirvana is generally believed to be achieved while staying in Gumba but interestingly enough Aani Pema leaves the Gumba in that chapter. "In the dawn of that morning, through the small Nagbeli path, I carried the bundle off and left the Guma once and for all and started claiming down to Kathmandu shown by Padam" (27). So, Nirvana for old self is at the Gumba and near the god. But for Aani Pema Nirvana is going outside the Gumba and living freely with Padam in Kathmandu.

In every story, the struggle between the old self and the new self can be seen. In the short story "Kumari Prashnharu" the title itself suggests something different. This story presents a story of a virgin girl who is twenty-two years old. As sex and the matter of virginity are considered secret and sacred, some communities. Bringing the story of virginity is itself a challenge to the traditional self. In this story, the central

character Manju falls in love with a boy named Ashim. She goes against the traditional notion of girls who do not speak to boys and don't have a relationship with them before marriage. But as the girl is okay to fall in love with the boy and do kiss she is hesitant to have sex before marriage. She stops the boy when he tries to unbutton her for sex. Manju sometimes feels that she might had sex with him. She also thinks because of her he went to other women: "Maybe I did not understand? Maybe that's why he went to those kinds of girls" (76). Remnants of the traditional self can be seen in the main character Manju. Manju seems to be revolutionary in some sense like falling in love with love, maintaining a secret relationship with Ashim, planning to marry him after she passes the public service examination, telling her love affair to her brother, and wanting to flee with him. But she is also a traditional self as she does not want to have sex with him, she breaks her relationship after knowing that the boy slept with another girl, she also does not look towards other boys as she thinks it will be a sin. However, the girl seems to be between her new self and her old self.

The traditional self can be seen in the story. Manju's elder brother had a love marriage but when she shared her love story, he denied her to get married to him: "You had to understand yourself. You are not a child, now. What are going do marrying to the person who cannot feed you. There is time, leave him" (65). Manju was hiding her love life from her brother and father and was afraid of them the most. Manju's brother does not believe that she will be independent despite her education.

The struggle between the selves or power can be seen everywhere where the traditional thoughts try to dominate the new ideology or new selves. In the story "Timro Mirtyiko Samachar" some of the narrators seem to have traditional ideologies and some others are open and respect the person. In one of the conversations, the

narrator says "What to talk about him? He was a bad person. He was living an illegal and unethical life." (7) The person shares that he did not believe in god and more than this the person "U" used to criticize the gods and goddesses. He shares that once the character "U" addresses the goddess Saraswati as "Dear. I want to kiss on your forehead" (8). He narrates further that he used to kiss as well. He represents the old self but the central character can be seen as a new self. The traditional self is singular and used to believe in one thing and does not want to consider more truths and selves but the new self is just the opposite.

In another context, a narrator shares his experience with the "U" character. Here the person shares that "U" was like a flowing river. "He knew how to flow. He was like an eternal season. For me, he was as attractive as Greek civilization." One of the interesting things in the story is that people do share stories of the character U where even the U character has multiple selves. He is presented as various selves by the people. It can be said that a person can have various selves according to his/her relationship with the particular person. In one of the contexts, a narrator says that U's character is nostalgic like an old season. She narrates that he was like an ancient river that wanted to flow in the desert. She also shared that she was his beloved. This character can be seen as a character with multiple selves.

In the story "Khel" the main character is educated but has difficulties leaving the old self and embracing the old self. Raghu is in the past self with Rupa although she is married to a different guy. Once he was ready to marry a girl named Shristi but Shristi proposes a different thing. She said, "I cannot leave my boyfriend. If you agree with it then only, I can marry you. Otherwise, I won't." (13) Raghu also realized that the era has changed, and he is stuck in his childhood days. Here, Shristi is a new self and Raghu is an old self. The main character mourns the purity of love affairs and

complains about the new love affairs. He uses the word "Khel" (play) for the love affairs in the present day. The story brings the story of Malla Kaka who is in an illicit relationship with a girl and he feels sad for Mallani Kaki. Likewise, there is a story of Churaaghare Paaru who has been married to a boy who is working in Dubai but she is in a love affair with another boy in Kathmandu. Raghu himself fed Basudha Vaauju who wanted him to have a sexual relationship with her. Basudha Vaauju puts five thousand rupees in the wallet of Raghu and when he says, "Vaauju, five thousand rupees have been put in my purse." (17) In his reply she says. "Have you had the courage, brother-in-law?" (17) However, Raghu got married and he has a daughter and Rupa has her son. He remembers his past while Rupa's son and his daughter playing. "In the dust of Pipalchaur, half me and half Rupa are building the unfinished house of our love." The main character Raghu is nostalgic about his past and he can be represented as the remnant of his old self. However, the story talks about various love affairs and private spaces that can be taken as a step toward a new self. Nepali self is changing but this story shows that not all the people are proud of it. Some people are even sad about it. Who are the sad people? Those people were sad and were controlling themselves. Raghu himself is a character from Hilly Reason and a character who is from the Brahmin community. These are the people who set the rules of what is a Nepali self and what is not. Who is Nepali and who is not? Who is an ideal woman and who is not? Where do these Nepali people live? What is the Nepali people's religion?

3.3 Implications of the New Self at Present

Analyzing the dynamics of old and new selves in Nepali contemporary short fiction through the lens of theorists like Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard,

Robert Howell, and Richard Rorty provides a rich framework for understanding the complexities of power, subjectivity, and cultural transformation within these narratives.

Michel Foucault's concept of power as discourse is foundational in understanding how societal norms and systems of control operate within the narratives described. In these stories, the struggle between old and new selves reflects a contestation over power dynamics within Nepali society. Foucault argues that power operates through discourses that shape subjectivity. Characters like Jamayanti and Aani Pema challenge prevailing norms through their actions, illustrating Foucault's notion of resistance against entrenched power structures. The societal scrutiny and objectification of characters like Damayanti demonstrate the operation of biopower, where individuals' lives are regulated and controlled by societal expectations.

Jean-François Lyotard's reflections on modernity and narratives offer insights into how these short stories engage with traditional and evolving cultural narratives. Lyotard's critique of grand narratives helps analyze the clash between traditional and new selves. Traditional beliefs and societal expectations constitute grand narratives that clash with emerging individual narratives represented by characters like Manju and Raghu. The plurality of narratives and identities in these stories reflects Lyotard's emphasis on fragmentation and the decline of overarching cultural narratives.

Robert Howell's exploration of subjectivity sheds light on how characters negotiate their selves within shifting cultural contexts. Howell's concept of the elusiveness of self is evident in characters like Manju and Aani Pema, whose identities are in flux due to societal pressures and personal aspirations. His focus on the inner struggles of subjectivity helps us understand the psychological conflicts

faced by characters torn between adhering to tradition and embracing change. Richard Rorty's ideas on contingency and solidarity elucidate the characters' quests for autonomy and solidarity within evolving social landscapes. Rorty's notion of contingency underscores the fluidity of identity seen in characters like Raghu and Jamayanti, whose identities are contingent upon their interactions with others and their environment. The pursuit of solidarity with like-minded individuals who share their aspirations for personal autonomy and fulfillment reflects Rorty's emphasis on irony and solidarity.

Through a nuanced textual analysis informed by these theorists, we gain deeper insights into how these narratives depict the struggle between traditional and new selves in Nepali society. Characters navigate complex power dynamics, societal expectations, and personal desires, reflecting broader transformations in cultural norms and individual subjectivities. The clash between tradition and change underscores the complexities of identity formation and the ongoing negotiation of selfhood within evolving social landscapes. Ultimately, these stories offer profound reflections on the multifaceted nature of Nepali identity and the enduring quest for personal autonomy amidst shifting cultural paradigms.

The self is evolving and changing with time in contemporary short fiction. However, some of the characters like Raghu still carry the traditional self in them. But time changes everything and they had to move with time as Raghu did although he is nostalgic for the old self with his friends and Rupa. Some of the characters like Basudaa Vaauju are ahead of time when it comes to physical pleasure. Malla Kaka has different selves in the village and the town with his girlfriend. Paru Didi is in an illicit relationship with another boy although she is married. She also has two selves. Raghu does not like it. This story seems to be nostalgic about old selves and

traditional systems. Nepali contemporary stories have not moved completely into their new selves but they are in transition. This story also picks the characters from typical traditionally defined Nepali characters. Raghu is a name Hindu name and the description of the character and the location suggest that Raghu is from a Brahmin/Kshatri Family. These castes were and still are in the position to make systems and define Nepali selves and put themselves in a position to tell that they are more Nepali than others. They are more patriotic than others.

However, other stories like "Yambunera" take the story of a Buddhist Aani where Aani Pema takes a new path to feel freedom. It's believed that Nirvana comes when you are near the god or in the refuge of the god. But she felt like she was controlled and she could not live longer. She was controlled even by what to read and who to talk to. One of the interesting things is that she did not feel freedom in the refuge of god. She is a new self and a revolutionary self. There was another character called Aani Dolma who can be referred to as an old self. Like this, Rimpoche can also be regarded as a traditional self. Where he says, "I think you are in Kaam Trishnaa. That's why you fell in love with worldly affairs. This is not good for you." (25). The last topic of the story is Nirvana the story of liberation where she leaves the Monastery once and for all.

Like this, "Kumari Prashnharu" is one of the short stories included in this research paper. The title of the story itself speaks a lot. It tries to speak about the topic many people have not spoken about. But the topic itself comes from the patriarchal mind. The character Manju is the product of the patriarchal society and tries to grow out of it in many ways, but she cannot move on from it. Her virginity becomes the cause of separation from her boyfriend or at least she thinks that her virginity might be the cause of her boyfriend going to other women. She says, "Maybe I could not

understand him! That's why he steaks to that kind of girl." (76) She has categorized herself as a nice kind of girl and others as not nice. She has developed those binaries because part of her is an old self and part of her is a new self. She is just like Raghu in many ways. They are changing with time but they are kind of speaking to their traditional self as well. Manju's father and brothers have patriarchal thoughts and they would love to speak with the old self. Manju's brother has got love marriage but he denies his sister's love. So, it also shows the hypocrisy of the traditional self. The narratives discussed in Nepali contemporary short fiction present a vivid tableau of the struggle between entrenched traditional values and emerging individual autonomy. Through the lens of Foucault, Lyotard, Howell, and Rorty, we can discern how power dynamics shape and constrain the characters' identities and actions.

In these narratives, characters like Jamayanti, Aani Pema, and Manju embody the tensions between old and new selves. Jamayanti's defiance of her family's expectations by marrying outside her religion and Aani Pema's departure from the Gumba signify acts of resistance against established societal norms. These actions reflect Foucault's notion of power as discourse, where individuals contest dominant narratives to assert their agency.

Lyotard's concept of fragmented narratives and the decline of grand narratives is exemplified by characters navigating conflicting cultural paradigms. Manju's internal conflict between embracing love and adhering to traditional values illustrates Howell's idea of the elusiveness of self, as her identity evolves in response to external pressures and personal desires. Rorty's emphasis on contingency and solidarity illuminates the characters' quests for autonomy within shifting social landscapes. Raghu's nostalgia for a past era and Jamayanti's pursuit of personal freedom reflect the fluidity and contingency of identity, shaped by interactions with others and

evolving cultural norms. Through textual analysis, we uncover the intricate interplay between individual agency and societal constraints. The narratives serve as mirrors reflecting the broader transformations within Nepali society, where old traditions clash with emerging aspirations for personal autonomy and self-expression.

Ultimately, these stories provoke reflection on the complex nature of identity formation and the enduring quest for individual freedom amidst cultural change. By engaging with the theories of Foucault, Lyotard, Howell, and Rorty, we gain deeper insights into the dynamics of power, subjectivity, and cultural transformation depicted in Nepali contemporary short fiction. The story "Janani" is found so powerful capturing and questioning the traditional beliefs of religion. Traditional self believes that changing religion is a sin. Jamayanti changes her religion for love. The story itself focuses on a woman from the Terai region. The writer taking the topic of the Madeshi family who are not still considered Nepali is a huge challenge for the old Nepali self. But also woman from a Hindu family marrying a Muslim boy is a breakthrough. Jamayant's father and brothers are big-time traditional selves who are always trying to follow the tradition even though they had to sacrifice Jamayant's life. They also murder a human being, Aphtaab to sustain their old traditional selves. However, Jayanti is a new force who goes against society and marries her boyfriend Aphtaab. After the murder of Aphtaab, she was married to Durgalal. After the death of Durgalal, she was used as an object of sex by the patriarchy. She was used by the so-called sage and other men. At last, she changed her religion and introduced herself as Naphisaa, Aptaab's wife. She is a character who is so powerful and advocates to change society and live life as she desires. Another story brings multiple selves of a single person. The short story "Timro Mirtyuko Samachar" brings different stories of the same person revealing different selves by different narrators. For some of the

narrators "U" was a wonderful person and was like a sage. But for some of the narrators he was an evil and unethical person. It was found that it's impossible to find a singular self of a country. "Timro Mirtyuko Samachar" brings the old selves and new selves together. Some narrators represent traditional selves and others represent new selves. Another interesting thing that was found in the research.

This story brings the character without a name. This story has broken traditional characterization and brought up a character who does not have a name. All the narrators address the main character as "U" like "He". The writer Kumar Nagarkoti breaks all the traditional notions bringing multiple narrators and not giving a conclusion. The main character is defined by many narrators and they talk about him differently. Some of them like him and some of them don't. The main character is not a hero for some and for some is a villain. So, the central character is not justified as a good character, Nepali, from the Hilly region, Chhetri or a Brahmin, or a Hindu. New short stories are bringing new Nepali self which was not found in the traditional literature.

The story "Chaumin" tells the story of a girl whose father is married to another woman and settled with them. However, his mother lives with them. The title of the story itself is different from conventional titles. Titles on food are rare and chamin is not Nepali traditional food which also shows globalization. Stir-fried noodles enter into the Nepali self. The main character of the story is a child which also shows diversified perspectives. The story focuses on the psychology of the child whose father is not around or may be dead. Kamala wants to share her feelings with her father. "If fate allows me to meet him one day I would catch his throat and ask him, crying out loud. Where were you all these years, father? Didn't you remember us even for a day? Didn't you want to see how was his daughter? Didn't you want to cry

thinking whether she had eaten or not?" (35). Karki has tried to capture the hurt and pain of the child while growing up. Kamala tried to fit into different selves. First wanted to be the daughter of her father, Badabaa, and Head Sir but no one was there for her when she needed her to be called their daughter. Kamala is a representative of a new self as she is changing her self. She has a different self from her boyfriend, with her mother she has a different self and she is angry and hurt with her father. The short story captures the marginalized story and also the story of a girl who is from a poor family and who does not have a father. That's a big step too.

Analyzing the depiction of self in the story "Chaumin" through the lens of Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, Robert Howell, and Richard Rorty provides a nuanced understanding of identity formation and cultural influences within the narrative. Michel Foucault's concept of power and discourse is evident in Kamala's struggle to reconcile her identity within familial dynamics. The absence of her father and the complexity of her relationships reflect power structures that shape her sense of self. Kamala's yearning to confront her father symbolizes Foucault's idea of resistance against societal norms and familial expectations that have marginalized her experience. Jean-François Lyotard's notion of fragmented narratives is reflected in Kamala's multifaceted identity. She navigates different selves within various relationships, seeking validation and belonging. The unconventional title of the story, "Chaumin," signifies the intrusion of global influences into Nepali culture, highlighting the fragmentation and diversification of contemporary identities. Robert Howell's exploration of the elusiveness of self is exemplified in Kamala's quest for recognition and connection. Her changing selves with her boyfriend, mother, and absent father illustrate the fluidity of identity in response to interpersonal dynamics

and emotional needs. Kamala embodies the struggle of constructing a coherent self in the absence of paternal presence.

Richard Rorty's emphasis on contingency and solidarity underscores Kamala's journey toward self-discovery and autonomy. Her anger and hurt toward her father reflect Rorty's idea of contingent identity shaped by personal experiences and relationships. Kamala's narrative represents a quest for solidarity, seeking acknowledgment and understanding amidst social and familial challenges. Through textual analysis informed by these theorists, we gain deeper insights into Kamala's narrative as a reflection of broader societal transformations. The story "Chaumin" encapsulates the complexity of contemporary Nepali identity, marked by globalization, familial dynamics, and individual agency. Kamala's pursuit of self-recognition and emotional expression resonates with Foucault's notion of resistance, Lyotard's fragmented narratives, Howell's elusiveness of self, and Rorty's emphasis on contingency and solidarity. Ultimately, Kamala's story serves as a poignant exploration of identity negotiation in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

Another story from *Mokshanta Kathmandu Fever*, "Metaphysic" written by Kumar Nagarkoti brings the stories within the story and often looks at the self from a different perspective. Here the writer himself is the character I. Beginning of the story starts with a newspaper report that says, "God is in exile. He managed to escape from the prison last night. The sudden rumor has been the hot gossip of the city. The God had been imprisoned in the dungeon (monastery plus church plus temple plus mosque) from the time human being came into existence" (183). A Nepali story beginning in the English language is and saying in the first sentence the god in exile and then saying the God was in prison. More than this saying that the God was in "life sentence imprisonment". The name of the story is itself in the English language. That

shows the change in thought. The writer has used the English language at his convenience. So, now Nepali self is not about using Nepali language. The writer uses the technique of stream of consciousness and again uses the English language to talk about the horoscope.

Nepali short stories are not in the Nepali language completely. They also do not follow the traditional style of writing. The writer uses the technique of stream of consciousness technique. The writer begins to elaborate on his appearance and then explains something else. "I look at my ugly face in the mirror of the dressing table. I am a little bit far. Many relations ought to be spit out. Hurtful sighs from the soul. Searching at the bottom of the ocean. "Hello, Ganga Maharjan. What is your depth? What is the measurement of your depth?" (185). The writer is using unconventional techniques to talk about Nepali stories. The chronological stories are not there anymore. The writer explains something else and then something else. It is hard to follow what the writer is trying to convey.

In one of the instances the writer invites people, "Let's do this now. Everyone has struggled to live. Come, let's create a conspiracy. Nothing will happen." (186). The writer has ruptured the self. Sounds like there is no self. In one of the lines the writer writes "Okay, I, means Kumar Nagarkoti enter into college and university to do pee" (186). Kumar Nagarkoti brings a new flavor to Nepali self like never before. In the excerpt above the character says he is Kumar Nagarkoti but at the end of the story, the character tells. "I am aborted in the womb of the call girl. I have died in the uterus" (202). More than this, the writer brings four languages into this story. "Going in the refugee of the Buddha." in Sanskrit language. "I think; therefore, I am" in Nepali of course. "God is dead" in the English language and "Soul neither born nor dies" (191). in the Hindi language. All these languages are used in one paragraph. He

just challenged the traditional way of writing. Later in the story, the character goes on to exhibition of a dead body to bring one of the dead bodies.

The character goes to the "house of the dead body exhibition" and asks one of the people who were carrying the dead body. "Whose dead body it is?" Own. I am carrying my own dead body" (198). This also could mean that the person's self is dead and walking like a dead body. Then again, the character asks another person and the reply is. "Whose body?" "Yours". The dead bodies were in various number lists some could get into number one others into other lists. Does a dead body have a self? Do they have Nepali self? What are they? At the end of the story, the narrator/character narrates about the incident where the old man had sex with the dead body of the call girl. The narrator asks the old man to clean with white clothes and he carries the dead body and comes out of the dead body exhibition house. Do these bodies have a self? Do we have a self? Do we have Nepali self? Are we living? Are we dead?

Analyzing the depiction of self in Kumar Nagarkoti's story "Metaphysic" from *Mokshanta Kathmandu Fever* through the perspectives of Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, Robert Howell, and Richard Rorty reveals profound insights into identity fragmentation, linguistic experimentation, and existential inquiry within the narrative. Michel Foucault's concept of power and discourse illuminates the narrative's exploration of societal constraints on self-expression and identity formation. The story begins with a provocative newspaper report announcing the escape of God from imprisonment, challenging traditional religious and philosophical narratives. The use of English alongside the Nepali language signifies a shift in cultural identity and language norms, reflecting Foucault's notion of power dynamics that influence linguistic choices and cultural representations. Jean-François Lyotard's theory of fragmented narratives finds resonance in the narrative's stream-of-

consciousness style, where the writer-character navigates disjointed thoughts and existential musings. The unconventional storytelling disrupts traditional chronological structures, reflecting a contemporary approach to narrative form that mirrors the fragmented nature of modern identity.

Robert Howell's exploration of the elusiveness of self is evident in the protagonist's existential quest for meaning and identity. The narrator's introspective reflections on appearance and depth symbolize an internal search for self-awareness amidst societal complexities and existential dilemmas. Howell's concept underscores the fluidity and complexity of selfhood portrayed in the narrative. Richard Rorty's emphasis on contingency and solidarity offers a lens to examine the narrator's existential crisis and self-referential discourse. The narrator's introspective journey blurs the boundaries between authorship and character, challenging traditional notions of self-representation. Rorty's framework highlights the narrative's exploration of contingency and the quest for personal authenticity within a fluid and uncertain world. Through textual analysis informed by these theorists, we gain deeper insights into the narrative's existential inquiry and linguistic experimentation. The use of multiple languages within a single paragraph challenges traditional linguistic boundaries, reflecting a broader interrogation of cultural and personal identity. The narrative's thematic exploration of death, identity, and selfhood invites reflection on the boundaries and fluidity of human existence.

Ultimately, "Metaphysic" exemplifies a postmodern interrogation of self and identity within a Nepali context, where linguistic innovation and existential introspection converge to challenge conventional narrative forms and cultural norms. The story's philosophical undertones and linguistic experimentation underscore broader societal transformations and existential inquiries into the nature of selfhood

and human existence. Michel Foucault's concept of power and discourse is particularly relevant in examining how societal norms and power dynamics influence the narrative's portrayal of self. The story opens with a bold assertion about God's escape from imprisonment, challenging established religious and philosophical constructs. This subversion of traditional narratives reflects Foucault's idea of resistance against dominant discourses. Moreover, the narrative's use of multiple languages, including English alongside Nepali, highlights the shifting power dynamics in language usage and cultural identity. The protagonist's fragmented sense of self and existential questioning can be seen as a response to societal structures that constrain and shape individual identity.

Jean-François Lyotard's notion of fragmented narratives is evident in the story's stream-of-consciousness style and nonlinear structure. The narrative weaves together disparate thoughts and reflections, mirroring the complexities of contemporary identity. The title itself, "Metaphysic," in English, signifies a departure from traditional linguistic and narrative conventions, reflecting Lyotard's critique of grand narratives and the emergence of localized, diverse narratives that challenge established modes of storytelling. This fragmentation highlights the multifaceted nature of identity and underscores the narrator's struggle to make sense of existence in a rapidly changing world. Robert Howell's exploration of the elusiveness of self is portrayed through the protagonist's introspective musings and existential journey. The narrator grapples with questions of identity and meaning, often expressing disillusionment with societal norms and traditional belief systems. The use of introspection and self-referential language underscores Howell's concept of the fluid and contingent nature of selfhood, shaped by personal experiences and interactions.

Richard Rorty's emphasis on contingency and solidarity provides a lens to examine the narrator's quest for authenticity and personal expression. The protagonist's existential crisis and linguistic experimentation reflect Rorty's idea of contingency, highlighting the individual's search for meaning and connection in a world characterized by uncertainty. The narrative challenges conventional notions of selfhood and invites readers to contemplate the boundaries between reality and fiction, authorship and character. In conclusion, "Metaphysic" encapsulates a postmodern exploration of self and identity within a Nepali context. Through linguistic innovation, existential inquiry, and narrative experimentation, Kumar Nagarkoti challenges traditional storytelling conventions and cultural norms. The narrative invites readers to engage with profound questions about existence, language, and the fluidity of human identity in a rapidly evolving society. By applying the theoretical frameworks of Foucault, Lyotard, Howell, and Rorty, we gain deeper insights into the narrative's thematic complexity and its reflection of broader societal transformations. Ultimately, "Metaphysic" offers a compelling portrayal of contemporary identity struggles and the quest for authenticity amidst shifting cultural paradigms.

The present Nepali self, as depicted in contemporary short stories, is a multifaceted and dynamic construct, significantly different from its traditional representation. Historically, Nepali identity was tightly bound to specific cultural and ethnic markers such as wearing Nepali clothes, adhering to Hindu practices, and being of fair skin from particular castes and regions. This unilinear notion of the Nepali self marginalized individuals from lower-caste communities, indigenous groups, and those practicing non-Hindu religions, often portraying them as less Nepali. However, post-2006 People's Movement II, Nepali literature began to challenge and redefine this

monolithic identity. Contemporary short stories now emphasize the diversity within Nepal, highlighting the experiences and identities of marginalized groups and thereby presenting a more inclusive and pluralistic view of the Nepali self. The arguments supporting this idea draw from various contemporary short stories that showcase characters from different backgrounds and communities across Nepal. For instance, Bina Theeng's "Aani Pema" and Durgaa Karki's "Kumari Prasnaharu" and "Chaumin" focus on the stories of indigenous people and women, offering narratives that diverge from traditional depictions. These stories illustrate the evolving nature of Nepali society, where the self is no longer a static entity but a site of contestation and change. The theoretical frameworks of thinkers like Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, and Onta employed in this study, underscore the fluidity and elusiveness of identity. They argue that the self is continuously constructed through social and cultural interactions, a notion that resonates with the diverse portrayals in contemporary Nepali fiction. Thus, contemporary short stories not only reflect but actively participate in the redefinition of what it means to be Nepali in the modern era.

Chapter IV. Rewriting Self through Short Stories

To bring this discussion to a close, the Nepali self was closed and it only recognized people in power and those people who used to create narratives. The Nepali people were recognized as people living in the Hilly Region, people from the Hindu religion, brave, wearing Gunio Choli or Dauraa Surwal, Dhaka Topi, loyal to their nation and the king. People belonging to other castes, religions, cultures and living in the Himalayan region or Terai Region were regarded as less Nepali. Even people living in the Hilly region but if they are not from Brahmin and Chhetri castes they were taken as low. Short stories also took those stories following the same narrative. The main characters were from the so-called Nepali self where whereas others used to get supporting roles or insignificant roles.

However, the Nepali self was never a single self as it was narrated by people in power. The lacking part was the perspective looking at these selves who were marginalized and considered as less Nepali, less alive, and insignificant. This dissertation shows that there was no single Nepali self as some people defined. People in authority and power had defined what and who was not a Nepali. There were various Nepali selves in the past as in the present. In the past, the characters of the stories used to be from the Hindu religion, upper caste people, but the stories of Madeshi people and their identity were not written in the mainstream literature. If there were people in the stories representing indigenous people they were used as insignificant characters or as thieves or prostitutes. People from the upper caste and upper class used to define caste and who could do what. People from lower cast used to be seen as lower human beings. Although people from so-called lower castes were used in the unification of Nepal as soldiers their bravery was never appreciated. People having darker skin were and are still sinned as Indian people. So, people living

in Terai were seen as less Nepali. As discussed in Chapter III, Only people from upper caste like Brahmin and Chhetri were seen as Nepali. People living in the Hilly region were seen as Nepali. However, people who fight for the land are the people living in the border area.

Bringing the reference from the story of Jamayenti from "Janani" from this research paper chapter II and Chapter III may not be good for the traditional self. The topic of the story itself carries the woman's character. The character is from the Terai region and married to a Muslim boy revolting against the traditional self. Although the traditional self tries to protect herself and fake dignity killing her lover and husband Aptaab. At last, she changes her religion and becomes Muslim. The story bringing the Terai woman as a main character shows the change in the Nepali contemporary literary field.

Some characters have not developed much and are static like Manju in "Kumari Pranaharu", Aani Dolma in "Yambunera", Raghu in "Khel" and Jamayanti's Father and Brothers in "Janani" and some of the narrators in "Timro Mirtyuko Samachar" discussed in the earlier section. However, this can be said by this dissertation that there was no single Nepali self in the contemporary short stories like it used to be in the traditional stories. Where they used to justify even the villainous acts of Nepali people from the upper-class family, like the act of the king's family was justified although they were misogynistic, polygamy or even they murder people in the intoxication of alcohol or rape people.

Stories in the past focused on the upper-class people and brought the stories of people who were praised by the society but the contemporary stories have picked up the stories from indigenous communities. Bringing the discussion from Chapter II Bina Thing brings the story of a Buddhist Aani is powerful where Aani Pema

represents the New Nepali self she goes against the traditional definition of liberation. Liberation was thought to gain in the refuse of the god but she was not feeling it. She felt like she was controlled. So, she chooses love instead of religion for "Nirvana". Likewise, in Chapter II and the discussion of Chapter III Kumar Nagarkoti brings the powerful story "Timro Mirthyuko Samaxhar". It is found powerful in the sense that the character does not have a proper introduction or even a proper name. The characters have various identities. It is interesting to see that each narrator has a different identity for the character. So, the self of the character is different from each of the narrators the writer meets.

To conclude, it is safe to say that even a single character does not have a single identity. The identity of the character or person depends on the perceiver. The research paper found that there was no singular self of Nepali people even in the past, it was just the use of power to justify that they were more Nepali than others. So, they created a system to define who is a better Nepali. It can be said that the Nepali self is ever-evolving and it is impossible to find a single self because it is elusive. This research does have some limitations as it is based on qualitative research. It is based on the analysis of seven stories from five contemporary short story collections. Another research can be self in Nepali literature or short stories.

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