

I. Introduction to Ha Jin's *Waiting*

Ha Jin's *Waiting* represents the conditions of subaltern people of China under the regime of communist dictatorship. The subaltern people are profoundly affected by the oppressive policies adopted by the communist dictator. Since the military takeover of the communist dictator in China, people have been tormented by the isolating and excluding policies. Moreover, the Cultural Revolution brings detrimental effect in the psychological makeup of the people. In the novel *Waiting*, the main character Lin Kong has to wait for twenty years to divorce his wife whom he can't love. He wants to divorce his wife whom he has to marry under the pressures of his parents. He loves a nurse Wu who works in the hospital where he serves as the army doctor. Despite his fervent love for Wu, he is not free to marry her. After waiting for twenty years to divorce his wife, he finally gets a golden chance to marry the woman whom he loves and vice versa.

After marrying Wu, he can't sex with her as he anticipated. The impotence of Kong implies the effect of communist policy of brainwashing people. The psychological loss of the people and sexual deviation are reflected in this text. The researcher wants to show how the upper class people treated the subaltern. Shuyu is the devoted wife of Kong. She helps Kong's family. But she is always treated as the burden and bane of Kong's life. Kong's treatment Shuyu is no less torturous and oppressive than that of the upper class people who oppress and victimize him.

By using the perspective of subalternity, the researcher shows how the subaltern people suffered in the hand of the upper class people following the military takeover of the communist dictatorship. The harrowing plight of the characters Wu, Kong and Shuyu is examined seriously to expose how the subaltern people are exploited and dehumanized.

Jin has been called a realist by less perceptive critics. But realism is not to be equated with dullness. A great writer knows how to highlight those realistic moments that catch a snippet of the transcendent, and juxtapose them with other elements to create poetry of the real. Jin, however, writes dully on dull events and people. Much of his prose seems to bear out the fact that English is not his native tongue. The characters are cardboard cutouts, and there is not a sin.

Ha Jin's *The Crazy* is the powerful new novel. It is at once an unblinking look into the bell jar of communist Chinese society. It is a portrait of the eternal compromises and deceptions of the human state. When the venerable professor Yang, a teacher of literature at a provincial university, has a stroke, his student Jian Wan is assigned to care for him. Since the dutiful Jian plans to marry his mentor's beautiful, icy daughter, the job requires delicacy. Combining warmth and intimacy with an unsparing social vision, *The Crazy* is Ha Jin's most enthralling book to interpret.

Waiting is impeccably written, in a sober prose that does nothing to call attention to it. It delivers images, characters, sensations, feelings. It lists a basically oppressive and static situation, bits of comedy and glimpses of natural beauty. The very modesty of the tone strengthens the reader's belief that this is how private lives were conducted amid the convulsions of the Cultural Revolution. In this novel Ha Jin shows how ancient customs worked with a fear-ridden Communist bureaucracy to stifle normal human appetites. Every simple, bleak detail has the fascination of the hitherto unknown. And the first-person, rather documentary prose of a *War Trash* flows as smoothly. His new novel *A Free Life* is a relatively lumpy and uncomfortable work. It is author's subtle expression of his innate love for spontaneous life that has its own grace.

Nanjing Requiem deals with the Nanjing Massacre remains a highly controversial topic. Some in Japan still deny or play it down. Its re-emergence in the 1990s is taken as a prime example of wartime barbarity. This barbarity has been used by the Chinese government as it constructs a highly nationalist version of its history. But Ha Jin is more interested in nuance than polemic. He shows us the Christian Japanese officer who brings supplies for the refugees. In this novel the Nazi saves a quarter of a million Chinese. The Chinese worker admits that, under torture, he made a false accusation of collaboration against two Americans from the Red Cross. The Chinese doctor consumed by self-loathing because of his association with the Japanese helps Vautrin rescue Chinese prisoners.

Ha Jin is the leading novelist. He is the Chinese-American. Most of his novels and short stories deal with the fatal psychological impacts of oppressive communist totalitarian rule in China. The social transformation brought by the communist leadership is praised by Ha Jin. But the other side of the coin is also exposed in a subtle way. At the restriction of freedom of expression, he laments in an indirect way. Ha Jin does not spend his literary talent in pinpointing the faults of the political system. But what he expects from any established political order and system is respect for citizens and their love for freedom of expression. Regarding to Ha Jin's *Waiting*, Julie Bosman gives the following views:

This is truly a tale about waiting--beginning in the 1960s. In the background is the scenario of the Cultural Revolution evolving in China and its day to day effect upon the lives of the characters. There is little about the practice of medicine or nursing as the professional lives of the characters seem to be statements of position in the place and time represented rather than issues of the nature of their work. The

patience, with which the two main characters wait for each other, without truly knowing what it is they seek, is the overriding message of the novel. (34)

The outcome of the *Waitis* both a surprise and, at some level, a lesson in profound blindness toward self. The manifest events and happenings of the novel *Waiting* suggest different kind of message. But the reality is substantially different. That is why it is safe to say that the allegory becomes the effective method of showing the extent to which Cultural Revolution led by the communist dictatorship posed the threat to the psycho-sexual virility of Chinese people.

John Noell is widely recognized as the leading critic of leading critic of Ha Jin. He extols Ha Jin's power to dramatize the eternal patience of a man who waits eighteenth years for getting wedded to the woman he loves. The divorce system of China under the harsh communist regime does not allow the protagonist of the novel to divorce his first wife and marry the woman he loves. The miracle of patience in love is presented in a vivid and touchy way. Nobel viewed *Waiting* in this light:

Waiting has the sort of first sentence that commands us to read the second, which makes us read the third, and so on until we're too caught up in the novel to marvel that its plot -- the story of a couple waiting chastely and more or less patiently for 18 years until they can get married -- should seem so suspenseful. *Waiting* also generously provides a dual education: a crash course in Chinese society during and since the Cultural Revolution, and a more leisurely but nonetheless compelling exploration of the less exotic terrain that is the human heart. (41)

Ha Jin's book could hardly be less theatrical. The narrative then skips back to the early 1960's to construct a chronology of the initially tentative and increasingly ardent romance, and to acquaint us with the obstacles the couple must overcome as they endure the full 18 years of marital separation that are required before Lin can divorce without his spouse's consent.

Neil Diamant concentrates upon the tension of the novel. He finds tension highly appealing. Such an intensity of tension is a masterstroke according to Diamant. Diamant could not help praising the true spirit of the novel which is expressed in terms of the tension and other important devices of the novel:

What gives the book its tension is not so much the question of when -- or if -- Manna and Lin will marry, but the force with which they are constantly pulled in several directions. Even as Lin tries to balance party loyalty against his love for Manna, each trip from Muji City back to Goose Village confronts him with the chasm that divides the new, industrial China from its ancient agricultural settlements. When it comes to their gossipy small-mindedness and suffocating lack of privacy, however, the two societies turn out to be more alike than they initially appear. (27)

Through the manipulation of the tension of this novel, Ha Jin wants to evoke a realistic glimpse of social transformation. The stories of social transformation have their own merits and demerits. But Diamant concludes that Ha Jin is always optimistic while rendering different fragments of social realities. A great deal of critics comes to terms with this aspect.

Sarah Fay studies Jin's *Waiting* in the light of the growing western literary influence in the generation of Ha Jin. Ha Jin is the author who is profoundly

influenced by the democratic sensibility of the American Bard, Walt Whitman. The literary transcendentalism of Walt Whitman brings effect in the genre of Ha Jin. Fay concludes thus:

Meanwhile, Western literary culture is exerting its steady pull on these thoughtful men and women. In one of the book's funniest and most ironic sections, Lin labors to write an essay on *Leaves of Grass* in order to help Manna impress a commissar (and Walt Whitman fan) that the hospital community wants her to marry. After puzzling over the poem for days, Lin decided to avoid dealing with the subjects of sexuality and self-celebration, and instead focus on the symbol of grass and on those poems praising the working class, particularly the one called A Song for Occupations. (51)

Fay is of the opinion that a great deal of influence of Whitman's writing style can easily be seen in the novels of Jin. But that does not mean there is no original trait in the style and presentation of the novelist, Ha Jin. Hence, it would be relevant to argue that there is certain degree of thematic nexus between the Ha Jin and Walt Whitman. Exactly as Whitman is laconic, Ha Jin is also laconic when the question of dealing with the immoral fantasy is concerned.

Yuejin Wang is views Ha Jin's *Waiting* from the domain of literary passion for the oddity of human experience. In this novel the main character Lin undergoes peculiar kind of sexual experiences. The deviant and odd experience of the main character constitutes the literary appeal of the text. Yuejin makes the following observation as to the strange feature of the text:

Among the luminous themes woven through *Waiting* is one concerning books and reading. Lin has a passion for literature; he despises his wife

for having let his books get mildewed. Early in their courtship, he asks Manna to help him make paper dust jackets to hide the titles of forbidden foreign novels -- those that contained bourgeois ideology and sentiments -- from the hospital's vigilant political department. Manna is only a casual reader. *Waiting* can be read as a long and eloquent answer to Manna's question. (17)

According to Wang, the term waiting signifies two things. One meaning is the endurance of Manna whom Lin waits for a decade. Other meaning is the endurance of the major character Lin who has to exercise a great deal of fortitude. The burden of loveless marriage and the relentless passion for a lady whom he loves are two conflicting things that capture the attention of the readers. Wang dwells upon this aspect of the novel.

David Kirby is minutely intent upon exploring the unimaginable consequence of political ordering of the psychological choices of the characters. There are certain things in the surface which always uncovers the darker realities that are hidden. The darker sides of political ordering of social institutions are clearly brought into light in the following lines by Kirby:

Communist China uses propaganda and force to hide the truth from the public, as well as controlling them in a sense. Ha Jin writes *Waiting* and in this book he comments and portrays communist China in great detail. *Waiting's* main character, Lin Kong, is commonly criticized as indecisive and unable to love. Allegorically *Waiting* sums up a sort of internal psychological damage to the Chinese. The Revolution was to disable people so they can't love others.

Psychological energy, sexual energy or creative energy could be focused on the revolutionary cause. (43)

Gestures and exchanges that illuminate the inner lives of the characters are enough to illustrate the psychological damages. Their hopes and anxieties, passions and longings are molded -- and blasted -- by the heat with which the state breathes down their necks. Tender private dramas are enacted against the coarse backdrop of party ideology. Invitation to celebrate radical individualism is juxtaposed with the traumatic legacy of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution.

Howard Goldblatt is another critic of Ha Jin. He is critically aware of Ha Jin's limitations as a novelist. He enumerates how Mo Yan has injected his own anecdotal experience to portrayal of village. Goldblatt argues thus:

One cannot say that Ha Jin has not criticized China in his portrayal of the village. Rather than exploring the darker undercurrents of society or the depths of the characters, he seems to make it his goal to stay on the surface. Much of the energy of the novel is spent on long and sensuous descriptions of butchering, cooking, eating and other bodily functions. There are too many episodes when the reader has to witness this or that character urinating, and to endure long descriptions of the urine. (27)

Whether Ha Jin has been successful in portraying the characters in their organic form or not, it is not clear. But one thing is undoubtedly clear that daily activities are described in a vivid and vigorous way. The real charm of Ha Jin literary oeuvre is that he is skillful in describing the common incidents of life.

Joanne Arnott is celebrated critic and author as well. She looks Ha Jin's literary representation from the western eyes. She maintains that *Waiting*

is characterized more by the features of memoir and less by the striking characteristic of novel. She reveals the following quality in the novel:

Waiting is barely a work of fiction. This is essentially a memoir. In contrast to Ha Jin's often expensive novel it is also a very slim volume barely over a hundred pages. But it describes events spanning four decades from 1969 to 2009. While amounting to a memoir, Mo is selective in what he presents. Much of the focus is on the transitional years after Mao's death in the late 1970. (37)

By writing this novel in the form of memoir, Ha Jin launches frontal attack on the transitional politics of China. The constantly shifting scenario of China has affected the common pattern of villagers. The modernization of China is both subversive and uplifting as well. Both the rosy and seamy side of modernizing China is brought to the focal point.

East-West dualism exists at the hot of Mo Yan's *Waiting*. Through the interpenetration of eastern and western value, the dualism gets the proper momentum. To some extent, Ha Jin addresses this sort of paradoxical issue in *Waiting*. Huo Jianqi concentrates upon this issue as follows:

The novella *Waiting* projects the decisive distinction between the western literary taste and the literary taste of China. While literature in the West enjoyed steady growth with multiple voices, in China its progress followed a roundabout course. Having a long history, traditional Chinese literature was known for its maturity, richness, and sophistication; hence, it had for many years been rather self-centered and self-sufficient, showing no interest in or any need for interaction with the literature of other countries. At the turn of the twentieth

century, however, with the introduction of foreign cultures and the translation of foreign literary works. (37)

Chinese literature is to some extent totalitarian, according to Huo. To this view of Huo, Ha Jin also agrees with. The literature of China hardly makes room for creative inspiration external to it. It is simply seduced by its own literary parochialism and perfidy. The first target of Mo Yan is to demolish this sort of literary egocentrism and eccentricity. To tell the truth, Mo Yan is successful in his mission fairly.

Although all these critics have examined the novel *Waiting* from different perspectives, none of them concentrated on the issue of the representation of subaltern Voice. Ha Jin is of the opinion that the communist social order and legal provision deny subaltern class access to divorce rights. The voices of the subaltern people are silenced and stifled by the communist regime and cultural totalitarianism. The issue of worry and disillusionment created by communist takeover is extensively dealt with in this novel. In the fictitious world of *Waiting* the much vaunted communist ideals, social justice and cultural nativism are portrayed as enfeebled and counterproductive. The subaltern are always victimized no matter what a tall claim communist dictator makes. In the peculiar world of China, the western thoughts turn out to be the source of despair. The native soil of China does not allow the seed of western concepts germinate and fructify easily. Hence, the issue of the critique of communist ideals which hardly makes room for the subaltern is really justifiable and pertinent from the research viewpoint. By using the perspective of subaltern studies, the researcher makes the thorough analysis of the text.

II. Representation of Subaltern Voices

Ha Jin's novel *Waiting* captures the voices of subaltern people who struggle to survive in a harrowing condition of China under the communist regime. Shuyu is the subaltern character. She serves her husband's family for twenty years. She loves her husband. She breeds children from Lin Kong. But she is victimized by her husband's one track obsessive mind. Despite Shuyu's love and dedication her husband does not love her. Rather he falls in love with a nurse who works in the same hospital where Lin Kong also works. Far from rendering Shuyu's love, Kong neglects her and undermines her self-esteem. She falls prey to the deviant impotence of her husband. Kong is capable of harboring sexual frenzy and fantasy. But he can't involve sexually with the opposite sex whom he befriends. Viewed from the selfish angle of Kong, Shuyu is the pathetic victim whose status sounds harrowing formidably. In the following lines this sort of glimpse about Shuyu's subaltern plight is reflected:

It is unfair for Lin Kong to do this to her. She has lived with the Kongs for more than twenty years, serving them like a dumb beast of burden. She looked after his sick mother until the old woman died. Then his father fell ill, and for three years she took care of the old man so well that he never had a single bedsore. After his father was gone, she raised their daughter alone and worked inside and outside the house like a widow, although her husband was still alive. She has lived a hard life; all the villagers have seen it and say so. But during all these years Lin Kong kept another woman. (13)

Shuyu is a dedicated house wife. She is an example of a perfect house wife with miraculous sense of endurance and fortitude. She is affected by the disloyalty and hatred of her husband. He wants to marry another woman whom he loves

wholehearted. For the sake of Manna Wu sacrifices his devoted housewife. It is an extreme example of a woman who is victimized by the callous insensitivity and indifference of her own husband.

To reinforce the suffering and agony of a subaltern character in *Waiting*, the researcher makes use of the theoretical notion of subaltern studies. The theoretical insights of some of the popular theorists of subaltern studies are quoted and elaborated so that the proposed hypothesis can be tested. Regarding to the concept of subalternity, David Arnold makes the following commentary:

The term subaltern identifies and describes the man, the woman, and the social group who is socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure. In describing history told from below, the term subaltern derived from the cultural hegemony work of Antonio Gramsci which identified the social groups who are excluded from a society's established structures for political representation, the means by which people have a voice in their society. The usage and the application of the terms subaltern and subaltern studies entered the field of post-colonial through the works of the subaltern studies group, a collection of South Asian historians.

(12)

Arnold maintains that the application of subaltern began to denote the colonized peoples of the South Asian Subcontinent. It described a new perspective of the history of an imperial colony. This perspective is told from the point of view of the colonized man and woman. Marxist historians already had been investigating colonial history told from the perspective of the proletariat. In the 1980s,

the scope of enquiry of Subaltern Studies was applied as an intervention in South Asian historiography.

Moreover there were other techniques which they adopted to rob the subaltern women their natural sense of being free for upward mobility. The following extract illuminates this kind of theme:

Most of the officers wanted to find a girlfriend or a fiancé among the students, although these young women were still soldiers and were not allowed to have a boyfriend. There was a secret reason for the men's interest in the female students, reasons few of them would articulate but one which they all know in their hearts, namely that these were good girls. That phrase meant these women were virgins; otherwise they could not have joined the army, since every young woman recruited has to go through a physical exam that eliminated those with a broken hymen. (18)

Girls from the subaltern background are vulnerable to the selfish intention of the official workers. The official workers have only one desire. That is how to secure the prospect and power of people belonging to their own coterie. Labor exploitation and sexual exploitation are twin problems that have profoundly affected the happiness and comforts of the subaltern people under the regime of communists.

Dipesh Chakrabarti is an eminent theorist of India. He views subaltern studies as the step towards grasping the core content of the history of oppression. Those whose voices are not heard should be enabled so that they begin to ask for their self-esteem and recognition. Without recognition and identity how can the subaltern feel freedom? Dipesh makes the following observation:

Subaltern is not just a classy word for oppressed, for [the] other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie. In post-colonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern — a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subalterns. Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus. They don't need the word subaltern.(30)

They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern.

He is not able to love his wife. but the social system does not think about enabling those who are trapped in such situation. Kong wants to marry Manna Wu who loves him in the same spirit. But Kong does not get the legal support to divorce his wife, Shuyu. The people belonging to the upper class society of China enjoyed the extreme privilege of keeping a large number of wives. But the reality is drastically different for those who want to be free from the burden of loveless marriage. In the following lines this sort of reality is reflected:

Apparently they all enjoyed themselves as his wives living under the same roof. He remembered that in the Old China some rich men had several wives. How lucky those landowners and capitalists must have been, wallowing in polygamous bliss. A scream of the wind brought him back to the snowfield. He shook his head and the vision disappeared. You are sick, he said to himself. He felt slightly disgusted by his envying those reactionary men, who ought to be condemned as

social parasites. Yet the feel of Manna's foot, which seemed to have penetrated his skin, was still lingering and expanding in his palms and fingers. (39)

The privileged class prevents the subaltern class from enjoying the divorce right. The subaltern people like Manna Wu and Kong are subjected to the harrowing condition. They are not able to fight against the oppressive and exclusionary system. That is why they are compelled to remain in the state of deprivation. They are excluded from the minimum rights and requirements of those who stay outside the barrier of society. There are no bodies and institutions which represent the voices of the voiceless. Hence, they have no option other than tolerating the torture and agony of being excluded from the self-esteem and dignity of the subaltern.

In *Making Development Geography*, Victoria Lawson presents a critique of mainstream development discourse as mere recreation of the Subaltern. It is affected by means of the subaltern being disengaged from other social scales. The continuation of the socio-cultural treatment of the subaltern as a subject of development is clearly visible. Lawson contends that "The dominant social order excludes the voices of the subject peoples from the formulations of policy and practice used to effect the modernization. As such, the subaltern is peoples who have been silenced in the administration of the colonial states". (16)

Subaltern falls prey to the rules which were applied at the hospital. Subaltern patients are discriminated. Manna helps all the patients without any sense of discrimination. By the same token, Kong the doctor also helps patients in the same spirit. But when they are in a state of taking help from other members, they themselves are victimized. In the following lines the victimization of subaltern workers is described:

A few nurses from the department of Infectious Diseases were searching about for their patients, who were not allowed to mix up with others at such a public place. Lin was worried, wondering why Mann was so indiscreet, but she did not seem to care about others' eyes and even stretched out her hand to him, half a dozen candies in her palm. He was nervous but picked one, peeled off the wrapper, and put it into his mouth. It was an orange drop. She smiled, and he felt she looked rather sweet. City girls, they are so bold, he said to himself.

(45)

Subalterns are encouraged so long as their services are useful. Once, they are no longer the source of useful service, the dominant social order excludes and treats them in an inhuman way. Subalterns are really in a pathetic condition. They are deprived and treated in an inhuman way. The treatment of the subaltern class degenerates into the peculiar kind of dehumanization of the subalterns. In a clear way, it seems axiomatic to say that there was a trend to oppress the subaltern people in a formidable way.

SumitSarkar is of the opinion that the voice of the subaltern can be heard by means of their political actions, effected in protest against the discourse of mainstream development. Subaltern social groups create social, political, and cultural movements. These movements contest and disassemble the exclusive claims to power of the Western imperialist powers. They seek to establish the use and application of local knowledge to create new spaces of opposition. Sarkar asserts:

Subaltern studies are a broadly influential academic movement. Its goal is to refocus history on the unique role of subaltern or marginalized people in bringing about large scale transformations in society. The implications of subaltern studies for geography are

especially apparent in the group's exploration of spatialized categories of class, ancestry, and religion. Subaltern studies' turn away from traditional methods of historical research was signaled by ongoing debates over the definition of the term subaltern. (39)

In the work of the collective the word subaltern came to describe any group that is wholly left out of the elite. In this light, the collective's focus also developed in relation to long-standing populist debates in South Asia.

Waiting draws on an intimate knowledge of contemporary China to create a novel of unexpected richness and feeling. This is the story of Lin Kong, a man living in two worlds, struggling with the conflicting claims of two utterly different women as he moves through the political minefields of a society designed to regulate his every move and stifle the promptings of his innermost heart. In the following lines the plight of subaltern workers can be seen:

For more than seventeen years, this devoted and ambitious doctor has been in love with an educated, clever, modern woman, Manna Wu. But back in the traditional world of his home village lives the wife his family chose for him when he was young--a humble and touchingly loyal woman, whom he visits in order to ask, again and again, for a divorce. In a culture in which the ancient ties of tradition and family still hold sway and where adultery discovered by the Party can ruin lives forever, Lin's passionate love is stretched ever more taut by the passing years. Every summer, his compliant wife agrees to a divorce but then backs out. This time, Lin promises, will be different. (87)

Tracing these lives through their summer of decision and beyond, Ha Jin vividly conjures the texture of daily life in a place where the demands of human longing must

contend with the weight of centuries of custom. *Waiting* charms and startles us with its depiction of a China that remains hidden to Western eyes even as it moves us with its piercing vision of the universal complications of love.

This assumption originally led to a neglect of gender and other forms of diversity within subaltern groups. She further notes that the British colonizers were the first to consider subalterns as a particular class of subordinated people. As a result, attempts to give voice to the subaltern might only reinforce the unfair distinctions between subalterns and elites. Yet Spivak famously holds the potential for further research provided that scholars recognize that the concept of the subaltern is simply a strategic essentialism. She argues in this way:

Thus, subaltern studies face four challenges. First, textual records contain few references to subaltern voices. Second, the references that do exist were often written by those in power. Third, even where their words were recorded, subalterns were often speaking in extremely imbalanced circumstances of the type they faced throughout their lives. Fourth, the division of people into elites and subalterns is itself the result of colonial oppression. Despite such obstacles, however, subaltern studies remains a vibrant movement whose scholars continue to use creative and alternative forms of knowledge to overcome the legacies of injustice.(51)

The book *Selected Subaltern Studies* penned by Ranajit Guha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak throws light on the historical aspects of the subaltern studies right from its origin and development. The very word Subaltern has got a lot of significances and the writers have made an attempt to trace the reasons and causes for their plight.

The judge says he must give the woman's name and all vital information for the case to proceed, and until then, he is to stay married and be good to his wife. A crowd of angry villagers, outraged by Lin's attempted disposal of his wife, which is led by her brother, Bensheng, has gathered outside. The following lines exemplify this fact:

Lin returns to the hospital to find out that a high-ranking officer has divorced his wife and is looking for another. He has asked the hospital to help, since he wants a nurse or doctor to care for him as he gets older. Since Manna is the most attractive of the "old maids" at the hospital, the political committee is thinking of recommending her. Director Ran Su talks to Lin first; who agrees it may be best for Manna. When Lin and Manna discuss it, they agree this is a chance she cannot pass up. A liaison with Commissar Wei could open up a much brighter future for her, professionally and socially. Lin feels angry that Wei has the power to choose any woman he likes and somewhat disgusted by. (115)

Lin introduces them and the three of them go to lunch, where Lin inexplicably becomes somewhat surly. Liang has to return home because his daughter is ill, but returns a few days later. He and Manna spend some time together and he writes Lin later that he is very interested in her and would like to return to woo her. Manna tells Lin she is not at all attracted to Liang, and Lin is secretly delighted. Manna insists Lin is the one she loves, and he is not to suggest looking for another man again. She writes to Liang, telling him she feels poorly and suffers from serious rheumatic heart disease, which apparently scares him off. Lin never hears from his cousin again.

In the early 1980s, there emerged in India a 'school' of history that goes by the name of 'Subaltern Studies'; this 'school' has now gained a world-wide reputation, and 'Subaltern Studies' is beginning to make its influence felt in Latin American Studies, African Studies, 'cultural studies', and other arenas. Where previously the history of modern India, and particularly of the nationalist movement, was etched as a history of Indian 'elites', now this history is being construed primarily as a history of 'subaltern groups'. GyanendraPandey raises questions after questions as who the subaltern insight developed:

How are the common people to think about subalterns? Who and what are the 'subalterns', and how did this military term begin to be used as the center-piece of a body of work on resistance? Even the common readers will begin with a consideration of the original problematic of subaltern histories and then ask how such histories can be written. It has effectively contested what were until recently the dominant interpretations of Indian history, and more generally it has provided a framework within which to contest the dominant modes of knowledge.

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However, subaltern history has not always had an easy relationship with feminism, and we will also interrogate the place of feminism within subaltern history. Feminist historiography, more than anything else, has brought questions of voice, agency, and resistance to the fore, and in this connection we will look at an oral history of women in the uprising, and some articles drawn from a recent anthology on constructions of womanhood and women in colonial India.

The course will, in the final weeks, move to debates among subaltern historians, and a consideration of the argument that Subaltern Studies has been

contaminated by post-modernism. Finally, it will: how do subaltern historians write histories of 'great men'? Does subaltern history condemn us to writing only of the history of this or that rebellion, this or that oppressed group? Are only fragmentary narratives possible, or is it possible to write a history of the nationalist movement as a whole, and if so, does that necessarily become a master narrative? The course will conclude with a discussion of AshisNandy's *The Intimate Enemy*, not a work belonging to the Subaltern School, but one of the most significant works on colonial India nonetheless; and we shall be interested particularly in attempting to locate it in relation to subaltern history.

The term subaltern is used in postcolonial theory. The exact meaning of the term in current philosophical and critical usage is disputed. Some thinkers use it in a general sense to refer to marginalized groups and the lower classes, a person rendered without agency by his or her social status. Others, such as GayatriChakravortySpivak, use it in a more specific sense. She argues that subaltern is not oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group; subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power (5).

Subaltern was first used in a non-military sense by Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Some believe that he used the term as a synonym for proletariat possibly as a codeword in order to get his writings past prison censors, while others believe his usage to be more nuanced and less clear cut .Gramsci claims that the history of the subaltern classes was just as complex as the history of the dominant classes, although the history of the latter is usually that which is accepted as official history. For him the history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic, since they are always subject to the activity of ruling groups even when they rebel. Clearly,

they have less access to cultural and social institutions. Only 'permanent' victory that is revolutionary class adjustment can break the pattern of subordination.

In order to counter the hegemony of western feminism the notion of third world feminism came in to the forefront of theoretical representation. Western feminism is hegemonic in the sense that it has not been able to address the subaltern issue of those women whose voices are rarely raised. To empower the voices of subaltern women who have fallen victims to the several cultural forces, western discourse of feminism is insufficient. Hence, it becomes imperative that the subaltern studies arose as a mode of emancipation for those women who are victimized by the plenty of cultural contradictions and hurdles. This is the rationale behind the inception of the subaltern women. The spirit of third world feminism and the insight of subaltern studies are blended so that the cause of the liberation of subaltern women is projected to the forefront of reader reception.

During the colonial rule there was no possibility for freedom. Even the people belonging to the mainstream class had no taste and experience of gaining access to the freedom. The question of the freedom of the subaltern class hardly arose. After the country became independent of the colonial rule of Britain the possibility of the forum for the unheard voice of the subaltern gained momentum. In this context it becomes interesting to quote ParthaChatterji who has made the following observation :

Indeed as long as Indians continue to harbor illusions about the progressive qualities of modern civilization, they will remain a subject nation. Even if they succeed physically in driving out the English they still have English rule without the Englishman because it is not the physical presence of the English which makes India a subject nation : it is civilization which subjects.(157)

ParthaChatterjee is extremely critical of the entire panorama of western epistemic landscape. She associates the term nationalism with the crooked lines. She is vocal against the modular nationalism of the west. Every discourse is capable of producing its own form of resistance.

The term subaltern has been adapted to post-colonial studies from the work of the subaltern studies group of historians, who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes of south Asian studies. It is used in subaltern studies as what RanjitGuha says as ‘ a name for the general attribute of subordination in south Asian society whether that is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or any other way’ (Guha). The group formed by RanjitGuha, and initially including Sahaid Amin.

Hardiman and GyanPandey –has produced five volumes of subaltern studies: essays relating to the history politics, economics and sociology of subalternity ‘as well as the attitudes ideologies and belief systems-in short, the culture informing that conditions:

Just a classy word for oppressed, for other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie. In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern a space of difference. Now who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern. Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus, they don't need the word 'subaltern'. They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie and not being allowed, so let them

speaking, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern. (3)

The purpose of the subaltern studies project was to redress the imbalance created in academic work by tendency to focus on elite culture in south Asian historiography. Recognizing that subordination cannot be understood except in a binary relationship with dominance, the group aimed to examine the subaltern 'as an objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations of the role'.

The goals of the group stemmed from the belief that the historiography of Indian nationalism, for instance, had long been dominated by elitism-colonialist elitism and bourgeoisie nationalist elitism-both the consequences of British colonialism. Such historiography suggested that the development of nationalist consciousness was an exclusively elite achievement either of colonial administrators, policy or culture, or of elite Indian personalities, institutions or ideas.

The publication under the subaltern studies is important events for the writing of the history of colonial India. This is not just because of the thorough research into the wide range of problems that make up the volume, nor is it only because the research wants to make us listen to the voices of silent. According to Sahid Amin and DipeshChakrabarty,' the condition of colonial people in the control of colonizers so what have had been done at that period was done by colonizer perspectives.'(90) According to them, British colonizers came to India and they established themselves as superior and Indian people were regarded as inferior. They wrote history of the Indian people but that history does have nominal voices of native.

Thus this study tries to attempt the Subaltern perspective of this novel. The members of the subaltern studies group attempt to locate a consciousness in the

subaltern by affirming the political nature of the subaltern group insurgencies. The subaltern would escape the subordinate position of the binary opposition in the sign system. This approach is regarded as problematic. Spivak writes:

In the context of the emergence of the new subaltern, the question of subaltern consciousness has once again become important. Spivak in her seminal essay *Introduction to Selected Subaltern Studies* cites about subaltern consciousness and ‘the colonial subject’ as the basis of theorization, perceived their task as making a theory consciousness or culture rather than specifically a theory of change. (4)

It is around the issues of democratization and gender and development that the question of subaltern consciousness most urgently arises. This is because it is precisely those who were denied access to lines leading to the European civil society mindset and bourgeoisie model female emancipation that must first be diagnosed today as culturally incapable.

Subaltern studies consider the bottom layer of society. Not necessarily out together by capital logic alone. This is its theoretical relationship of feminism that the subaltern is gendered, and hence needs to be studied with the help of feminist theory. The imprisoned Antonio Gramsci used the words to stand in for ‘proletarian’ to escape the prison censors. But the word soon cleared a space and took on the task of analyzing what ‘proletarian’ produced by capital logic, could not cover.

In Gramsci’s project is not specially gender sensitive in its detail but can be made so. In his prison notebook he lays out that future program. He argues that” This new location of subalternity also requires a vision of feminist theory. The generically reproductive body as the site of production questions feminist’s theories based only on the ownership of the phenomenal body as means of reproduction, and

feminist psychological theories reactive to reproductive genital penetration as normality (19). Another example would be the shift in the dominant tone of feminist history. There had been interesting developments in the new field of gender studies in the 1970s and early 1980s. A simple binary of westernized surrendering exist resistance will necessarily have major difficulties in finding space for sensitive studies of movements for women's right ,or In the field of post-colonial studies, GayatriChakravortySpivak conceptualized "The Subaltern." The subject of the woman from the Third World as being doubly oppressed by the Virtue of her being a woman and poor at that was the thesis of Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Hans Bertens in *Literary Theory* says:

Spivak has drawn our attention to that large majority of the colonized that has left no mark upon history because it could not, or was not allowed to, make itself heard. Millions and millions have come and gone under the colonial dispensation without leaving a trace: men, but even more so women. Since colonized women almost by definition went unheard within their own patriarchal culture, they were doubly Unheard under a colonial regime. (211)

Bertens adds that Spivak employs the term lower caste. As the subaltern people do not have the means as the strategy to get access to hegemony, they need the intellectuals to show them the way. Gramsci's opinion is inevitably fragmented and episodic as they were subject to the activity of the elite and dominant group. Gramsci remarks in the following way:

Subaltern consciousness is another hotly debated issue of subaltern studies. Gramsci suggests to us a methodological approach in which we see subaltern consciousness as contradictory, consisting of two

opposed elements one autonomous and the other borrowed. Similarly, we see the history of religion two opposed tendencies –one the attempt to articulate a universal code for society as a whole, and the other the struggle by the subordinated to resist the dominating implications of this code. (27)

Gramsci maintains that it is necessary to be cautious while using the notion of subalternity. He furthermore elaborates that the concept of subalternity is contradictory. It is driven by the dual contradictory purpose. I wasn't such an unattractive girl when Granny's always hated me for it. One time she beat me so badly for something. I did that she broke on my hips.

Gramsci is proposing to study methodological approach and subaltern consciousness as contradictory and consisting of two opposed elements of autonomous. Subaltern refers to those groups of the society who are subject to hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers, woman marginalized groups, indigenous and other group denied to hegemonic power.

Golden, of course, does not want his characters to be demoralized in such an influential manner. This drastic change in the name of major, Granny's further proves that patriarchal capitalist ideology. Capitalists are never ready to give clear identification of working class people. It stands in guard against its fixed ideology of suppression and domination over the satsu by expanding its economy based market slavery. Satsu is an unattractive girl and Granny dominates her.

Some elitists objectify to the subaltern and are caught in the game of the knowledge as a power. So, subaltern studies seem to suggest that its own subalternity, in claiming a positive subject position for the subaltern, might be rein

scribed as a strategy for our times. DipeshChakrabatri points out subaltern consciousness as the “Peasant consciousness” in this essay he writes:

The religious consciousness of the peasantry is not subjected to any determinations and is made supra-historical. It is assumed that the peasantry has an ideal for at paradigmatically pure peasant consciousness marked by religiously existed in a pure state especially in the nineteenth century. (365)

Golden presentation of the Mr. Tanaka is dominating her. After the death of the mother they were sold by their father and rich merchant Mr. Tanaka sells them in the pleasure district of Hanamachi to servitude his livelihood. The religious faith as claimed by Dipesh, hardly hinders the gradual formation and material of the spirit of resistance. However underprivileged and backward the class, the nascent and latent spirit of resistance can grow gradually:

When Mr. Tanaka had closed the door behind them, I turned to see Satsu setting in the edge of the platform, gazing upward toward the ceiling. Because of the shape of her face, tears were pooled along the tops of her nostrils, and I burst into tears myself the moment I saw her upset. I felt myself to blame for what had happened, and wiped her face with the corner of my peasant shirt. (23)

Every poor girl sold in those Okiya dreamed of becoming a geisha because there was no other thing as beautiful. They always remained closed for any personal desire because they knew that their professions demand them to make other happy.”The fate of geishas is manestin,what do you think life as a geisha would be like? We don’t become geisha so our lives will be satisfying. We become geisha because we have no

other choice”(338). Becoming a geisha is definitely not a woman’s first choice starvation. The plight of women in that profession is increasingly miserable.

Guha is not proposing to study peasant consciousness and its entirety, but only the consciousness of the insurgent peasants. DipeshChakrabarty, further, views about too opposing totalities the elite and the subaltern,” the feudal mode of power and the peasant communal mode of power. Subaltern studies are also supposed to be ill equipped to analyze the role and effect of colonization”(25). In this novel Sayuri further describes when Mr. Tanaka closed the door the both were wiping because of their suppression. After closing the door they think what happened to them. They were wearing a peasant dress and wiped very much. DipeshChakrabati points out that subaltern studies as a peasant studies.

Thus the class analysis should be ‘the latent anti-imperialism within the communal consciousness. The insurgent consciousness that Guha shows analysis is’ constructed on the basis of categories which are derived from Marxism and which are only remotely connected to’ categories’ that peasant ‘use in their daily lives make sense of their world” (375).Peasant experience ‘has to find a place in any project that aspires to categorizes and understand peasant consciousness. In this novel also there are subaltern class people having their only subaltern consciousness.

For the subaltern members spokesperson becomes their life giver and master. The small peasant properties cannot represent themselves. They must be represented their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above:

Guha’s view clarifies that the alleged ‘peasant consciousness’ is a strategy they have got to adopt foe establishing subaltern people as an

autonomous domain having their own history. Spivak finally suggests Subaltern Studies to follow reading against grain approach because it would get group off the dangerous hook of claiming to establish the truth knowledge of the subaltern and his consciousness. (356)

In Ha Jin's *Waiting* there is also autonomous domain for the subaltern people the girl should be beaten and made to repay the cost of the kimono, and that's that, where the bamboo pole? Rich people want to earn money to sell their peasant girls virginity in the higher bids. In this essay "elementary aspects of peasant insurgency" Guha too, depicts tribal revolts as the subaltern rebellion, which is completely different from nationalism "subaltern studies" in David Ludden words "entered the academic scene by asserting the complete autonomy of lower class insurgency "(20)". It is equally remarkable that the scholars from inside and outside have established subaltern peoples everyday resistance against elite classes as the basic features of life in the political decolonization spaces like India.

The youths belonging to the new generation are in disagreement not only with the old leaders but with the mass media and representatives of the state apparatuses. The upper class elites does not try to bring into light the truth which makes people aware of the mushrooming follies and perversion. The following lines exemplify the fact that media is in complicit with the politics of cynicism, corruptions and fantasy:

There were two reasons why I listened so avidly. In the first place news-thirst becomes a craving for every political activist, a kind of occupational disease. Secondly I wanted to keep a close watch on the antics of our national radio systems which incidentally had not so far said a single word about the existence of our new party even though we had kept them fully informed of our activities. My Boniface and

the others soon developed the same new-thirst, only they never did seem able to listen with their ears alone; they must pass their very loud comment at the same time. (132)

Many factors contribute to the deterioration of the communist china. As far as possible, attempts are made to keep reality at bay. It is very difficult to find any institutional body to watch the reality. For the most part, people are taken away from the reality. They are happy to tread on the path shown by the visionless and parochial leaders of the country. Nobody strives to explore the hidden reality. Rumor, illusion and false hope are rampant. To explore the truth and to convince the people is to run the great risk. Nobody had the gut to raise finger at the wrong doings done by the corrupted and bankrupt leaders of the country.

This leads to the questions of how to characterize and describe subaltern consciousness. Sumit Sarkar, argues there is a coexistence and complex interaction between different types of consciousness –eg: caste, class, regional and national. Sarkar goes on to define subaltern consciousness as having positive and negative dimensions. Example of positive consciousness participation in railway strikes, for instance, where as to strike for low protection is seen as evidence of negative consciousness. The following citation from the text supports the point:

I promised her I'd speak with you. She told me something very strange. She said óhHatsumomo! Mother has changed her mind! But I am sure she'd feel better, mother, if you told yourself that you haven't changed your mind about adopting her” Pumpkin had rushed down the stairs looking upset. (321)

Negative consciousness, for instance, sees it as the consciousness not of the being 'subaltern 'but for the oppressors. A subaltern study provides the model for general

theory of consciousness. 'Subaltern consciousness's emerged as collective subaltern consciousness which is unavoidably a post-psychoanalytic issue. Some elitists objectify the subaltern people. They are caught in the game of knowledge as power.

Kong takes part in the election campaign. He is bent upon defeating Nanga in the election. He is so determined to defeat Nanga that he would prefer the tyrannical rule than regressive governance of Nanga the minister of culture. Nanga gradually comes to know that his political hold is slipping. He does his best to maintain the integrity of his political hegemony. He employs fair means or foul to win in the election. But his dream hardly gets materialized. One of the tyrants launches military take-over. Kong concludes and consoles himself by saying that he rather prefers the tyrannical rule rather than the corrupted and extremely parochial rule of Nanga. The following lines mark the dramatic moment of the conflict between Nanga and Odili:

But their most touching gestures as far as I was concerned was release Eunice from jail and pronounce Max as a Hero of the revolution. What I found distasteful however was the sudden, unashamed change of front among the very people who had stood by and watched him die. Overnight everyone began to shake their heads at the excesses of the last regime, at its grafts, oppression and corrupt government: newspapers, the radio, the hitherto silent intellectuals and civil servants-everybody said what a terrible lot; and it became public opinion the next morning. (149)

Max launched a military coup. He deposed Nanga. Max's military rise marks the end of political liberalism and democratic norms. But his rule heralds the new beginning. The youths' search for newness in every sphere of life is clearly materialized following Marx's military revolution. Whether the new military ruler will pursue the regressive

policy or not is unclear. Corruptions, degradation, and other forms of deterioration are expected to sweep away. A new and fresh political beginning is going to happen. Such a beginning is expected to brighten the faces of the entire people. The new beginning is promising. But it is a matter of arduous anticipation.

Thus, it is clear that the novel *Waiting* represents the conflict between the old generation of leaders and the new generation of aspiring youths. The rigid and parochial thinking of the old generation and the ambitious youths of the new generation collided. Due to the conflict, the postcolonial vision and anticipation never come to true.

The core value of the indigenous culture of China and the lingering legacy of European colonialism stood in a course of constant conflict. This conflicting viewpoint underscores the generational conflict between the old generation and the new generation. In the new generation there is the strong influence of colonial legacy. The new generation exemplified by Odili is subject to the seductive charm of colonial legacy. The effect of colonial legacy can be found in the love of new generation for the westernized modernity. On the contrary, the old generation is fearful of the fact that the renewal of the country is possible through the importation of western values. Although there are a large number of crowds who are wholly hypocritical, the distinguishing factor is that they are averse to the emerging tendency towards the total modernization of China.

The new generation is not in favor of sabotaging the indigenous culture of their country. They are of the opinion that the pristine quality of the indigenous culture should be protected. But the indigenous culture and techniques alone are not enough to modernize the country. On the contrary, country needs progressive values external to the indigenous soil. To welcome the western cultural importation does not mean that

the youths are fully antagonistic to the indigenous culture. The essence and core values of China make strong resurgence. Chinese essentialism is overassertive. But the lingering vestige of European colonialism continued to produce effect and strength. The conflicting relationship between them Chinese essentialism and colonial legacy has found reflection in the inter-generational conflict between the old generational leaders and the new generation of youths.

HomiBhabha, a key-thinker within post-colonial thought, emphasizes the importance of social power relations in his working definition of 'Subaltern' groups as oppressed minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group. Subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power.

It is noteworthy that Bonaventura de Sousa Santos uses the term 'Subaltern Cosmopolitanism' extensively in his book. He refers to this in the context of counter-hegemonic practices, movements, resistances and struggles against neoliberal globalization, particularly the struggle against social exclusion. He also uses the term interchangeably with cosmopolitan legality as the diverse normative framework for an 'equality of differences'. In fact, here, the term subaltern is used to denote marginalized and oppressed people(s) specifically struggling against hegemonic globalization.

The conflict between the old elitism and the new generation of subaltern furnishes the main thematic logic of this novel. This research probes into the reasons for the widening distance between the old and the new generation of leaders. The fictitious setting of this novel largely resembles the real postcolonial China. Achebe sets this novel in a fictitious nation of China. The fictitious South Asian country, in which this novel is set, is independent from the colonial rule of the whites. There is a

great deal of troubles and vacuums in the post-independent period. To some extent the inept and incompetent leaders of the postcolonial China are largely responsible for the failure of postcolonial China to present itself as the leading economic country. Moreover the institutionalized biases of the old generations of people towards the educated and free youths prevent the post-independent China from falling into the mould of anarchy and further impoverishment.

Some people like Lin Kong and his followers struggle to defend the pre-colonial culture, ritual, customs and identity. They try to revive and restore the pristine pre-colonial legacy. They are firmly bent upon rejecting the western European life style and norms. On the contrary, there is another group who prefers newness, new norms and western European life. For them to follow the western life style and norms is to welcome the modernist mentality and the materialistic conception of life. The old generation of people is turned towards the pre-colonial tradition whereas the new generation of youths followed on the footsteps of western modernity and European norms. They are averse to the emerging trends of modernizations. Due to the difference between the viewpoints of the old and the new generation, the conflict arises between them. Two characters Lin Kong and chief Nanga represent two different generations which are in a collision course. Manna represents the new generation of politicians whereas the minister Nanga represents the old generation of politicians. This research dwells upon the dynamics of conflict between these two generations- the old and the new generation.

Kong is the defender of the pre-colonial culture and tradition of the China. He is a teacher in the beginning of his career. Later on he quits this profession and enters politics. To climb the ladder of political success, he makes use of the powerful rhetoric of taking the country back to the golden period of pre-colonial tradition,

values and norms. He collects people who like to revive the pre-colonial past. In the groups of those who hate the new trend to imitate the western European thoughts and norms, he becomes popular. Those who are suspicious of the emerging European fashions and trends are ready to follow on the path shown by Nanga. Nanga also produces every impression of being leader who is genuinely worried about the fate of common people.

The voice, view and rhetoric used by Nanga are all tempting and tantalizing. He ignites what the close friend of the narrator says “the inflammatory anti-European rhetoric”(164). As a consequence, he becomes the powerful and sincere representative of the common people. He argues that the educated people and elites are the followers of the west. They don't think about the real problems of the country. They are the real enemies of the common people. Such a rejectionist model of Nanga's thought is rejected by other people who have the new fresh viewpoint. The educated youth and emerging generation believe that the importation of western thought and European techniques help country to get modernized and advanced. Shuyu represents this line of thought. The contrast between the viewpoints adopted by Nanga and Kong generates conflict. It is the conflict between the tradition and modernity. In other words, it is the conflict between the old and the new generation of politicians.

The researcher examines critically the socio-political implication of this conflict by using some of the postcolonial theories developed by different postcolonial theorists. Though Nanga claims to be the defender of the pre-colonial tradition of country, he is not the defender in the real sense of the word. He is just the self centric, greedy and corrupt leader. Instead of being honestly devoted to the welfare of common people, he is involved in boosting and strengthening his own living conditions. He embezzles hefty amount of government money. He uses that

money to construct a four story house. He is enmeshed in several corrupt activities. Not only this, he becomes increasingly lecherous. He can go to any extent in order to fulfill his lecherous desire. The values and vision cherished by Nanga is almost defunct and obsolete. The following lines extracted from *Waiting* justify the corrupt and degraded existence of Nanga, the representative of the old generation:

Max began by accusing the outgoing Government of all kinds of swindling and corruption. As he gave instance after instance of how some of our leaders who were ash-mouthed paupers five years ago had become near-millionaires under our very eyes, many in the audience laughed. But it was the laughter of resignation to misfortune. No one among them swore vengeance; no one shook with rage or showed any sign of fight. They understood what was being said, they had seen it with their own eyes. But what did anyone expect them to do? (125)

The failure of postcolonial vision to make the independent country progressive and modernized is clearly seen in the fate of this country. People had expected a lot from the post-independent China. There is enthusiasm and expectation that the new country will give them the sense of success, dignity, progress and security. But the leaders like Nanga and other parochial crackpot put the country on the path of ruin and destruction. In this regard, the postcolonial theory seems to be far more relevant and pertinent.

III. Ha Jin's Subaltern Concern in *Waiting*

The core finding of this research is that subaltern people in China under the communist reign are tortured, excluded and disposed. They are deprived of their access to humanity. They are psychologically so harassed and hamstrung that they are unable to risk the minor task of life. *Waiting* is based on a true story that Jin heard from his wife when they were visiting her family at an army hospital in China.

At the hospital was an army doctor who had waited eighteen years to get a divorce so he could marry his longtime friend, a nurse. The major part of the narrative revolves around the fortunes of three people: Lin Kong, the army doctor; his wife Shuyu, whom he has never loved; and his girlfriend at the hospital where he works, the nurse Manna Wu. Beginning in 1963 and stretching over a twenty-year period, *Waiting* is set against the background of a changing Chinese society. It contrasts city and country life and shows the restrictions on individual freedoms that are a routine part of life under communism.

Waiting is primarily a novel of character. It presents a portrait of a decent but deeply flawed man, Lin Kong, whose life is spoiled by his inability to experience strong emotions and to love wholeheartedly. Army doctor Lin Kong married his wife, Shuyu, as decided by his parents. While Lin spent most of his of time away from home for his job, Shuyu raised their daughter and cared for both Lin's dying mother and father. Lin feels no love for her, and once he meets Manna Wu, a nurse at the hospital, he falls in love with her and feels that he must divorce his wife. Year after year, Lin tries to divorce the woman he is embarrassed to be married to, and every year when he comes home for a few days during the holidays, he goes with her to the courthouse, and she agrees that she will consent to the divorce. But each time, once they arrive at the courthouse, she does not consent. The *Waiting* of the title refers to

Lin's waiting to divorce Shuyu so he can be with Manna. He finally succeeds in divorcing Shuyu, thanks to a law that states that, if a man and wife have been separate for 18 years, the man can divorce her without her consent.

Manna and Lin attend a staff holiday dinner, although not together. Manna begins to drink heavily, which Lin admonishes her for, but she defies him and he feels humiliated. Later, he goes outside and smokes a cigarette, still stinging from the rejection, but blaming himself and realizing he wants her most when it is impossible to have her. Manna appears, embracing him and apologizing. He forgives her, and she reminds him she is a thirty-year-old virgin, asking him if he wants to make love to her. Manna accuses him of being a "fearful rabbit" and he agrees to take the blame for the situation, then helps her back to her living quarters, as she is very drunk. Lin is upset and embarrassed, but he decides to ask Shuyu for a divorce the next summer.

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