TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Retrieval the History of Sati: Sacrifice and Triumph in Owenson's *The Missionary; An Indian Tale*

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Yogendra Mainali has completed his thesis entitled “Retrieval the History of Sati: Sacrifice and Triumph in Owenson’s *The Missionary; An Indian Tale*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from November 2011 to December 2012. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

The Thesis entitled "Retrieval the History of Sati: Sacrifice and Triumph in Owenson's *The Missionary; An Indian Tale*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Yogendra Mainali, has been approved by the undersigned members of Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present thesis entitled "Retrieval the History of Sati: Sacrifice and Triumph in Owenson's *The Missionary; An Indian Tale*" retrieves the history of *sati* by taking the subject position. Owenson empowers her heroine, Luxima to protest against injustice, colonial oppression of culture, and negative attitude towards Hindu culture by Westerner. The material reality of *sati* silences the voice with an ahistorical symbol of oppression of women, but in the novel, Luxima incites a long imminent Hindu uprising against colonial rule when she jumps upon a missionary Hilarion's pyre. Luxima's determination to commit *sati* is her own decision. Hilarion attempts to convert the Hindu belief into Christianity, but due to the consciousness of Hindu priestess and with her ritual performance of Hinduism makes failure to achieve his mission. Luxima's struggle to resist the cultural colonial mission with the performance of culture becomes a milestone to retrieve the history of *sati* in the transmission of Indian culture. Although Luxima has sacrificed her life for the preservation of Hinduism and National Identity, she triumphs in colonial mission of converting the Hindu religion into Christianity.

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I. Cultural Resistance against Colonizing Sensibility

The ritual space of *sati* is an ahistorical symbol of oppression of women while examining the Hindu women's vexed status but Luxima, a heroine of the novel, *The Missionary,* incites a long imminent Hindu uprising against colonial rule when she jumps upon a missionary Hilarion's funeral pyre. Underscoring women's troubling role in the transmission of Hindu culture, Luxima's aborted ritual provokes the centuries long debate about *sati* and female agency.

Examining the Hindu woman's vexed status as a repository of culture, this project focuses on religious issues. The novel appears with the moral question about colonialism and slavery in order to confront the brutalities of British colonialism. Owenson explores the ritual space of *sati* and she perhaps unwittingly represents and reproduces the double colonization of her heroine.

The reason behind selecting text is to represent the silence voices, allowing them to speak, talking back to powers that marginalize them, documenting their hidden pasts and lost movements, and to restore the integrity of indigenous histories. Also, this study makes significant contribution to illuminate the false assumption of Christianity on Hinduism. Finally, this project aims to valorize the Hindu culture, religion, system, rules and regulations.

For the identity and consciousness of the voiceless people, Subaltern Study became one of the milestone fields which give the voice for voiceless in the novel, *The Missionary: An Indian Tale.* Though, "Subaltern Studies began its impressive career in England at the end of the 1970s'' with "a small group of English and Indian historians" (Ludden1) and formally born with the publication of *Subaltern Studies: Writing on South Asian History* under the editorship of South Asian scholar Ranjit Guha. It is broad field with the space for the recovery of multiple and diverse silenced voices of the history. Subaltern Studies launched itself with an act of rejection, denying South Asia's previous 'history from below'.

Subaltern Studies appeared with thorny question by questioning of the elitist historiography and subalternity of the various minority groups and under the postcolonial Indian context. The subaltern does in fact speak, but Owenson's novel replete with essentialist stereotypes, exposes the problems inherent in giving her voice. Owenson's subaltern protagonist, Luxima demonstrates a profound commitment to her religion and for national identities, and she performs cultural rituals that link an oppressed past with a liberated future.

Subaltern Studies explores the subaltern consciousness and resistance against the domination that becomes the milestone to retrieve the history of *sati*. Keeping this fact into consideration, this project fulfills the objectives also from the standpoint of Subaltern Theory, especially of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Gyan Prakash. Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and Gyan Prakash's "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism" become the embracing tool to fulfill this project, as well as with the contribution of the other Subaltern Theorist as Antonio Gramsci, Ranjit Guha, Dipesh Chakravorty, Veena Das etc.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Introduction to Selected Subaltern Studies* (from Subaltern Studies IV) cites "the Subaltern Studies collective […] generally perceive their task as making a theory of consciousness or culture rather than specifically a theory of change" (4). A subaltern cannot speak due to various reasons among which David Richards clarify three major reasons in his essay "Framing Identity" collected in *A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature*. In response in 1988 Spivak seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" got published. In this essay she presents women as a subaltern group. In describing, the circumstances of surrounding the suicide of young Bengali women become relevant in this context as:

> To see this as proof of the feminism of classical Hinduism or of Indian culture as goddess-centered and therefore feminist is a ideologically contaminated by nativism or reverse ethnocentrism as it was imperialist to erase the image of the luminous fighting Mother Durga and invest the proper noun Sati with no significance other than the ritual burning of the helpless widow as sacrificial offering who can then be saved. There is no space from which the sexed subaltern can speak. (103)

She could not speak even though she is renowned Postcolonial critic. At least her contribution helped ahead to evaluate the history of women. Of course, the subalterns speak but in the context of Spivak, Owenson's novel replete with essentialist stereotypes exposes the problems inherent in giving her voice. Spivak, in her words, is pessimistic that she establishes the space of *sati* as 'the ritual burning of the helpless widow as sacrificial offering who can then be saved'.

Postcolonial cultural criticism and literary theory had embraced Subaltern Studies shifted as the framework of the study increasingly stressed the clash of unequal cultures under Colonialism and the dominance of Colonial modernity over Indian's resistant, indigenous culture and so on. It has also enabled Subaltern Studies to speak the Indian Culture from its domination by the Colonial archive.

Critical reading of Colonial texts, oral histories, and ethnographic techniques are employed to reveal India's cultural roots in the subaltern subjectivity. Subaltern Studies thus becomes a Post-colonial critique of Modern, European, and Enlightenment epistemologies. It is impossible to retrieve the woman's voice when she was not given a subject position from which to speak. This argument appears to run counter to the historiographical convention of retrieval to recover the histories of the traditionally ignored-women, workers, peasants, minorities etc.

In the period of the major shift that emerged in the history of Subaltern Studies, Socialist Communist and Marxist system were deteriorating throughout the world. In such a context, Postcolonial Studies remained the only domain which could provide a platform to the third world voices. Dinesh Chakrabarty in his essay “Invitation to a Dialogue” (*Subaltern Studies IV*) not only tries to defend it from the critics especially the Marxist ones but also pinpoints its problematic relation with Marxists. The Marxism only brought consciousness to the subaltern people. But, its impact was not in all the third world countries.

Clearly, Subaltern Studies obtains its force as Postcolonial criticism from a catachrestic combination of Marxism, Post-structuralism, Gramsci and Foucault, the Modern West and India, archival research and textual criticism. This project has become applicable in religions and disciplines, the histories of colonialism, capitalism, and subalternity in different areas and so on.

It is a radical departure from the western elitist discourses of Post-colonialism, Nationalism, and Marxism that are laden with the neo-colonial, patriarchal and white terminologies, with an aim to totally decolonized the subalterns, breaking them free of the repression of the hegemonic discourses of the west.

Hindu religion is also a respective and holy religion in the Asian sub-continent especially in India, but it has taken as an inferior, deteriorate and superstitious religion by the Christian. The whole issues of the colonialism, domination, hegemony and sacred truth are guided by the religious subject matter in the novel. Such religious dominance of the Christianity can be understood through the protagonist of this novel. Therefore, this research introduces the proverbial question of Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

The main characters in the novel are from both male and female to represent as colonizer and colonized dominator and dominated as well as of the suppressed subaltern. The male character is Hilarion represents a westerner as well as male dominator, whereas Luxima is Hindu priestess represents the character of subaltern, injustice, exploitation, suppression and so on. We find the conscious voice of subaltern character, Luxima for to resists the domination because she as the subaltern characters became conscious due to the different movements and revolutions. Owenson tries to capture subaltern issues of class, gender, cast, and colonizer and colonized in relation to converting religions in the novel. The Hindu priestess always seems in the quest of her subaltern identity, consciousness, nationality, cultural identity. Owenson beautifully and interestingly projects the protest and resistance of her character, Luxima against the colonizing sensibility and male domination.

The missionary urged the Hindu priestess openly to embrace and publicly to profess the Christian doctrine, she felt herself as a convulsed and agitated. Under the guidance of the Christian hero, she become as a wretched woman. But, she resist saying, “it were better to die, then to live under the curse of my nation; it were better to suffer the tortures of Norekah, than on earth to lose cast, and become a wretched chancalas!” (104). Here, the issue of consciousness focuses on the composite cultural of resistance to arid acceptance of domination and hierarch.

Many critics have analyzed the text from different perspective. Frances Botkin in her review vehemently criticizes the European, especially of British colonialism and imperialism because Irish, India as well as many other countries were politically, geographically, economically, and culturally exploited for centuries. Owenson's many Irish novels attest to her own commitment to Irish independence and catholic emancipation: “Examining the Hindu woman's vexed status as a repository of culture, *The Missionary* explores the ritual space of *sati* as the gendered site for the articulation of cultural resistance” (36). Compulsion of self-immolation indeed raises complicated question on the Hindu woman's social and cultural status. When a woman commits *sati*, she is believed to become a symbol of power to her family and her community, and the generative strength of her sat (virtue) is thought to be self-emanating and forceful. The term *sati* reflects ‘good woman’ or ‘truthful woman’. John Hawley and Donna Wulff in their eds. on, *Devi: Goddesses of India*, explain the decision to commit *sati* results from the energy or possession of her sat:

> As she moves forward to the act of self-sacrifice that demonstrates outwardly what she inwardly already is a woman of pure virtue and truth – she is believed to radiate the nurturing beliefs of motherhood upon her family, her community, and those who come to worship her. This power is felt to persist after death, as well. Hence… she wields that powerful combination of the virginal and the motherly. (21)

It is believed that the ideal *sati* like Luxima does, still being virgin, a timeless ritual that blesses her family and husband even after her death. In so doing, she prepares to be eternally united with her husband. As bride/widow, virgin/mother, woman/goddess, the sati exceeds her status as merely a devoted wife, becoming a powerful and revered embodiment of perfection.

Owenson in her novel mainly focuses on the masculine with double domination of a female orient. Of course, she has discussed about the religious, cultural, political domination of the westerner on the non-westerner, her female victimization is a key issue of the narrative. In this context, one critic, Balchandra Rajan highlights the same pattern of issues in *The Missionary*. According to Rajan:

> It found a significant reading publish before the genre (including unfortunately the work of those woman writers who practiced it) was made to collaborate with the masculine domination of female orient, now stereotyped so as to make that domination desirable. (154)

Rajan issues in this extract about *The Missionary* mainly focus on ‘the masculine domination of female orient’. According to Rajan, Owenson discussed about the religious and cultural subject matter with the female victimization is the domination of the westerner. Such domination of the Christianity can be understood through the activities of Hilarion. The double domination as religious and male domination is the suppression of the subaltern, especially of women.

Owenson not so much adjusting as reinforcing colonialist stereotypes; the Christian missionary's imperial desire to dominate the feminized minds, bodies, and lands of the orient is starkly sexualized in this cultural confrontation. From the critical lens, Michael J. Franklin in his journal finds Owenson's *Orientalism* more subtle. Her delineation of Hinduism contrasts with this portrayal of yielding submission, for Luxima: “who could not, even remotely, comprehend the pious solicitude for her conversion”, professes "a religion which unites the most boundless toleration to the most obstinate faith; the most unvanquishable conviction of its own supreme excellence" (125).

East is east and West is west because of its own identity. Hilarion, the Christian protagonist, cannot convert the Hindu protagonist, Luxima, as well as they eternally disunite at the end of the novel. The similar subject matters have been described by Kathryn Freeman in the essay about *The Missionary* as:

> Most surprising thing about Luxima's emerging subjectivity in the discovery that, rather than choosing Hilarion on her Hindu identity, she has held firm to her beliefs in spite of her love for Hilarion and her willingness to die for him. Owenson's decision to have the uprising associated with Luxima's final rejection of Christianity. (26)

Kathryn surprises in ‘Luxima’s emerging subjectivity’ that brings the consciousness on her Hindu identity. Kathryn says about Owenson’s decision that is based on the Luxima’s final rejection of Christianity. The emerging subjective somehow can be related with the Enlightenment period also.

Christian Protagonist, Hilarion was guided by certain desires to study the Sanskrit Language. He wanted to know everything, for it, learning Sanskrit Language is important for imperial projection. Sir William Jones in his article discusses the similar issues:

> In spite of his revolution at the 'superstition' of Hinduism, Hilarion's study of Sanskrit, this proceeds so that he reads it 'with ease and even with facility'. Hilarion had made himself master of the topography of the country- the valley of Cashmire, its village, its village, its capital, its pagodas, and temple and Brahminical College in which the Guru presided, thus associating the learning of language with imperial project. (101)

As Jones’ view, the missionary intents to show the Christianity as civilized, superior and powerful. So, Hilarion’s desire to study the Sanskrit language is the medium to triumph over the Hinduism. He wants to be the master of the dialects of upper India.

He clearly view reflects when Jones says as, ‘the learning of the language with imperial project’.

The choice of India for the novel setting highlights the subversive exploitation of European. Maureen O'Connor in the essay describes about the setting of Owenson's novel *The Missionary* as:

> Transactions of intertextuality that abet overlapping strategies of legitimating, the displaced, encoded interpellation and enunciation of potentially explosive political opinions, and a subversive exploitation of the equivalences empire posits among its peripheries are all crucial to the choice of India for *The Missionary's* setting. (26)

The words of Maureen about *The Missionary* fall on the importance of the setting. The setting of the novel is set in India, but the novel begins with the Portuguese priest Hilarion’s missionary project. Owenson is well positioned, perhaps, uniquely so, to understand the dangers of such cultural appropriation, aesthetic replacement and oppression.

This research is primarily divided into four chapters. The first chapter begins with direct argument which helps the reader to understand in which matter the research is going to explore. To prove this argument, it develops with a brief explanation of the theoretical prospective that is used to analyze the text. Subaltern Theory has been used in this research that evolves from the questioning of the elitist historiography and subalternity of the various minority groups and under the postcolonial Indian continent, it can be applied to question any kind of elitist discourses effecting the silence of the subaltern voices. As well as, this research keeps its significance in relation to the many reviews that helps the going on research has not explored. So, this research helps the reader to understand the taken text and about *sati* from the different perspective.

The second chapter develops with the textual analysis that helps to defense the major arguments and the theoretical perspective. Many proofs have been explored in this chapter. It explores the religious conflict between Hilarion, a Christian and Luxima, a Hindu protagonist. Christianity appeared as a civilized, self, superior and powerful in the missionary, but the Hindu priestess anytime tried to valorize her own Hindu culture, religion, system, rules and regulation. Likewise, the third part has been based on the thesis title itself that gives the new concepts replacing and revising the traditional concept. Especially, in this chapter the issues of *sati* have been discussed. Similarly, the last part is conclusion which winds up the research work finally. The beginning argument has been proved clearly in the concluding chapter that brings the taste and success of this project.

II. Subaltern Consciousness in *The Missionary*

The Missionary explores the ritual space of *sati* as the gendered site for the articulation of cultural resistance. Luxima is a heroine of the novel and her performance of *sati* disrupts colonial and missionary power. The subject matter of religious value, existence, dignity and superiority are elaborated in details of binary opposition between Christianity and Hinduism. The Portuguese priest, Hilarion D'Acugna, travels to India to pursue the missionary projects where he contrives to convert the much admired Luxima, Brachmachira of Kashmir. 'The ill-fated religious leader' falls in love, struggling with the conflict between their obligation and their passion once discovered Luxima loses caste.

It explores the religious conflict between Hilarion, a Christian and Luxima, a Hindu protagonist. Both are devoted to their religion, bound by rows of chastity, and begin the novel biased against other cultures. According to Christian beliefs, Hinduism is a superstitious, an illusory and inferior religion whereas Christianity is a civilized, trusty and superior religion. It also includes extensive primary source appendices that situate the novel in relation to Irish, Portuguese and Indian history, as well as to the literature of sensibility and travel writing.

From the beginning to the end of this novel, the narrative develops with the conversation where the dominance of the Christianity raise the issues of binary opposition, power showing, hegemonic and colonial representation, but the resistance and sacrificial activities of Hindu priestess, Luxima proves the glory of Hinduism. The missionary once in course of his mission urged the Hindu priestess openly to embrace and publicly to profess the Christian doctrine she felt herself as a convulsed and agitated. She responded, "It was better to die, than to live under the curse of my nation; it were better to suffer the tortures of Norekah than on earthen to lose cast, and become a wretched chancalas” (104).

Hilarion as narcissistic and Orientalist character thoughts his own religion and religious doctrine as the best, but from the very beginning of this novel, his weakness begins as:

> His ardent imagination becomes his ruling faculty, while the wild magnificence of the scenes by which he was surrounded threw its correspondent influence on his disordered mind; and all within, and all without, his monastery, contributed to cherish and to perpetuate the religious, melancholy and gloomy enthusiasm of his character. (9)

The Hilarion himself was zealous in his faith. ‘His ardent imagination’ being his ruling faculty brings his failure later. ‘His disorder mind’ itself is his weakness that brings gloomy enthusiasm in his character. It indicates how the imagination ruins the order mind into disorder mind. Here, the imagination of Hilarion has guided by over obsession.

The mission of Hilarion symbolically represents the colonial mission of European, especially of Britain because the arrangements for Hilarion’s departure were effected, permission from the governor of the order to leave the convent was obtained and he repaired to Lisbon to procure the necessary credentials for his perilous enterprise. The purpose of mission has depicted through the character of the missionary. Hilarion soul only stopped from Heaven to earth for:

> To relieve the sufferings he pitied, or to correct the errors he condemned; to substitute peace for animosity; to restrain the blasphemies of the profane; to dispel the darkness of the ignorant; to support the sick; to solace the wretched; to strengthen the weak, and to

> encourage the timid; to watch, to pray, to fast, and to suffer for all such was the occupation of a life, active as it was sinless. (18)

As the other mission of the colonizer, the mission of Hilarion also keeps its certain purposes. Ironically, the mission begins from Heaven to earth. The term *Heaven* has put in capital letter that reflects the respective position but the term *earth* depicts the lower position. Many lists of the purposes have been mentioned in this extract.

Hilarion was determined to remain until he had made himself master of the dialects of Upper India, where the pure Hindu was deemed primeval and his previous 'knowledge of the Hebrew and Arabic' he had placed himself under the tuition of a learned Pundit, who was devoted to 'secular business', and had travelled into various countries of the east, as a 'secretary and interpreter'. It was common policy of colonizers to prepare themselves in course of their project.

Casting *The Missionary* in the mode of sensibility as it exposes the conflict between East and West and between female and male; Owenson subverts the 'inert model' of Enlightenment reason so that sensibility becomes a way of thinking though [her] relationship to knowledge. Eighteenth-Century novelists had "found it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the figure of the virtuous hero …and that of the sadly distracted and isolated hysteric"; Owenson, however, reveals that these are not exclusive characteristics; "creeping 'unreason'…haunts [Hilarion's] supposedly triumphant 'reason'" (Mullan, 16). As the trend of the Eighteenth-Century novelist' novels, *The Missionary* does not develop.

In the first meeting of Hilarion to Hindu priestess made no impression on his mind but when he be held her receiving the homage of a deity, all lovely as she was, she awakened no other sentiment in his breast than a pious indignation, natural to his religious zeal, at beholding human reason so subdued by human imposition. When her story had been related to him and her influence described “he then considered her as the powerful rival of his influence, and the most fatal obstacle to the success of the enterprise he had engaged” (46). Where a true and perfect love exists, there is a melancholy bliss in the sacrifice. Luxima influence became the instrument of divine grace to her nation as well as in Hindu Religion.

Later, Hilarion and Luxima encounter, in Miltonic resonances, is figured in the oppositional binaries of geography, race, and gender. Pointing to the feature in Owenson's *The Missionary: An Indian Tale*, one of the critics, Julia M. Wright in her edition mentioned as:

> Silently gazing, in wonder, upon each other, they stood finely opposed, the noblest specimens of the human species as it appears in the most opposite regions of the earth; lofty and commanding: the one, radiant in all the luster, attractive in all the softness which distinguishes her native religion; the other, towering in all the energy, imposing in all the vigor, which marks his ruder latitudes. (109)

Wright remarks in Owenson’s *The Missionary* the issue of British colonialism, romantic representation and binaries on Hindu religion. Such issues of binaries, colonialism clearly reflects the superiority of Westerner which was due to the ‘attraction in all the softness in Luxima’s native religion’. It symbolically indicates the Westerner’s domination the Non-Westerner as Hilarion dominated Luxima culturally, religiously, politically and so on that brought the consciousness on that suppressed people.

It was in vain that Hilarion invoked from heaven some part that miraculous power granted to those who had preceded him as to cure the sick by a touch, or raise the dead by a look, but he could not subvert a single law of nature, nor, by any miraculous power. He becomes impressive when he sees the Brahminical scriptures and admires, “oh pure waters! Since you afford delight, grant me a rapturous view of heaven; and as he who plunges into thy wave is freed from all impurity, so may my soul live, free from all pollution” (57). He further admires:

> On that effulgent power, which is Brahma, do I meditate; governed by that mysterious light which exists internally within my breast, externally in the orb of the sun, being one and the same with that effulgent power, since I myself am an irradiated manifestation of the supreme Brahma. (57)

Here, Hilarion surprises the effulgent power of Brahma. He believes in the mysterious light and feels that it can exist in his breast. He pronounces ‘supreme Brahma’ for the invisible power but it can be the way of praising and deceiving way. Though it can be the deceiving way, he cannot deceive his heart and begins to enchant by the Hindu culture.

The Christian protagonist creates the binary opposition and dominates the Hindu religion. He offers to adopt the higher levels of Christian Religion. He says, “Daughter, in approaching thee I obey a will higher than thy command; I obey a power” (63). Hilarion is a representative of colonial mission, so he directly says Luxima that he has power and he is a follower of power. In respond, the Hindu protagonist, Luxima gazed timidly on him and expressions strongly over her countenance. At last she exclaimed:

> Stranger, thou sayest we are of the same cast. Art thou then an irradiation of the Deity, and, like me, wilt thou finally be absorbed in his divine effulgence? Ah, no! thou wouldst deceive me and cannot … faith in the thriple god, the holy Treemoortee, Brahma, Vishnu

> and Shiva … when Brahma spoke by the lips, thy voice only left its accents on my ear. (63-4)

Luxima, here, becomes conscious and directly resists as, “Stranger, thou sayest we are of same cast”. She knows that Hilarion trying to deceive her. Her faith in the triple God, the holy Treemoortee, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva valorizes in devotional position of Indian women. In the conversation she says, ‘I know thee well, and thy power is great and dreadful’ which gives the sense of Luxima’s respective response being conscious.

The suppression of subaltern in India is represented by the Luxima. Rajan believes that the novel about India was originated by women. Rajan somehow indicates the character of *The Missionary*, where Luxima has been suppressed under patriarchy and colonizers. It found significant reading publicly before the genre was made to collaborate with the masculine domination of female orient, now stereotyped so as to make that domination desirable. Speaking specifically about *The Missionary*, Rajan says, “One might almost conclude that the stereotype [of feminine India] is explored to India so that identification with it can be allowed and resisted” (154).

Sometimes, the false impression upon Luxima made her mistaken on her way. ‘‘The deep impression he made on her mind’’ indicates Hilarion has tried to impress her for it he planed skillfully to make a good impression on him. She has mistaken him for “an incarnation of her worshipped good” (65). Owenson reflects these attributes in Luxima’s non-dual relationship to divinity which is in turn inextricably tied to her sensuality. When Hilarion discovers Luxima worshipping before her private alter, Hilarion, divided between his erotic attraction to her and his sense of Christian virtue, and cannot fathom the *bhakti* tradition of the divine love.

To Hilarion, she appears as “a human form”, which is “so bright and so ethereal […] that it seemed but a transient incorporation of the brilliant mists of morning” (108). The innocent nature of Luxima makes Hilarion compel to admire her. He compares her as the brilliant mists of morning.

Owenson’s *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* is set on the Indian sub-continent is an important work. Under the guise of an adventure story, Owenson framed an eloquent plea against empire, more specifically, against the use of religious as a tool of empire. India was an appropriate setting for discussion of religion because it was regarded as the cradle of the world’s great religions, in particular, of primordial Hinduism, idealized by late Eighteenth-Century liberals as a form of rational revelation that they contrasted with the superstition and ‘bigotry of the church of England’. In *The Missionary*, Luxima embodies the genius of primordial Hinduism. When Shelley read the novel he writes a letter about novel to his friend Thomas Jefferson, which has quoted by Julia M. Wright as:

> The only thing that has interested me, if I accept your letters has been one novel. It is Miss Owenson’s *The Missionary*. Will you read it; it is really a divine thing. Luxima the Indian is an Angel. What pity that we cannot incorporate these creation of fancy; the very thought of them thrills the soul. Since I have read this book I have read no other – but I have thought strangely. (42)

The Missionary introduces the romantic love affair between two protagonists- Hilarion and Luxima. Franklin highlights the Shelley's proselytizing zeal because his arch-enemy Castlereagh admires the Romantic Orientalism of a text implicitly opposed to cultural interventionism and missionary conversion. So, Shelley recommends Owenson's novel to friend with a Proselytizing Zeal.

Dreams were central to Shelley’s poetry in *Queen Mob* (1813) he used the dream vision to express his political opinions but with *Alastor* Shelley served notice of a new direction, turning his attention to psychology of dreaming mind in which the visionary imagination is at full strength, presenting itself as a form of personal revelation superior to the corruptions of established religion.

Hilarion’s self-proclaimed rationality is his repressed sensibility which rises to a neurosis that Owenson elaborates as he acknowledges his self-deception. At the heart of Hilarion’s neurosis is his ambivalence towards Luxima, powerful from his first meeting with her:

> [w]hen he beheld her receiving the homage of a deity, all lovely as she was, she awakened no other sentiment in his breast than a pious indignation, natural to his religious zeal, at beholding human reason so subdued by human imposition. The innate purity of the mind betrayed the unconscious sensibility of the heart. (101)

Here, Hilarion’s notion that reason is ‘subdued’ is held in ironic contrast to his suppression of what Owenson refers to later as his sensibility. In the first meeting to Luxima he finds ‘her receiving the homage of deity’. Perhaps the most problematic aspect of Hilarion’s sensibility is the conflict he creates between his erotic love for her Luxima and his religion, for “passion and honor, religion and love, opposed their conflicts in his mind” (170). Luxima, by contrast, embodies the Hindu notion of *bhakti*, devotional love for God which Jones describes in his essay, “On the Mystical Poetry of the Persians and Hindus”. According to Jones, the Vedas is “Concur in believing, that the souls of men differ infinitely in *degree*, but not at all in *kind*, from the divine spirit, of which they are *particles*, and in which they will ultimately be absorbed”. Further, the mystical poetry elaborates:

> The spirit of GOD pervades the universe, always immediately present to his work, and consequently always substance, that he alone is perfect benevolence, perfect truth, perfect beauty; that the love of him alone is *real* and genuine love, while that of all other objects is *absurd* and illusory. (219-20)

The Vedas beautifully admires the glory of god, god is a ‘perfect benevolence, perfect truth’ so Vedas remarks that the other objects are ‘absurd and illusory’, so the *bhakti* on god is only the medium to achieve the divine spirit. This belief has occurred in Luxima as devotional love for God.

As Hilarion begins to acknowledge his attraction to Luxima and to India, he comes to fear the possibility that he will subvert his mission. He thus reflects as:

> How difficult [it was] to eradicate those principles impressed on the character without any operation of the reason. The wonderful culture … [h] e, whose life had been governed by a dream, was struck by the imbecility of those who submitted their reason to the tyranny of a baseless illusion. (102)

That Hilarion considers his quest to convert Indians to Christianity a dream while he dismisses Indian thought as ‘baseless illusion’ conveys his growing awareness that his own idealism may be no more grounded in reason than the illusion he claims Hinduism to be. For him, reason is the medium but he confidently cannot tell that he can easily impress on the character, the character are the Indians Hindus.

The deceitful love of the missionary towards the Hindu priestess works the false impression upon her that made her mistaken on her way. The false romantic love with the Hindu priestess was only medium for him to exploit and dominate the Hinduism. His attitudes reflect in deceiving way that he loves Luxima in Christian charity, as he is bound to love all mankind. It was the indication of fraud love which was a channel to get mastery over the Hinduism. But the priestess has shown the honor in the Hinduism. She expresses the exclaimed words:

> Oh! I am not a Christian! Not all a Christian! His god indeed is mine; but Brahma still receives my homage: I am still his priestess, and bound by holy vows to serve him; then save me from my nation's dreadful curse it is in thy power only to draw it on my head: for here, hidden from all human eyes, I listen to the percepts of this holy man in innocence and truth. (141)

Here, the disagreement of the priestess on Christianity is the consciousness on Luxima. The expression 'oh! I am not a Christian! Not all a Christian' shows the honor of the Hinduism. The final phrase of this speech is ambiguous, on the one level, Luxima is saying that the curse of her nation is on her head, but it can also be read as a nation that is cursed, since Luxima becomes a signifier for India in the novel. The irony thus deepens, for it is the European Christian male who is enacting the curse, leading to India's as well as her own downfall.

While Luxima connects love, nature, and divinity, Hilarion, 'sigh[ing] convulsively' as he watches Luxima's 'perfect form', cannot resolve his overwhelming desire for her. In the beginning, he creates a fake love affair as a medium for his mission. In the latent level, Hilarion's separation of love and religion appears with increasing obviousness to run counter to the emerging Hindu perspective of their union. Later, Hilarion really falls in love with Luxima and his attempting to convert becomes vexed. Luxima is ready to call directly him 'my husband' that is the emerging Hindu perspective of their union. She is ready to call him 'my husband' according to the law and the religion of her country. But, Hilarion is not ready to accept it in relation to religion’s holy law. So, the problem appears between religion and love. In the Hindu religion love and religion have been connected each other. Luxima, being conscious, gives the perspective that his attempt to convert in religion is the obstacle between them.

Most surprising about Luxima’s emerging subjectivity is the discovery that, rather than choosing Hilarion’s religion, she has held firm to her belief in spite of her love for Hilarion and her willingness to die for him:

> Oh! Give me back to my country, my peace, my fame; or suffer me still to remain near thee, and I will rejoice in loss of all …[I]f it is a virtue in thy religion to stifle the best and purest feeling of the heart, that nature implants, how shall I believe in, or adopt, its tenets? I whose nature, whose faith itself, was love-how from thee shall I learn to subdue my feeling, who first taught me to substitute a human, for a heavenly passion? (230-31)

Luxima cannot deceive her country. She is conscious and the conscious is her ‘purest feeling of the heart’. Clearly, she keeps her attitude to Hilarion. Luxima has pure heart and she is a symbol of Goddess Luxima. Her emerging subjectivity is her consciousness. She does not believe in his religion, and says, ‘How shall I believe in or adopt’. In spite of her love to Hilarion, she favors her own trend. Though she has demanded as, ‘give me back my country, my peace, my fame’ still she wants to remain near him. But, she understood that she had been the principle object of his visiting Cashmire, and that her happiness, temporal and eternal, was the subject of his ardent hopes and eloquent supplications. It is a surprising emerging subjectivity of Luxima that helped to liberate India from the colonialism.

Owenson's decision to have the uprising associated with Luxima's final rejection of Christianity has several narrative implications, one of the most significant the public setting of her death:

> Brahma! Brahma! Was re-echoed on every side … [T]he sufferings, the oppression they had so long endured, seemed now epitomized before their eyes, in the person of their celebrated and distinguished prophetess-they believed it was their god who addressed them from her lips. (250)

Luxima's body as a signifier for Hilarion is contrasted to what she comes to represent for the Hindus attending the *auto da fė*. Deepening the implication of Luxima's sacrifice, her spiritually triumphant prayer to Brahma becomes the catalyst that triggers the uprising by the Hindus against their Christian persecutors.

The kindness and welfare of Luxima becomes praiseworthy even in the animals. One day she met a wounded fawn. Suddenly, she exclaimed, "thou art wounded?" with a voice of pity and of tear. Ahead she says, "Almora, my dear and faithful animal; thou whom I have fostered, as thy mother would have fostered thee; thou form embodies, has not yet fled to some less pure receptacle" (69). In absence of the fawn's mother, Luxima takes the artificial motherhood even to the fawn of animal. She treats the fawn with natural herbs and binds the wound with the long fibers of the cusa-grass. "It lives!" she exclaims with joyfully, and turning her look upon the Hilarion added, in response, "thou hast saved its life" (70). The kindness of Hindu women has been highlighted through this expression.

In itself the moment of illumination is far from sufficient for the work of Enlightenment. So, Owenson gives awareness in her character. Owenson warns Luxima's awareness, as she lies dying, that the afterlife of her vision depends on *The*

Missionary, Owenson entrusts to publish her creed abroad and thereby keep alive the high ideals to which Luxima sacrifice her life. At the movement of death, Luxima directs her attention to the Hindu community. Although her religion is based on universal standers of reason and humanity, she emphasizes her specifically Hindu identity, declaring, “I *die* as Brahmin women *die*, a *Hindu* in my feelings and my faith –dying for him I loved, and believing as my fathers have believed” (257). Luxima asserts that her behavior has been faithful to Hindu ideals, “that her *soul* was pure from sin as, when clothed in transcendent brightness, as she outshone, in faith, in *virtue*, all the women of her nation!” (258). As the other women of her nation, she is conscious ‘in faith, in virtue’ which makes her soul pure from sin.

In the novel’s brief coda, we learn that ‘Hilarion did not serve her cause well; though no longer the bigoted emissary of the church’, he fails. Some twenty years later, a European philosopher journeying to Cashmere is appraised by the local people of the missionary’s reclusive fate: “‘he was’, they said, ‘a wild and melancholy man! Whose religion was unknown, but who prayed at the confluence of rivers, at the rising and the setting of the sun… he needed no assistance, nor sought any intercourse’” (260).

The moral paradox burns at the heart of *The Missionary* when Luxima asserts her claim to lead the nation after being excommunicated from the established church. Branded an infidel by the elders, she nonetheless, as we have seen, considers herself one of the faithful, loyal to the spirit of her religion though not to its often corrupt forms. As a putative convert to Christianity in a land hostile to the faith, Luxima asks, “must I worship alone and secretly, amidst my kindred and my friend’ or, must I by a public profession of apostasy, lose my cast, and wander wretched and an alien in distant wilds, my nation’s curse and shame?” (170). Secrecy and exile are equally despairing alternatives because they remove vision from public influence hence Luxima's insistence that she belong to the Hindu community.

Owenson suggests that Hilarion's disempowerments results from his egocentrism and its attendant neurosis. Luxima's rationality, which she retains in spite of her powerlessness, stands in contrast to Hilarion's sensibility which has built to a complex set of psychological conditions:

> No thought of future care contracted her bows, and the smile of peace and innocence sat on her lips. Not so the missionary: the morbid habits of watching his own sensations had produced in him as hypochondrias of conscience… [h]is danger arose less from his temptation, than from the sensibility with which he watched its progress. (202)

Luxima's response to this neurotic behavior reveals the contrasting sanity Owenson associates with her: "if thou art prone to pity the wretched, and aid the weak, it is because thou west thyself created of those particles which, at an infinite distance, constitute the Divine essence" (214). Owenson links Eastern non-dualism with the feminine and with what Armstrong describes as a Nineteenth-Century feminine epistemology of sensibility that challenges the Western tradition.

Hinduism presented a substantial challenge for Owenson's cultural relativism and religious syncretism. Furthermore, *The Missionary* appeared amidst the heated debate preceding the renewal of the East India Company's character, and especially the so-called 'pious clause' concerning the question of whether missionaries should be allowed to proselytize among the Indian peoples, might well be seen to be making a timely commercial as well as political intervention. It has become relevant in the context of the novel, *The Missionary*.

The multiplicity of interpretative and representative possibilities permits the novel to critique England's missionary and civilizing projects while seeming to address a different time and place. Owenson's footnote about the Vellore incident calls attention to the very real threat of rebellion against cultural repression, a reality reinforced by the revolutionary energies witnessed in Europe and its colonies in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth century. The Vellore Muting of 1806 alludes to contemporary British religious and civil domination of India. The reference to this incident invokes the EIC's concern that Indians would respond with hostility to missionary activity:

> An insurrection of a fatal consequence took place in Vellore as late as 1806, and a mutiny at Nundy-drag and Bangalore occurred about the same period: both were supposed to have originated in the religious bigotry of the natives, suddenly kindled by the supposed threatened violence of their faith from the Christian settlers. (241)

The much debated Vellore incident occurred when Indian sepoys (soldiers in the British army) killed hundreds of British soldiers in response to regulations that required them to wear uniform headgear, shave their beards, and remove caste marks. The Vellore Mutiny signaled an important movement in the history of the British presence in India, shifting away from the policy of nonintervention and toward assimilation. The subsequent debate sparked a pamphlet war of more than twenty-five authors and later the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh Review* joined the conversation. Siraj Ahmed writes that this pamphlet debate was "one more example of the discursive conflict between the principles of the civilizing mission and the politics of empire" (10). An avid reader of and respondent to the periodicals, Owenson most certainly would have witnessed these debates.

The conflict even in religion creates a great ditch for binary opposition to each other. Owenson has mentioned about the conflict between the two protagonists from the two most powerful religions of the earth. Both appeared as the 'ministers and representatives' of the two most powerful religions of the earth. The one no less enthusiastic in her brilliant errors that the other confident in his immutable truth. The novel, *The Missionary* develops with the conflict between these two religions.

Hilarion's attempt to convert Luxima with the vocabulary of romance reveals the gendered violence of the missionary project. When she is stripped of her 'caste and title, shunned by her family and excommunicated' Hilarion takes advantage of her vulnerable state and baptizes her. The ritual sacrament signals for Hilarion her rebirth as a Christian, but for Luxima it marks her entrance into her new life with her lover. When Hilarion asks her to take up the cross and follow him to Goa, she replies, "Follow thee! O Heaven! through life to death" (191). Here, the ritual of baptism is merged with the ritual of *sati*. Luxima transforms the baptismal rite into her intention of becoming a *sati* that follows her mate through life to death. However, Luxima commits herself to Hilarion rather than to his Christian God.

The mystic myth in Hinduism valorizes the Hindu religion which becomes unique for the entire missionary who used to visit India for different purposes. The mystery of a consecrated spot and every tree seems sacred to religious rites:

> The mystery of a consecrated spot, and every tree seemed sacred to religious rites, how peaceful environment. The bilva, the shrub of the Goddess Durga; the high flowering murva, whose elastic fibers from the sacrificial threads of the Brahmins; the bacula, the lovely tree of Indian Eden. (61)

Hilarion, a missionary of the novel, has fascinated by the beauty of the lovely tree of the Indian Eden. He sees the mystery on religious rites. ‘The shrub of the Goddess Durga’ valorizes the Hindu’s myth. Goddess Durga is the Goddess of Nature in the Indian Mythology. The real peace and harmony one can feel in the garden. The trees of the garden have linked sacred to religious rites.

Mysticism is a spiritual quest for hidden truth or wisdom the goal of which is union with the divine or sacred. In the worldwide context of mysticism, Hinduism is naturally predisposed to mystical interpretation. In *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, mysticism has been explained as:

> Although mysticism is often set over against theology and is said to be more authentic or more subjective or more impassioned, the two forms of religious thought have in fact existed side by side, frequently in the same individual. But this is not the same as saying that a reduction of the mystical experience to its theological implication does or explains the unique experience of mystical purgation, illumination, and union. (470)

When people rely on some supernatural or magical belief to come across a certain condition, at that time, for them, mysticism becomes guiding principle. The feeling of mysticism may be influenced by the religious practices. Hilarion surprises in the mysticism of Hinduism. The existence of Hinduism depends on the mystical invisible power and in mystical beliefs.

Hilarion has no understanding of the profundity of Luxima’s direct communion with Brahma. He remarks that the unique “mystery” of Luxima’s “sudden distraction was unfathomable” (173). Hilarion, mystified when she expresses her growing doubt about her conversion and asks, “Who will dare to disobey the mandate of a God, who comes in his own presence to save and to redeem us?" (177). He hears her with uncontrolled emotion, deeming the fancied event … but deistic perspective of Luxima's divine revelation becomes ironic from the perspective the novel has given of his 'hypochondriasm'. Luxima cannot disobey the mandate of god; the devotion in God becomes unique for Hilarion because Luxima direct communion with Brahma is no understanding for him. In the novel Luxima is guided by over devotion to god whereas Hilarion is guides by over obsession to convert the Hindu relation that is his hypocrisy.

Owenson dismantles through its self-subverting ties to both sensibility and late Enlightenment rationalism. The romantic masculine ideal described by Marlon Ross as the romantic poets "myth of masculine self-possession" that enables his "historical resituating", in turn allowing him to "adapt psychologically, philosophically, and pragmatically to historical forces that are beyond his control as the primary means for containing those forces" (28-9). Hilarion, whose self-possession abandons him on each of these fronts in the course of his mission to convert Luxima, becomes afflicted with an excess of sensibility, arrogance, lust, and repression.

Miss Owenson's narrative novel develops with the issue of conflict between Christian and Hindu protagonists in the dialogue form. Most of the time, Hilarion's dominance of Christianity reflects through his dialogue but the representation of the Hindu religion always practiced for the religious value, dignity and so on:

> Father, then who art thyself pure and holy as a Brahmin's thought, pray for me to thy God; I will pray for thee to mine. Thus, then turning her eyes for movement as him, she pronounced the Indian salaam. And with a soft sigh and pensive look, moved slowly away.

> Hilarion pursued her with his glance, until the thickening shade of group of mangoostan-trees concealed her from his view. (87)

The consciousness on Luxima became a way of valorizing her religious dignity and cultural norms. Her respective thought has given the space for both religions for the respect of each other's religion. 'The Indian salaam' is the dignity of Hinduism that gives priority to the value, and the superiority of the Hindu God. Though she has not biased, here, in religions the salaam was only for she is still following Hindu's rules and regulations. The consciousness of Luxima with Hindu faith becomes obstacle for Halation's mission. He perceived that a pure system of natural religion was innate in her sublime and contemplative mind.

Luxima's pointed correction of her earlier addressing Hilarion as 'father' suggests Owenson's ironic reference to 'the father-daughter tie' characteristic of the cult of sensibility. Luxima's sensibility contrasts Hilarion's erotic love for her. In this movement, she embraces her identity as priestess. Through Luxima's "religious ecstasy" upon her vision of Brahma, embraces non-duality and she proclaims "I am myself become a part of the Divinity" (176). From this proclaim what we can say is her voice through this section because strong instead of meekly addressing her role as Hindu priestess with his as missionary.

Luxima has given such a powerful role of direct communion with God underscores the importance for Owenson of linking Indian epistemology with a feminine sensibility, a radical revision of her male contemporaries' feminizing of India. Hilarion has no power to understand the profundity of Luxima's direct communion with Brahma that is become of the mystery of Luxima's sudden distraction which was unfathomable. It is a great strength of Eastern Religions belief that usually makes unique for the mystery even lies in the trees. Hilarion again mystifies when she expresses her growing doubt about her conversion, and she asks, "Who will dare to disobey the mandate of a God, who comes in his own presence to save and to redeem us?" (177). How trickily, Luxima asked the unfathomable question.

Luxima's excommunication only heightens her identification with all that has alienated Hilarion from India. By contrast, Hilarion's excommunication brings his internal dividedness to the surface as:

> [p]prejudice governed those *feelings*, over which *reason* had lost all sway … [h]e who had… acknowledged the precious influence of human feeling, now recalled to mind that he had vowed the sacrifice of *all* human feeling to heaven! (235)

The earlier mission of Hilarion has dismissed because the guiding reason, now, lost. He recalls but it was too late that he was already alienated from India.

The weakness of Hilarion comes to surface that he himself finds reason had lost all sway. He begins to evaluate his missionary achievement and becomes confuse that "he had vowed the sacrifice of all men feeling to Heaven" (252). Intensifying this irony, when Hilarion asks Luxima, "[A]re we then to be *eternally disunited*?" Time and again Hilarion has been trying to convert the Hindu priestess, but Luxima's response is simply "a look of life and love" (256). The pure spirit of religion reflects in Luxima's response, which also clues us to understand Hilarion has lost sight of in the zeal of his mission. Luxima's faith, indeed, never wavers, and her last words, "Brahma… Brahma" (258), echoes her reaction when she feels pressure to follow the Christian Religion. But, the love of Hilarion to Luxima has never compromised with that devotional nature of her love. True love of Luxima wins, and before the true love of her, he becomes mad: "A cry of despair escaped from his bursting heart; and, in the madness of the movement, he uttered aloud her name" (260).

Nineteenth- Century conversations about *sati* considered in part the distinction between voluntary and forced *sati*. These same debates have reerupted in a fairy recent spate of critical commentary, much of which responds to Gayatri Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" It was difficult for many critics to assert the will of the *sati* because her voice, if heard at all, is silence by a painful and fiery death. Moreover, as Spivak suggests, speaking for even in defense of the widow introduces a whole new set of theoretical problems. Being Postcolonial critics, Spivak could not evaluate it in part the distinction between voluntary and forced *sati*. European representation of the ritual reiterate the binary of forced versus voluntary *sati* 'depicting either the violent coercion of the widow or, conversely, a beautiful young women's brave'. Like Westerners, Owenson establishes the issue of voluntary and forced *sati*.

The Missionary represents Luxima as a sort of superwoman, embodying all the traits thought to be ideal in the Hindu woman. Luxima exceeds the traditional expectations of Hindu women in her possession of social economic and religious power. For her, joining Hilarion in death signals her perfect moment of 'sacrifice and triumph'. In this way, Luxima's determination to commit *sati* calls attention to the agency she can exert over herself as well as to the troubling means by which woman contribute to the transmission of Indian culture.

As a repository of Hinduism, Luxima symbolizes its oppression by both imperialist and colonialist forces. Her self-immolation creates an important point of resistance that challenges value and modes of behavior represented by male authority. Undermining the power of the Inquisitional officers, challenging Spanish colonial rule, and mobilizing her compatriots out of their torpor, the novel represents Luxima's performance of *sati* as a voluntary act of rebellion and devotion. Owenson's heroine typically demonstrates a profound commitment to their religious and national identities, performing rituals that link an oppressed past with a liberated future. In 1859 Owenson republished her novel as *Luxima the Prophetess*, changing the title to reflect the novel's true protagonist.

To sum up, Owenson disseminates the story that Hilarion failed to tell, a story of patriarchal control, religious persecution and colonial oppression. However, it is significant that Luxima does not actually die on the pyre, but instead she dies being rescued from it. The novel's conclusion thus successfully skirts the issue – the material reality of *sati*. Indeed, for Owenson, as for many others, *sati* functions as an ahistorical symbol of the oppression of women and of the subaltern, and she perhaps unwittingly represents and reproduces the double colonization of her heroine. In *The Missionary*, the subaltern does in fact speak, as well as Owenson's novel replete with essentialist stereotypes exposes the problems inherent in giving her voice. The heroine of Owenson struggled against the missionary project and male domination. She did best to upside down the hegemonic power; however she cannot totally brings this power in her favor. She symbolically wins to deserve her religion. Owenson pays equal attention to strengthen female voice, for it she puts the representative of subaltern character, Luxima. The clear indication of the subaltern's consciousness of the novel links an oppressed past to the liberated future.

III. Retrieval the History of Sati in *The Missionary*

Hindu Mythology views *sati* as an important link between the earthly and spiritual worlds. The term *sati* is derived from the original name of the goddess Sati, also known as Dakshayani who self-immolated because she was unable to bear her father Daksha's humilation of her husband Shiva. Botkin says, "*sati* is also associated with the goddess known as Satimata or 'Sati mother's': real women who immolated themselves and who are venerated at various sacred spots; these women are simultaneously real women and goddess" (38). *Sati* is believed to possess the power to both bless and curse her family and community at the moment of her death.

The burning of the widow, *sati* is described as a Hindu custom in India known as *sati* in Hindu religious literature. Prabhal Varun writes an article in *Hinduism Today* about *sati* pratha. The first woman is known as Sati, who burnt herself in fire as protest against her father, Daksha. While burning herself she prayed to reborn against as the new consort of Shiva, and her name in the new incarnation was Parvati. As well as, other famous woman in Hindu literature titled Sati was Savitri. When her husband, Satyavan died, the Lord of death, Yama arrived to take his soul. She begged Yama to restore Satyavan but Yama could not do. So, she keeps on following Yama, after a long way Yama noticed that Savitri was losing strength but was still following him and her dead husband. Yama had no option except to offer Savitri a boon, anything other than her husband's life. She asked to have children from Satyavan. Now, Yama had no choice but to restore satyavan to life and so Savitri gained her husband back. It is just a mythical story of Hindu Religion about the origin of *sati*.

It is not exclusively an Indian ritual but has been practiced in many parts of the world such as China, Oceania, Africa and Scandinavia from where it arrived in

India only late. It is believed that there is no statement in the classical Hindu scriptures concerning *sati*. According to the funeral hymns in Rigveda, there is a ceremony of a widow sleeping next to the corpse of her dead husband and than being allowed to marry anyone she pleases. It is belief that the practice of *sati* came to India through the Kushans in 1 A.D. and was practice by the Rajputs, a warring tribe living in the North-Western parts of India who were in constant battle amongst themselves and the Moslems. The interesting explanation for their practice of *sati* is that due to the constant warfare many young men were killed and the young widows were considered a danger to the moral stability of society. The introduction of sati was thus an extreme measure of eliminating them. The Moslems, who had the same problem of young widow solved by allowing polygamous marriages.

There are different theories about the origins of *sati*. One theory says that sati was introduced to prevent wives from poising their wealthy husbands and many their real lovers. Other theory says that sati began with a jealous king's queen, who heard that dead kings were welcomed in Heaven by hundreds of beautiful women, called Apsaras. And, therefore when her husband died, she demanded to be burnt on her dead husband's pyre and arrive with him to Heaven and they were able to prevent the Apsaras from consorting with her husband.

Another theory in its arguments claims that *sati* as probably brought to India by the Seythians invaders of India. Arriving in India, they adopted the Indian system of funeral instead of burying their kings and his servers; they started cremating their dead with his serving lovers. This custom was more dominant among the warrior communities in North India, especially in Rajasthan and also among the higher castes in Bengal in East India. The way of adopting the Indian system was with certain purpose i.e. to abolish the widow.

The practice of *sati* was not all over India by all Hindus but only among certain communities of India. The activity of sacrificing the widow in her dead husband's pyre was not unique only to India. In many ancient communities it was an acceptable feature as in Egyptians, Greek, Goths, Scythians and others. Among these communities it was a custom to bury the dead king with his mistresses or wives, servants and other things so that they could continue to serve him in the next world.

In different communities of India, *sati* was performed for different reasons and different manner. In the communities where the man was married to one wife, the wife put an end to her life on the pyre. But even in these communities not all widows committed *sati*. These women who committed *sati* were highly honored and their families were given lot of respect. It was believed that the women who committed *sati* blessed her family for seven generations after her. Temples or other religious shrines were built to honor the *sati*. In many communities, the ruler was married to more than one wife, in some cases only one wife was allowed to commit *sati* and this wife was normally the preferred wife of the husband.

So far the Nepalese history concerns on *sati*, it begins from the ancient Nepal. Jaya Raj Acharya in his article "Sati Was Not Enforced in Ancient Nepal" clearly indicates the origin of *sati* during the rule of the Licchavi Dynasty (ca. 300-879 A.D.). Acharya writes in article that there were 190 stones inscription which has a reference to the *sati* system was the inscription of Manadeva at the Changu Narayan temple in the North-Eastern corner of the Kathmandu Valley. The inscription, no. 2, has become the first reference to this system. It helps further investigation about *sati* practice. In this inscription dated 464 A.D., Queen Rajyavati, mother of king Manadeva I, is depicted as deeply grieved at the death of her husband king Dharmadev. She was ready to follow the dead husband that was the commitment of voluntary *sati*.

The history of *sati* in Nepal reflects, for understanding, through the ancient royal families for our common knowledge. Anil Chitrakar has discussed about Nepali *sati* practice. The history reflects both voluntary and forced *sati*. Maharani Raj Rajeshwari Devi of Nepal becomes regent in 1799 in the name of her son, Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah Deva, after abdication of her husband, Rana bahadur Shah, who become a sanyasi. Her husband returned and took power again in 1804. In 1806 he was assassinated by his brother, and ten days later on 5th May, 1806 A.D., his widow was forced to commit *sati*. It is said that Bhimsen Thapa forced Queen Raj Rajeshwori Devi to commit *sati* ten days after the cremation of her husband on the bank of Sali Nadi rivulet in Sundarijal. It is such a historical anomaly that two remaining queens of King Rana Bahadur Shah, Subarna Prabha and Lalit Tripura Sundari, were able to escape from this traumatic fate. All together, 16 women committed *sati* in the funeral pyre of king Rana Bahadur Shah. The similar escape from the traumatic situation has been narrated in the story of Krishna Dharabasi. Dharabasi in his story “Jhola” beautifully narrates the forceful *sati* through the fictional narrator, himself. The story has based on a young widow, who was compelled to commit forceful *sati* but the story becomes unique when she was able to escape from the pyre. It was possible only due to the evening time, so people were unable to observe her escape from the pyre. The story of “Jhola” was broadcasted from Ujyalo F.M. When it was broadcasted many listeners were able to understand the reality of society, and the voice of suppressed women.

In Nepal, the history of *sati* reflects that widow may not wear colorful dress, bangles, makeup, and are frequently not allowed to speak with other men. If a widow speaks with a man, or marries another man, her deceased husband's soul moves from Heaven to Hell. These practices are not mentioned in the holy books but no legal rights, no inheritance, no pension, and are frequently outcasts from both their family and society, especially if they do not follow these rules. They are third class citizens, and are seen as bad luck.

The practice of voluntary *sati* we can find in the Nepali history. Shrikrishna Shrestha, BhojRaj Bhusal and Mohan Krishna Ojha, Raju Guragai and Bhabuk Parajibi raised objective questions about *sati* in their General Knowledge Book. According to these writers, after the death of Ratna Malla, 10 Queens were committed *sati*. Likewise, in the death of Pratab Malla, 9 Queen were committed *sati*. Similarly, 33 Queen committed *sati* in the death of Yog Narendra Malla. But, Pratab Malla had stopped her mother to committed *sati*, and under her advice he ruled in Kantipur. The history writer Devi Prasad Sharma claims that while Jung Bahadur was successful in preventing the wives of his brothers from committing *sati*, his own wives committed *sati* upon his death.

The particular barbarism of consigning a vibrant life to the flames of a funeral pyre has always provoked the rulers of India to prevent this horror, despite the spurious sanctity that has come to be attached to the practice. Many accounts of the practice explain that the widow was often thought to blame her husband's death because she failed at her task of protection. Particularly, of course, the men often died first because older men usually married younger women. The practice was designed by the patriarchal society. Keeping this oppressive practice of *sati* in mind, as the Indian Penal Code (IPC) of East Indian Company (EIC), in the Bir Samser period, he made the rule that without taking permission from government the women could not commit *sati*. But, these horrible practice of *sati* in Nepal was until it's abolition by Prime Minister Chandra Shumshere Rana on 28th June 1920 (1977 B.S).

When Jung Bahadur Rana was in power in the 1850s, he made a set of rules to try and control and discourage *sati*. He banned women below 16 to commit *sati*. Women whose children were below 16 (boys) and below 5 (girls) were not allowed to commit *sati*. Similarly, if the widow had more than one husband, or if she was pregnant, *sati* was illegal. Slave women were also prohibited from this act. Jung Bahadur also made it mandatory that an advocate be present when *sati* was performed voluntary to make sure it was not coerced. Anyone forcing women to commit *sati* was to be charged with murder.

Numerous religious epics of the subcontinent speak of and glorify the tradition. The Hindu Religious book, *Swasthani* becomes important during the Nepali month of Magh (Jan-Feb). This book recites in Nepalese homes. Each year a festival is held near Sankhu to 'celebrate' this ultimate act of devotion and sacrifice for one's husband.

It is believed that Nepali is 'A country cursed by a widow'. The wife of Kaji Bhim Malla was compelled to commit forceful *sati*. Bhoj Raj Bhusal and Mohan Krishna Ojha in *Nayab Subbha Pratiyogita Sanjibani* write the curse that is spoken during the period of committing *sati*. The curse was as, "Nepal ko bhalai garneko kahile bhalo nahos, Nepalko darbarma basneharuko kahilai bivek narahos" (206). The future position of Nepal, since long time, has been comparing with the sense of this saying. The hot discussion sometimes we can find in blogs of facebook, twitter by many intellectual person by evaluating the politics of Nepal.

Harlan explains about *sati* as, "*sati* are said to transform into supernatural being akin to goddesses who can be at once good and 'powerfully destructive'" he further, on the *sati* story, writes, “resists attempts to keep goodness and real power-namely uncontrolled and unhandled power-separate” (241). Harlan’s study emphasizes the subjectivity of the *sati* in making and articulating the choice, directing the ritual, and achieving the cultural power of *sati*, worried about the potential surplus of needy, lusty widows and says, “if there was no concremation, widow may go astray; if they burn, this fear is removed” (qtd. in Narasimhan, 33). His concern was primarily for women who did not bur. He was preoccupied with the condition of women, especially widows, in Hindu society. The Guru Nanak, the first Guru of Sikhs spoke out against the practice of *sati*.

Law books also give justification for the practice of *sati*. Vishnu Smriti justifies as: “Now the duties of a woman (are) …After the death of her husband, to preserve her chastity, or to ascend the pile after him” (59).

As well as the Manu Smriti is often regarded as the culmination of classical Hindu law by whom? and hence its position is important. It does not mention or sanction *sati* though it does prescribe life-long asceticism for most widows.

The controversial connection can be seen in scriptures. Although the myth of the goddess *sati* is that of a wife who dies by her own volition on a fire, this is not a case of the practice of *sati*. The goddess was not widowed, and the myth is quite unconnected with the justifications for the practice. Influencing from this myth, different stories have been written. The puranas have examples of women who commit *sati* and there are suggestions in them that this was considered desirable or praiseworthy: “A wife who dies in the company of her husband shall remain in heaven as many years as there are hairs on his person” (Garuda Purana: 1.107.29). According to 2.4.93 she stays with her husband in heaven during the rule of 14

Indras, i.e. a Kalpa. Passages in the Atharva Veda, including 13.3.1, offer advice to the widow on mourning and her life after widowhood, including her remarriage.

Concerning the features of *sati* many Novel, Drama, and Poem are written. Among them, few have been described here. Taking the ideas for further elaboration, the site of The Googlescholar becomes important here. A *sati* attempt features has reflected in the novel *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Gosh. Dramatic events at a royal *sati* occur near the end of the novel and mini-series *The Far Pavilions* by N.M. Kaye. Likewise, in *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne, Phileas Fogg and his accomplice Passepartout successfully rescue a young Parsi woman, Aouda from an enforced *sati* ritual in India. In an episode of *Highlander: The Series*, Duncan Macleod (played by Adrian Paul) rescues a woman attempting *sati* in a flashback to his time in British controlled India. He appeared horrified at the attempt despite his colonial rulers. So far as the poem concerns, in the poem of Rudyard Kipling “The Last Suttee” describes a royal widow sneaking from the palace in disguise after her husband’s death. Upon reaching the pyre, she loses courage and asks her cousin to kill her so she may join with her husband in death.

The symbolic *sati* can find in the practice of *sati* while entering into the history of *sati*. As history, there have a widow lies down next to her dead husband, and certain parts of both the marriage ceremony and the funeral ceremonies are enacted, but without death. In the modern context, as a *sati*, suicide became deliberate taking of one’s own life. Ideally it is an individual’s conscious decision. The similarities between suicide and voluntary *sati* seem similar. So, the basic concept of this voluntary *sati* lies beyond the traditional Indian context. The novel of Marsha Norman’s “‘Night’ Mother” reflects the suicidal theme. In the novel, Jessie Cates chooses the decision of suicide not for devotion but for rebellion.

Not with exact evidence, we can find that in some very rare incidences mothers committed *sati* on their son's pyre and in even more rare cases husbands committed *sati* on their wives pyres. It becomes unique from the feminist perspectives. Many feminist have spoken about *sati* practice, and about the attempts to ban it. They believe that women were targeted by the fundamentalists. According to Clark and Feldman:

> Some feminist believe that women have also been targeted by fundamentalists, such as the Committee for the Defense of the Religion of *sati* ...Feminist are disturbed that women can be active supporter of organizations and activities which limit their own rights in their campaign. (3-5)

Despite the existence of laws which prohibit *sati* in India and these laws have not hindered some attempts by women to perform the selfless act. In this context, Kishwar says, "For Indian feminists, these occurrences confirm that deeply hold and deeply cherished norms cannot be changed simply by enacting laws" (7-8). In essence, reversing years or centuries of female oppression is not only a challenge for Indian women but for women on a global scale.

The principal early foreign visitors to the subcontinent, who left records of the practice, were from Western Asia, Central Asian and later on, Europeans. Both groups were fascinated by the practice, and they sometimes described it as horrific, but they also often described it as an incomparable act of devotion.

By the end of the Eighteenth-Century, the practice had been banned in territories held by some European powers. The Portuguese banned the practice in Goa by about 1515. The Dutch and the French also banned it in Chinsurah and Pondicherry. The British ruled much of subcontinent, and the Danes, who held the small territories of Tranguebar and Serampore, permitted it until the Nineteenth-Century. The Mughal Period (1526-1858) interfered little with local customs; they seemed intent on stopping *sati*. Akbar (1542-1605) had issued general orders prohibiting *sati* and insisted that no woman could commit *sati* without the specific permission of his chief police officers. The first formal British ban was imposed in 1798 in the city of Calcutta only. The practice continued in surrounding regions. Towards the end of the Eighteenth-Century, the evangelical church in Britain, and its members in India started campaigns against *sati*. The leaders of these campaigns were William Carey and William Wilberforce. On 4 December 1829, the practice was formally banned in the Bengal Presidency lands, by the then governor, Lord William Bentinck. The ban was challenged in the court, and the matter went to the Privy Council in London, but was uphold in 1832. *Sati* remained legal in some princely states for a time after it had been abolished in 1846. In Nepal, the practice continued well into the Twenty-Century. On the Indonesian Island of Bali, *sati* was practiced by the aristocracy as late as 1905, until Dutch colonial rule pushed for its termination.

To illustrate the complexities and ambiguities of giving the subaltern and more specifically the subaltern as woman, and in the voice of their in history, Spivak looks at the history of *sati*. As she puts it:

> The abolition of this rite by the British has been generally understood as a case of: ‘white men saving brown women from brown men’. Against this arguments, a parody of the nostalgia for lost origins: ‘The women actually wanted to die’. These two sentences itself reflect a long way to legitimize each other. (297)

The brilliant analysis of the discursive aspects of the Nineteenth-Century debate on *sati*, Lata Mani (1990) has tried to show that the notion of 'tradition' in these debates is specifically 'colonial'. Her argument is that 'women' is neither subject nor object of that debate but that it became the site of the formulation of tradition. In her view Brahmanical scripture only became a privileged source of tradition because the colonial authorities established it as such in their need for an indigenous legal basis for their rule over Indian society. She also shows convincingly that, although the question of the 'free will' of the women who ascends her husband's pyre is a crucial element in the debate, her voice is not heard in the colonial records which focus on Brahmanical scripture. But, it became the orientalistic perspective of the westerner.

In marked distinction from Lata Mani, Spivak presents lengthy discussion of the scriptural basic of the *sati* practice. Her initial question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" leads her to tackle the problem of the free choice of the *sati*. This is clearly the main issue in the debates between critics and defenders of the practice in the Nineteenth-Century, as highlighted by Mani. She recognizes that "imperialism's image as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the woman as object of protection from her own kind" but goes on to ask, "how should an examine the dissimulation of patriarchal strategy, which apparently grants the woman free choice as subject? In other words, how does one make the more from 'Britain' to 'Hinduism'?" (299). Spivak decides to move to the Sanskrit tradition. Her argument in the analysis of that tradition is that it defines the woman as object of one husband who is her god and locates her free will in the act of self-immolation as a means of free herself from her female (lower) body. In this way Spivak succeeds in showing that the woman disappears between patriarchy and imperialism and comes to the conclusion that “there is no space from which that sexed subaltern can speak” (307).

Paradoxically, Spivak is right in referring to the Sanskrit tradition, since this is the hegemonic tradition to which the indigenous elite turned in its debate with itself and the colonial authorities. The point clearly is that the Sanskrit tradition had been a hegemonic discourse in its own right in the pre-colonial and that Orientalist interest in it was not simply a romantic fancy, but based on the recognition of that hegemony.

Spivak in her another article “The Making of Americans; the Teaching of English, the Future of Colonial Studies” puts the deconstructive philosophical position consists in saying an “impossible ‘no’ to a structure, which one critiques, yet inhabits intimately” (28). Gyan Prakash has been explored effectively the potential of this deconstructive position in the archival documents on the abolition of *sati*. The historian encounters these records as evidence of the contests between the British ‘civilizing mission’ and Hindu heathenism, between modernity and tradition, and as a story of the beginning of the emancipation of Hindu women and about the birth of modern India. The question appeared on accumulated sources on *sati* as whether or not the burning of widows was sanctioned by Hindu codes, did could the immolation of women be abolished in the early Nineteenth-Century history.

In the Nineteenth-Century, the issues were on emancipation between barbaric Hindu practices and the British ‘civilizing mission’. Spivak argues that the silencing of subaltern women marks the limit of historical knowledge. It is impossible to retrieve the woman’s voice when she was not given a subject position from which to speak. Though, she has not taken clear stance. Prakash says, “This argument appears to run counter to the historiographical convention of retrieval to recover the histories of the traditionally ignored woman, workers, peasants, and minorities” (1488).

The perspective on history and the position within it that the Postcolonial critic occupies keeps on eye on both the conditions of historical knowledge and the possibilities of its reinscription. Underscoring women’s troubling role in the transmission of Hindu culture, Luxima’s aborted ritual provokes the centuries long debate about *sati* and female agency. The practice of self-immolation brings the complicated question about the Hindu woman’s social and cultural status. When a woman commit *sati,* she is believed to become a symbol of power to her family and her community, and the generative strength of her sat (virtue) is through to be self-emanating and forceful. *Sati* in fact means ‘good woman’ or ‘truthful woman’. John Hawley and Donna Wulff explain the decision to commit *sati* results from the energy or possession of her sat:

> As she moves forward to the act of self-sacrifice that demonstrates outwardly what she inwardly already is-a woman of pure virtue and truth-she is believed to radiate the nurturing beliefs of motherhood upon her family, her community, and those who come to worship her. This power is felt to persist after death, as well. Hence …she wields that powerful combination of the virginal and the motherly. (21)

Performing a ceremony that blends together the two rites of passage are wedding and funeral. The *sati* dresses as a bride, carefully adorning herself in jewelry and real clothing with the help of other women who sing and chant as the preparations are made. All these activities indicate the preparation to be eternally united with her husband. As bride/widow, virgin/mother, woman/goddess, the *sati* exceeds her status as merely devoted wife, becoming a powerful and revered embodiment of perfection.

But, Stein keeps his attitude as “Like a dining leaf used previously by another person, she is unfit to be enjoyed by another person” (468). He further elaborates that not only was the woman considered being inferior to her husband, her entire family was looked down upon as well. Upon her marriage, a Hindu woman became a part of her husband’s family. If and when her husband were to die she was then a burden on her in laws, and due to the patriarchal nature of ancient Hindu society there was no longer a place for her in the world.

The Missionary introduces the performance of *sati* is Luxima’s decision rather than as a cultural imperative imposed upon her by elders of her community or family. In the novel, she articulates her wish to die with Hilarion, and “when she sees him on the pyre, she calls out to Brahma to eternally unite their spirits (251). Moreover, her prerogative of choice is established earlier in the novel. When the reader learns that Luxima, in fact, choose not to commit *sati* when she was married and widow as a young girl. Unlike many Hindu women, she had options: her unique status as a widow, virgin and member of the Brahmin class afforded her the alternative of becoming a Brachmachira. Rather than enduring the widow’s lot of shame and poverty, Luxima becomes a celebrated community leader who wields religious, social and economic power. *The Missionary* thus represents Luxima as a sort of superwoman, embodying all the traits thought to be ideal in the Hindu woman. A pundit explains the elevated status of Hindu women, especially of Luxima:

> Pure and tender, faithful and pious, zealous alike in their fondness and their faith, they immolate themselves as martyrs to both, and expire on the pile which consumes the objective of their affection, to inherit the promise which religion holds out to their hopes; for the

> heaven of an Indian woman is the eternal society of whom she loved on earth. In all the religions of the east, woman has held a decided influence, either as a priestess or a victim. (249)

The choices for Indian women's victim or priestess denote their lamentably limited realm of power. But, Luxima exceeds the traditional expectations of Hindu women in her possession of social, economic and religious power in addition to the possession of her sat. For her, joining Hilarion in death signals her perfect moments of 'triumph'. In this way, Luxima's determination to commit *sati* calls attention to the agency she can exert over herself as well as to the troubling means by which women contribute to the transmission of Hindu culture.

Sati conflates women's symbolic death (or loss of identity) through marriage with a literal death that is itself symbolic of marriage. The overlapping of wedding and funerary rituals in Owenson's *The Missionary* illuminates a model that Rush Rehm terms "Marriage to Death". Marriage and funerary rituals, Rehm explains, are similarly constitutive of family and community. A wedding ties together two families, creating a new conjugal unit, while families or communities often coalesce around the deceased in order to reaggregate. Luxima's performance of *sati* enacts this kind of cultural creativity by uniting the Hindu population against colonial forces.

While Luxima's self-immolation is voluntary, Hilarion is forced to commit a kind of *sati*. Hilarion accepts his fate as irrevocable, and he approaches the altar with dignity; however, he does not choose death. Hilarion ultimately renounces his faith, his missionary project and his western roots. He has no option except to confess the reality. He cannot lie in the Hindu territory eventually. So, he seems to surrender, and urges Luxima to resist her approaching death. Hilarion exclaims:

> Dearest and most unfortunate, our destinies are now inseparably united! ... Alike condemned by our religion and our countries, there now remains nothing on earth for us but each other! Already have we met the horrors of death without its repose; and the life for which thou hast offered the precious purchase of thine own, must now belong alone to me. (255)

Luxima's willing to commit *sati* in order to be eternally united with her lover and her self-immolation is voluntary where as the Dominican authorities of the Inquisition indict Hilarion for 'heresy' and 'for the seduction of a neophyte', sentencing him is forced to commit a kind of *sati*. Hilarion accepts that they both met the horrors of death. So, he exclaims that their destinies are now inseparably united.

Owenson's footnote about the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 alludes to contemporary British religious and civil domination of India. The Vellore incident calls attention to the very real threat of rebellion against cultural repression, a reality reinforced by the revolutionary energies witnessed in Europe and its colonial rule in India to Spanish domination of Portugal and its colonial in Seventeenth-Century Goa, *The Missionary* identifies a similar pattern of cultural repression and insurgence. The narrator explains that Spanish control of Portugal and its colonies was declining and 'it was known by many fatal symptoms' that the Indian were 'ripe for insurrection':

> The arts used by the Dominicans and the Jesuits for the conversion of the followers of Brahma, the evil consequences which had arisen by the forfeiture of cast… with the coercive tyranny of the Spanish government, had excited in the breasts of the mild, patient, and long

> enduring Hindus, a principle of resistance, which waited only for some strong and sudden impulse to call it into action. (241)

The Hindus, like the Portuguese, suffered at the injustice of Spanish colonial rule in the Seventeenth-Century. The novel, *The Missionary* reflects a similar pattern of cultural repression. It was lesson for Hindus and Indians as ‘ripe for insurrection’ in the case of British cultural repression *The Missionary* covers a twenty year time span, concluding four years after Portugal’s successful revolution against Spain. Owenson explicitly links the Vellore footnote to the brutality of the Inquisition by its proximity in theme and position.

The Missionary includes a number of footnotes that employ a variety of scholar sources, mostly travel accounts from the Seventeenth-Century. John Drew identifies Owenson’s ‘total immersion’ in her reliance upon Francois Bernier (the first European to visit Kashmir) for her setting she collected her Indian material from Charles Ormsby’s Oriental Library which “supplied her with rare books that gave the sanction of authority to her own wild and improbable visions” (242). Her footnotes are the ‘sanction’ that she was expressing ideas for which she might be censured. After reading many books, Owenson cannot tolerate the Westerner domination in other countries also because she is such a dauntless woman writer who fought against colonial rule with her writings.

Hilarion desire to possess and control Luxima reveals his own anxiety of identity and the fragility of his own faith: “To listen to her was dangerous, for the eloquence of genius and feeling… gave a force to her errors and a charm to her look, which weakened even the zeal of conversion in the priest” (126). Not only Hilarion but also many European colonizers were victimized by love affairs in the colonized territory. In the novel of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* also the Belgian colonizers were victimized in the African territory.

Luxima’s devotion and innate strength fuel her resolve. In addition, her excess of identity, emblematized by the adornment of her casts marks and cross as she jumps on the fire, permits her to maintain her commitment to both her spiritual and her earthly loves. By affirms her love for Hilarion that brings the gap between her religious and emotional commitments. So, the novel, *The Missionary* represents Luxima’s performance of *sati* as a voluntary act of rebellion and devotion. And, a profound commitment to her religious and national identities is only possible by performing rituals that links an oppressed past with a liberated future.

The multiplicity of interpretive and representative possibilities permits the novel to critique England’s missionary and civilizing projects while seeming to address a different time and place. Hilarion’s attitude towards Hinduism reflects Western claims of ascendancy over the east. The Western people have been orientalistic perspective on Hinduism. Nineteenth-Century conversations about *sati* considered in part the distinction between voluntary and forced *sati*, an issue that Lati Mani suggests helps shape colonial discourse and policy.

The trajectory of Luxima’s subjectivity culminates with her complex associations of the *auto de fė* with *sati*. When she sees Hilarion on the pyre, Luxima is not only reminded of her previous rejection of suicide when she was widowed, but in her confusion she recreates her widowhood, reclaiming her opportunity for martyrdom:

> [s]he saw a spectacle similar to that which the self-immolation of the Brahmin women presents…[s]he believed the hour of her sacrifice and her triumph was arrived…, and when she heard her name

> pronounced by his well-known voice, she rushed to the pie in all enthusiasm of love and of devotion. (251)

Luxima had been previously married when she was very young, but her husband died before they consummated the relationship. Because she was a widow and a virgin, as well as part of the Brahmin class, she was able to become a Brachmachiva. The subaltern consciousness brings triumph but the triumph was on the sacrifice of Luxima's committing *sati*. Luxima's two roles as Hindu woman and icon of India are dramatically fused here: her ambivalent signification culminates with her memory of having rejected *sati* as a young, and to be widow to take up the powerful position of priestess. The committing *sati* of Luxima is not only an opportunity for martyrdom for the nation but also it retrieves the history of *sati* as well as on a long imminent Hindu uprising against colonial rule.

IV. Sacrifice and Triumph in *The Missionary*

Owenson writings are populated with zealous protagonist – a particularly woman, who is profoundly devoted to the preservation of her religious or national identity. She empowers her heroine with strong cultural resistance. *The Missionary* introduces a heroine whose performance of *sati* disrupts colonial and missionary power. When Luxima jumps upon a missionary Hilarion's funeral pyre for the preservation of Hindu religion, Hilarion failed to tell a story of patriarchal control, religious persecution and colonial oppression.

Usually, each subaltern's writer has selected certain form of agency to strengthen his/her dominated character with the role of protagonist or with major character. This novel also projects different forms of protest against the injustice and mutiny. Owenson presents India as a land of mystery, of religious rites and beliefs not easily comprehensible to the ordinary westerner who has been taught to judge everything by the yardstick of commonsense and reason.

The writer, Owenson represents colonial character Hilarion as unsuccessful character who attempts to convert the Hindu belief into Christianity but because of the consciousness of Hindu priestess, Luxima with the ritual performance of Hinduism makes failure in his mission. Elusive nature of Hilarion shows the ambivalent nature of westerner in choice of their life and suitable life friends. Hilarion's identity, literary cloaked throughout the novel by his monastic trappings, comes to surface that he is the 'wild and melancholy man', and 'unknown Christian wanderer'. Owenson has laid bare the hypocrisy behind Hilarion's conviction that his dream of converting the religion differed from "the imbecility of those who submitted their reason to the tyranny of a baseless illusion" (102). By submitting his sensibility to the tyranny of reason's baseless illusion of control, Hilarion himself brings about tragedy for a woman.

It is significant that Luxima does not actually die in the pyre, but instead she dies being rescued from it. The permutation of cultural and religious intolerance would set the vexed tone in India for a long time to come. Although Luxima might be willing to commit *sati* in order to be eternally united with her commitment to Brahma; in fact she had never converted to Christianity. The Hindu priestess, Luxima had surrendered to Hilarion on an emotional love affair rather than a spiritual level, but she was conscious in her religious identity and nationality, and significantly the missionary efforts of Hilarion have ultimately failed. Hilarion's capitulation signals the failure of the missionary and civilizing projects as well as a deficit of character, of zeal, and of faith. Conversely, Luxima's excess, her layers of faith, love and passion, permit her to ultimately uphold her loyalty to her Hindu religion and her Catholic lover.

The Missionary introduces *sati* as Luxima's decision rather than as a cultural imperative imposed upon her by the elders. Thus, the novel represents Luxima as a sort of superwoman embodying all the traits thought to be ideal in the Hindu woman. In this way, Luxima's determination to commit *sati* calls attention to the agency she can exert over herself as well as to the troubling means by which women contribute to the transmission of Indian culture.

In *The Missionary* the subaltern does in fact speak. The silenced subaltern histories and recovery of the subaltern voices was possible only with the contribution of the subaltern theorists and critics. If the Subaltern Studies have not taken place, the voice of the subaltern heroine of the novel would have silenced forever. Although she has sacrificed her life, she triumphs on religious mission of Hilarion as well as on patriarchy that now Hilarion fails to tell a story of patriarchal control and colonial oppression to convert the Hindu religion.

Luxima's struggle to resist the cultural colonial mission with the performance of cultural resistance becomes milestone to retrieve the history of *sati*. To speak honestly, there is a triumph on Luxima's sacrifice. In Nepal, the impact of education was also a cause to add strengthen in the attempt to ban the *sati*. It added the consciousness not only to subaltern people but also to the ruler of the Ranas.

This research has contributed for documenting the history of *sati*. In the earlier histories, the voice of *sati* was silenced and the subject position was imagery. This research successfully retrieves the women's voice, for it women have given subject position from which they can speak. There was a negative attitude on *sati*, and this attitude was Orientalistic perspective for the Westerner. Now onwards, this research resists these assumptions. For the new researcher on *sati*, this research can be contributed because there is a lack of sources about *sati* in Nepali history, as well as it can be unique source for the foreign researchers on *sati*. So, this research exists in its own importance.

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