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Resistance to Neo-colonialism in Ruth Ozeki's Novel *My Year of Meat*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Behave Cks Giri has completed his thesis entitled "Resistance of Neo-colonialism in Ruth Ozeki's Novel *My Year of Meat*" under my supervision. He carried out his thesis from August 2017 to March 2018. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted to viva voce.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Resistance of Neo-colonialism in Ruth Ozeki's Novel *My Year of Meat*", submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Behave Cks Giri, has been approved by the undersigned members of the thesis Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Abstract

This research is a study of Japanese-American novelist Ruth Ozeki's novel My Year of Meats as the critique of neo-colonialistic vision. It focuses basically on three post-colonial concerns of the novelist: extension of American meat market to Japan with idealized image of America in media representation, neo-colonial management of the environment of Asian countries to gain profit and subversion of the colonial image of cannibalism. The protagonist, Jane, works as a documentarian making documentaries to promote beef and American values and cooking methods to the housewives of Japan. The export of American values and food culture is responsible to deteriorate not only the cultural proceedings of the Japanese housewives but it also shows the deteriorating impacts on their health. As Jane visits America to shoot the episodes of the show, she sees violence embedded in American culture and a case of cannibalism in America itself. She listens to a bartender's story about two people eating stew of human head and a doctor's dealing to buy fresh human skull in Wyoming that shows the practice of cannibalism practiced in American people themselves. Akiko, a Japanese housewife follows the recipes as Jane suggests in various episodes, her reproductive health deteriorates due to the hormones used in beef. Thus, the novel presents the adverse impact on the Japanese culture and criticizes the neo-colonial marketing of culture as harmful to the Japanese culture.

Key Words:

American values, Japanese culture, media, discourse, knowledge, cannibalism, representation, environmentalism, neo-colonial, post-colonial

Introduction

Resistance of Neo-colonialism in Ruth Ozeki's Novel *My Year of Meat*

This research is a study of Ruth Ozeki's novel *My Year of Meats* as a critique of neo-colonial discourse promoted by world power America to decimate the Asian cultures. For the effectiveness to understand the cultural difference, the writer has juxtaposed the American and Japanese characters and highlights the fact how the discourse of wholesome American value is idealized in Japan and American beef is taking the share of Japanese market without considering its hazards on human health.

Jane Takagi-Little, a Japanese-American journalist, is the protagonist of the novel. She is employed by a Japanese production company working with BEEF-EX to promote American beef in Japan. She is making a Japanese television show called '*My American Wife!*' for the promotion of the meat for the company. Jane works as the host for that show and later turns to its director as well as a creative producer. She travels throughout America and films the various recipes of beef in American families. The show she films is broadcasted on the Japanese television channels targeting the Japanese housewives who cook beefs following the recipes. The import of American beef and American wholesome values in the novel can be studied as the proliferation of neo-colonial values. Parallel to Jane's story there is also the life story of Akiko Ueno, a former reluctantly married to a man working for BEEF-EX.

Akiko's husband only wants Akiko to have a baby and forces her to watch *My American Wife* and cook the beef following the recipes. He believes that it will allow her to conceive. But when Akiko's independence and sense of self grows from watching the show and cooking for her husband, her complacent life and relationship with her husband becomes just formal. The book uses two point of views: point of view from Jane Takagi-Little and Akiko Ueno. For Jane the plot is told through faxes

and journal entries, for Akiko the plot is told through third person omniscient point of view. These points of view and difference in their experiences unfolds the failure of import of neo-colonial American values.

In *My Year of Meats*, the writer has presented Jane as involved in the transference of American values to Asian country Japan through a Japanese production company, BEEF-EX; this capitalist company itself imports the wholesome American values for the cultured Japanese housewives. The production company invests in filming documentary *My American Wife* hiring a Japanese-American documentarian Jane so that the recipes and the lifestyles of American housewives can be learnt by Japanese women. To explore this situation and examine its implications in the novel is basic research problem.

Hypothesis

The novel presents the situation in which there is the import of the wholesome American values that is rendering Japanese cultural values weak and imperfect. The narrator is adamant to her power to manipulate the Japanese audience and instead of selling the falsehood of so-called wholesomeness in American values, she resists them working with the diverse and multicultural families.

The main objective of this research is to examine the facets of nationalist, neo-colonial ideologies and hegemony in the novel. The study of the consequences of the neo-colonialism in the capitalist world and its consequences is the objective of the study. Even though this research primarily examines the stance of the writer against neo-colonial hegemony to reduce the consequences neo-colonial values in Japanese people, the analysis primarily draws upon textual interpretation of the novel. Only the textual evidences are drawn into the discussion. Even though, this research uses the theoretical basis of neo-colonialism and hegemony, it does not clarify all the aspects

of neo-colonialism and hegemony due to limitation of time. Only the supportive theoretical premises are used. This research becomes a remarkable contribution for upcoming researchers. It helps them understand the neo-colonial hegemony and its critique in American novels. Further, the future researchers will be benefitted and encouraged to study neo-colonialism in the novels on the framework of this research.

Literature Reviews

Ruth Ozeki's novel has attracted the large number of criticisms since its publication. Many of the critics have analyzed the novel in terms critique of advertisements, eco-critical issues and American culture. Ursula K. Heise has examined the novel from eco-critical perspective focusing on the novel's representation of the use of hormones in beef in export and the impact of hormones to the human health. The hormones used in the meat have adverse effect upon women's reproduction. She writes, "*My Year of Meats* focuses mostly on the use of hormones in the beef industry and its deleterious effects on human health, especially women's reproduction, in a cultural context that includes the advertisement and export of American beef to Japan" (395-96). It is clear that Ozeki has presented the capitalist economy and transnational trade in negative light. She sees such marketing dependent to advertisements are mindlessly destroying the natural phenomenon.

Another critic of the novel, Julie Sze, sees the novel as tragicomic novel depicting the issues like love, failure of fertility, and the pollution upon human body. She observes:

My Year of Meats is a tragicomic novel that follows the exploits of a mixed-race producer of a Japanese television show that promotes American meat and of a Japanese housewife. Themes of love, failed fertility, and bodily pollution are linked through a synthetic estrogen called diethylstilbestrol (DES). Women

and animals are linked through DES because it was given to women to prevent miscarriages (while what it actually did was produce reproductive cancers in the children who were exposed in uterus) and to the animal industry to promote growth. (127)

Sze sees the novel as the exploits of Japanese American producer of the documentary about meat recipe on the process of the promotion of American beef in Japanese market. She also observes the connection between the female body and animals' body through a synthetic estrogen hormone called diethylstilbestrol that causes cancer in women. Sze, thus, also focuses on the health hazards of the chemicals upon human body by the means of meat.

Ozeki's interviewer, Eleanor Ty has also discussed about Ozeki's works as the introduction to her interview. She sees Ozeki's works as the works of margins, focusing on the unfocused and neglected sides of America shattering the popular belief about it:

In both *My Year of Meats* and her second novel, *All Over Creation*, the protagonists are mixed-race Japanese Americans who do not quite fit the image of the "attractive, appetizing, and all- American" ideal woman represented in popular media. Jane Takagi-Little of *My Year of Meats* tries to explode this nostalgic "illusion of America" by deliberately focusing on nonwhite, nonheterosexual, and nontraditional families when she gets a chance to direct a television-show called *My American Wife!* for a Japanese audience. (160)

Ty points that the works of Ozeki explore nonwhite, non-heterosexual, and nontraditional families of America shattering the established image of America and Americans. She does not use the typical and stereotyped American characters rather

she uses the characters from margin and criticizes the illusion of America.

Thus, after the study of numerous critiques of the novel, this researcher reaches into the conclusion that the novel is not studied in the framework of neo-colonialism and hegemony. So, departing from the earlier critiques, this research focuses on the colonial and hegemonic elements and their critiques in the novel.

Methodology

Neocolonialism can be defined as a theoretical concept that refers to the situation of colonial control in the less-developed and technically decolonized countries. Widely, in current world under the spread of globalization, the super-powers and developed countries have shown their interest to gain maximum advantage from the powerless countries through trade and cultural expansion. Such countries can also be seen from neocolonial perspective. It is one of the prominent concepts in post-colonial theory in recent time. The value of this term is elaborated by Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin in *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*:

The powerful designation of neo-colonialism to denote the new force of global control operating through a local élite or comprador class was coined by the Ghanaian independence leader Kwame Nkrumah (1965). As a socialist, Nkrumah restricted his concept of the neo-colonial operations of imperialism to the operation of the global capitalism of the West. (74)

When we look for the history of the term 'neocolonial', we have to go back to mid twentieth century just after WWII. Bandung Conference, the conference of Afro-Asian non-aligned nations in Bandung, Indonesia, sowed the seed of the resistance against the domination of the powerful countries and charged against the domination of the powerful countries. Later, in 1965, the term 'neo-colonialism' is coined by Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah.

To understand the background of the very concept of neo-colonialism, understanding of Bandung conference and important because it is the occasion in which the undeveloped, underdeveloped and non-aligned nation started to voice their concern against the colonial countries for their unnecessary interference into the internal affairs of the Asian and African countries. This conference was the anti-colonial conference of solidarity of the Asians and Africans against the colonial domination. “The Asian–African Conference, which took place in Bandung from 18 to 24 April 1955, was a crucial event that has come to symbolize anti-colonial solidarity” (23). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin further write:

Twenty-nine formerly colonized nations met at Bandung in Java for a groundbreaking meeting, organized by Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon, that represented 1.5 billion people. The African contingent was quite small despite having the largest number of colonies – only Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia and Liberia were independent, since most African colonies did not receive independence until the 1960s. (23)

The aims of the conference were clear. They wanted to promote the economic and cultural cooperation among the Asian countries as well as resist the colonial domination of the super powers. The Conference was organized by Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka (Ceylon) that represented 1.5 billion of the world population. This third world initiative was well supported by African colonies like Egypt, Libya and so on. Many regard this conference as a groundbreaking step towards the resistance of the colonial and neo-colonial domination in the Third World. This conference did not only categorize the West into colonial but also started the debate that even the socialists like Soviet Union should be regarded as neo-colonial. “The conference was an important step towards the crystallization of the Non-Aligned

Movement and the way their unity might assist them in resisting the emerging challenge characterized by the term neo-colonialism” (23). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin further clarify:

Despite its call for National Liberation, some delegates considered that Soviet Russia offered as much a threat of such control as the capitalist West. As a result, much of the discussion of the conference revolved around the question of whether the Soviet Union should be censured as neo-colonial. (23)

The world powers like United States and Soviet Russia were criticized for their threats to the Asian and African countries in Bandung Conference. The non-aligned nations of Asia and Africa started a new way of resistance for their self-determination and economic and political freedom that marks conceptual beginning of neo-colonialism in practical way. The spirit of resistance against the colonial domination became more powerful thereafter. Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah coined the term neo-colonialism in 1965. Nkrumah’s stance and conceptualization of the term is elaborated by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “Neo-colonialism meaning ‘new colonialism’ was a term coined by Kwame Nkrumah . . . *The Last Stage of Imperialism*” (177). They clarify further:

. . . although countries such as Ghana had achieved political independence, the excolonial powers and the newly emerging superpowers such as the United States continued to play a decisive role in their cultures and economies through new instruments of indirect control such as international monetary bodies, through the power of multinational corporations and cartels which artificially fixed prices in world markets, and through a variety of other educational and cultural NGOs. . . . In fact, Nkrumah argued that neo-colonialism was more insidious and more difficult to detect and resist than the

direct control exercised by classic colonialism. (177-78)

The subtle discourse of neo-colonialism is hard to figure out and resist according to Nkrumah. It uses the instruments of indirect control like international monetary bodies, world markets and NGOs. In Ozeki's novel *My Year of Meats* media and market play crucial role to promote so-called wholesome American values by the means of documentary and Japanese meat market.

Analysis

My Year of Meats is the first novel by Japanese American novelist Ruth L. Ozeki. In this novel, Jane Takagi-Little takes a job as a producer on a Japanese reality show designed to encourage Japanese housewives to cook more beef. Jane is responsible for finding American housewives who are wholesome and attractive who will open her home to the cameras and make a meal whose centerpiece is some kind of beef dish. As Jane becomes more involved in the show, she begins to learn things about the beef industry that cause her to doubt her commitment to the show. At the same time, Akiko Ueno, the wife of the advertising executive who oversees the show's production, watches and learns that there is more to life than subservient obedience to a husband that she never loved.

My Year of Meats is not only a closer look into the controversial practices of the beef industry but also a story of self-discovery in the lives of two very different women. Jane Takagi-Little is living the life of a starving artist when she is offered a job producing a Japanese reality show to promote American beef. Jane is grateful for the job and quickly jumps into it despite a disastrous beginning with the first housewife that she features on the show. At the same time, Akiko Ueno, the wife of a Japanese advertising executive who is in charge of the production of *My American Wife!*, is given the chore of watching the show, cooking the dishes featured, and

rating its overall wholesomeness and authenticity. Promoting the superiority and wholesomeness gives this novel a shape of a neo-colonial resistance.

Further, the choice of Jane, to film diversity of American characters marks the novel as a novel of neo-colonial critique and a post-colonial novel. Ashcroft et.al. write:

The field of postcolonial studies now includes the vexed subjects of contemporary neo-colonialism: the identities and relationships of Chicano, Latino and hybrid subjectivities of various kinds. These subjects, who slip between the boundaries of the grand narratives of history and nation, are becoming an increasingly important constituency for postcolonial studies.

(viii)

Jane constantly contests with the Japanese producers as she attempts to include a variety of American housewives on the show and not just the attractive white women they would prefer. Jane also wants to direct the show but again the Japanese want a Japanese director who will understand the standards by which the Japanese live. However, on the rare occasions when Jane gets her way, Akiko gives the show higher ratings in comparison to the shows that her husband finds more appropriate. The taste of Japanese housewives is different and Jane knows it. She does not care what her boss would want and resistance to the need of the capitalist company is clearly seen in her narration. ““Takagi, don’t be stupid,” he told me. “The program is not called *My Mexican Wife!*, you know....” I had given up trying to sell him on the idea” (47). Jane goes to shoot a Mexican family in Oklahoma instead of going after pure American family and its values. On that day of filming, the director from Japan, Oda, has a bad reaction to the meat he is eating at the home of a featured housewife. Jane learns that this reaction is caused by the man's severe allergy to antibiotics. Jane learns from the

doctor that all beef has some residual antibiotic in it from the antibiotics given to the cows at the feedlots to keep them from getting sick. All Jane cares about at this point, however, is the fact that the director's illness allows her to step in his place.

Jane continues searching out more unusual housewives, such as a woman in Louisiana who has adopted ten Korean children with her chef husband instead of searching totally American family and pursuing their values. Unfortunately, the ad executive, John Ueno, does not like this episode because Jane allows the husband to cook the meal. However, Ueno's wife finds this episode to be more wholesome than some of the others. Another controversial episode Jane films is one that centers around vegetarian lesbians. This episode causes a great deal of stress for John Ueno but his wife finds it inspiring, making her see how unhappy she is in her life. Jane narrates the reason behind her choice of lesbian family to shoot as the satisfaction of the Japanese audience instead of Japanese company:

Maybe America had radicalized him, but it was Suzuki who convinced me that it would be fine to put lesbians on the show. There was nothing unwholesome about their lifestyle, he argued. The women were pillars of their community: one was a district attorney, the other a well-published author; their tiny children were unusually smart and cute; and they were exemplary mothers, both of them . . . why not do a show about alternative lifestyles, something that was not often tolerated in Japan. (114)

Suzuki, the crew member of Jane, suggested Jane to film the lesbian family. So-called wholesomeness of American values is also found with lesbian and diverse families. The lesbians they choose to shoot are both good mothers. Suzuki emphasized on the authenticity of the show helping the audience understand about alternative lifestyles of America. Jane, thus, in the quest for wholesome American cultural values that

serve as model values for the Japanese housewives to follow, creates the diverse and fragmented American values. Thus, she resists the neo-colonial discourse of cultural superiority of America.

In the novel, American values as superior is spoken with the use of media. The documentary, in which Jane works as a crew member first and director later speaks a discourse that Japanese housewives need to follow wholesome American values and recipes to cook beef. It is spoken careful choice of the director among the diverse range of American values at the beginning of the show. The danger generated by such lopsided and selected language is pointed by Frantz Fanon in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*:

To speak means to be in a position to use certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization. Since the situation is not one-way only, the statement of it should reflect the fact. Here the reader is asked to concede certain points that, however unacceptable they may seem in the beginning, will find the measure of their validity in the facts. (8)

Speaking about American culture through media in selected language and filming the selected cultural proceedings is evident in Ozeki's novel. Media representation about American cultural values has become one-way and it is an imposition upon Japanese audience rather than being factual.

From the very beginning of the novel, the novelist associates her Japanese American protagonist Jane with media and presents the subtle away of the discourse formation and promotion through the media. Jane involves in the television show "My American Wife !" and starts the formation of discourse of the American values in her viewers in Japan. The very formation of the superior American value is connected to

the meat market. The American beef supplier company BEEF-EX sponsors the reality show so that the American meat culture could be promoted to Japanese housewives.

The show and its purposes are introduced in the narration:

Meat is the Message. Each weekly half-hour episode of must culminate in the celebration of a featured meat, climaxing in its glorious consumption. It's the meat (not the Mrs.) who's the star of our show! Of course, the "Wife of the Week" is important too. She must be attractive, appetizing, and all-American. She is the Meat Made Manifest: ample, robust, yet never tough or hard to digest. Through her, Japanese housewives will feel the hearty sense of warmth, of comfort, of hearth and home - the traditional family values symbolized by red meat in rural America. (18)

The promotion of powerful culture of the powerful country through media representation is evident in the basic commentary of the television show by Jane. She idealizes American recipes of meat and consumption as a glorious act. She is promoting consumer culture of America as well as American meat product to Japan. She claims the originality of those American values and products and looks for the model American wife for her television show that should be attractive, appetizing and all-American.

The Japanese audience, the housewives need to feel at home with the American role model they watch on their TV screen and copy the American values and lifestyle without any doubt on the superiority of American values. For the originality of American values, traditional American families and the red meat of rural America is shown on the television show.

The writer ironically presents the artificiality of seemingly idealized American values as they appear in disarray when she shoots for it. Jane, the documentary maker,

has to look for the original things that are removed by her American housewives to be filmed to appear modern. Suzie removes a quilt that appears to be very old and antique from her bedroom before filming it. Since all the household activities, cooking styles, rooms and their lifestyle are to be filmed, Suzie sends the quilt to her sister in Wisconsin in case it creates problem. But, the documentarians want it back as it is a part of American cultural value. They see the changes in the time duration between their first and second visits to Suzie's home. Suzie has replaced her old bedding with newer ones:

Jane had hesitated when she saw the new bedding and asked again about the old quilt, which Suzie had already washed and sent off to her sister in Wisconsin, who collected antiques. That was the big joke, that the quilt was so old you could call it an antique. Jane frowned and consulted with Mr. Oda, the director, in Japanese, then she asked if there was any way to get it back quickly. (27)

Americans are showy and hesitate to show their old cultural objects in the show. Artificiality in so-called wholesome American culture is clear in this instance. Suzie, the wife to be shot for Jane's show has washed and sent the old quilt to her sister in Wisconsin. Jane is not pleased with her act and wants the quilt back again quickly so that it could be filmed for the show as an emblem of American cultural heritage. The narrator further narrates:

But Suzie had sent the package by parcel post, because airmail was so expensive. There wasn't any real hurry for it to get there, after all, and now it was probably on a mail truck somewhere between here and Sheboygan. Jane had looked stunned. She explained that it was the *old* quilt they liked, because it had old-fashioned, wholesome family values. The new quilt was not

interesting, she said, and Mr. Oda seemed very angry and decided not to shoot in the bedroom. Suzie felt terrible. (27-8)

The writer has pointed to the confusion what wholesome American values actually mean by. But they have to make the values appear wholesome and idealized before parceling it in form of documentary to Japan. The removal of old quilt by American housewife is the removal of old family value that was actually a wholesome American value. Wholesome American value is rapidly waning and being replaced by new values but it is made up for the Japanese audience. They are just selling the illusion, a discourse of non-existent wholesome American values and try to assert their superiority over Japanese cultural values. It is a neocolonial tendency to promote so-called superior Euro-American values to Asian and African market and establish their cultural taste dismantling the so-called inferior cultural values of those regions.

The writer continues to narrate instances how they make up for the missing thing for the wholesome American recipes and show them as ideal one. A meat cuisine, rump roast is made with Pepsi since Coke is not available in the store and has to work to show the meat fresh at any cost during the time she collects the ingredients before cooking it:

But Suzie had bought only enough ingredients to make *one* rump roast, so they had to go out to the grocery store and buy a dozen economy-size bottles of Pepsi because the store had run out of Coke. Unfortunately they couldn't find another rump roast that looked the same, and in between each take, Suzie had to wash off the raw meat in the sink and pat it dry with paper towels and make it look new again. (28)

The store runs out of Coke and thus, Suzie has to buy Pepsi instead of Coke. There are other problems too. The pieces rump roast does not appear same. So, between

filming, Suzie needs to take measures so that the rump roast looks fresh. It shows that the cooking value they are claiming to be authentic American value is fabricated and is almost a joke. They sell the fabricated American value in the garb of camera showing it as authentic one. It is a kind of joke:

It was kind of funny at first. Jane stood off to one side, funneling the Pepsi into the Coke bottle, which Suzie then poured onto the tired rump, over and over again, until the meat turned gray. Finally they told her to put it into the oven a few dozen times, and when that was over she was so relieved—but then, out of the blue, Jane asked for the matching, already cooked roast she was supposed to have prepared in advance, so they could shoot her taking it back out of the oven without wasting time. (28)

The writer ironizes the American values and funny proceedings at kitchen. Her protagonist, Jane, knows it. They need to show Coke instead of Pepsi in ideal American recipe, but since only Pepsi is available to them, they funnel Pepsi into the bottles of Coke. Following the ideal cooking style, recipe is very cumbersome even to the American housewives is clearly presented in the narration as Suzie finds it hard to meet the demands of documentarians.

There is close connection between the promotion of the discourse of powerful wholesome cultures of West and America to Asian and African cultures and neo-colonialism. In its wider sense, the term neo-colonialism does not only present the dominating relation between former colonizers' culture and the cultures of ex-colonies rather it also includes the relation between current economically powerful countries and economically poor countries:

The term has since been widely used to refer to any and all forms of control of the ex-colonies after political independence. Thus, for example, it has been

argued by some that the new *élites* brought to power by independence, and often educated and trained by the colonialist powers, were unrepresentative of the people and acted as unwitting or even willing agents (compradors) for the former colonial rulers. (178)

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have thus clarified the term neo-colonialism as a catchall term to refer to any forms of control of the ex-colonies by the former colonizers after their political independence. The new elites educated in the former colonizer countries may act as the agent to promote their influence in the former colonies is also the notable concern of the post-colonialist thinkers. They further clarify:

In a wider sense the term has come to signify the inability of developing economies, the erstwhile so-called Third World economies, to develop an independent economic and political identity under the pressures of globalization. (Recently the term has been associated less with the influence of the former colonial powers and more with the role of the new superpower of the United States, whose expansionist policy past and present, it is argued, constitutes a new form of imperialism.) (178)

The role of superpowers in the promotion of their cultures to rest of the world is also included in the term neo-colonialism. It forms a flawed knowledge and circulates it through the media as it appears in Ozeki's novel. The influence of America over Japanese culture is taken for granted and since Japanese housewives believe that they are gaining the knowledge about the best American values they never doubt the media representation. It makes their own Japanese values as weak and weird.

Foucault talks about the construction of knowledge by the means of technological instruments and use of knowledge they produce as instrument with apt

control over the production of knowledge:

. . . "knowledge" of the body . . . is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body . . . rarely formulated in continuous, systematic discourse; it is often made up of bits and pieces; it implements . . . methods . . . it is generally no more than a multiform instrumentation . . . it cannot be localized in . . . institution or state apparatus. For they have recourse to it; they use, select, or impose certain of its methods. (173)

How the knowledge formed by the means of technology and media are flawed and problematic is highlighted by Foucault in his observation. They are made up of pieces and bits selected carefully to promote a discourse that we see in the making process of documentary. It is interesting to see, how the fabricated cultures of Europe and America are promoted as wholesome cultures through the media representations and the products are promoted as a part of wholesome and advanced culture to the markets of non-American, non-European world. This gives the power to powerful culture over powerless culture generating a psychological pressure and a sense of inferiority complex. This process is explained by Fanon:

Every colonized people - in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality - finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (9)

The promotion of powerful culture over powerless culture generates loss of cultural originality in local level and thus, it creates inferiority complex. The culture of mother country is denounced and the people of developing countries become whiter or more and more europeanized. Thus, colonization is a psychological phenomenon. This process is shown in Ozeki's novel. The cooking of Japanese culture is ridiculed and greatest cooking methods imported from America need to displace cultural cooking method of Japan. Japanese are presented as the receptors of American values without questioning them. Ueno forces his wife Akiko to rate the recipes presented in the documentary as good ones, at least better than, traditional Japanese recipes. Thus, they are slowly losing their cultural originality and being colonized.

Ozeki raises post-colonial environmental concern powerfully. Her viewer Akiko has struggled with her own infertility issues. However, she has recently begun menstruating again and knows that a pregnancy is possible. Akiko thinks about the episode of *My American Wife!* with the lesbians and realizes she cannot find happiness with her husband. As Akiko reaches this conclusion, her husband's occasional abuse toward her reaches a fevered pitch. John Ueno rapes his wife and leaves her badly injured, an injury that leads to hospitalization a few days later.

Jane knows she needs her job but she also wants to expose the truth she has learned about DES to the public. Jane arranges to film a show with a family that owns a feedlot. Jane films the manager of the feedlot feeding the cows and his employees injecting new arrivals. During this visit, Jane comes into contact with some hormones and begins to fear for the health of her unborn child. The following day, Jane and her crew go to the slaughterhouse to film the process. Jane is injured when she accidentally falls.

As a resistance, Akiko leaves her husband and goes to America. Once there,

Akiko befriends Jane and visits some of the families who made the biggest impact on her through *My American Wife!* At the same time, Jane makes a documentary out of her footage of the feedlot in the aftermath of the accident that caused her to lose her job. This documentary sells to hundreds of media outlets in the aftermath of the revelation that the feedlot in question was using DES. At the same time, Jane reconnects with her lover and looks forward to a happier future.

Along with the criticism of the so-called wholeness and superiority of American values, hazards to the human health and negative consequences in human reproduction caused by the American beef marketing is criticized in the novel. The concern over the environmental impacts caused by powerful countries to the environment of powerless countries is one of the major issues in recent post-colonial novels. According to Ashcroft et al.:

The legacies of that colonial past, together with neo-colonial environmental exploitation and outright destruction, have energized environmental activism worldwide, from the tragic case of Ken Saro Wiwa to Arundhati Roy's protest against the Narmada dam project, to the desert walk for food in the South-West United States. (95)

Ashcroft et al. discuss the environmentalist theoretical turn in post-colonial studies. The neo-colonial and colonial environmental exploitation has become the major subject matter for the recent Third World literature. It has politicized colonial and neo-colonial micro-management and appropriation of Third World environment and resisted the neo-colonial presence of West in the Third World environment for their economic advantage. Ken Saro Wiwa and Arundhati Roy protest over the consequences the colonial environmental management of the Asian.

The importance of other forms of life in the world emerged in the recent times.

It is a welcoming aspect according to Ashcroft et al. but the export of various forms of life and some kind of imposition on postcolonized cultures are not free of doubts, charges and criticisms. The colonizers have already used the environments of their colonies and now, they are again coming up to use them with the theories of environment preservation to justify their presence. It is objectionable for post-colonial world; as pointed by Ashcroft et al.:

While belated recognition of the crucial importance of other forms of life on earth is both welcome and necessary, its export and sometimes imposition on postcolonized cultures invites the obvious charge of hypocrisy and generates resentment against former imperial states, which, having degraded their own and their colonies' environments in the 'interests' of progress and 'development', now encourage (or impose) the theory and practices of environmental preservation on other peoples. (95)

It is clear that the domination of powerful countries lies on the domination and management of the environment of the powerless countries. This comes into severe criticism in post-colonial novels of *Wiwa* and *Roy* too. *Ozeki's* concern is also similar in her novel as she points out the health hazards created in Japanese people by American beef. The management of environment by powerful countries creates environmental decline and cultural division as Ashcroft et al. continue:

This also frequently creates division within postcolonized cultures themselves . . . for instance, peoples are moved off their traditional lands to make way for game parks, essentially for the benefit of wealthy tourists . . . Demands for the 'global' preservation of endangered species frequently clash with the policies of postcolonized governments eager to use their regained environmental sovereignty in the interests of a modern capitalism from which

it is difficult for them to escape. Clashes between ‘local’ and ‘global’ environmental interests are explored in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* .
(95-6)

The clash between the local and global environmental interests is explored in Ghosh’s novel *The Hungry Tide*. In the same manner, the clash between Akiko and her husband due to American beef and her lack of conceiving a baby because of its side effect come to foreground in Ozeki’s novel.

In post-colonial novels resistant to neo-colonialism, the environmental concerns are prominently voiced. Ursula K. Heise has discussed post-colonial environmentalism as transnational turn in American Studies that refers to the study of American culture in international setting and framework. This is a new interest grown in cultural studies of America that came into existence after 1970s through number of writings. It came into prominence after 1990s in the context of globalization as many of the writers started to create literary arts that juxtapose American cultures to the cultures of other countries. Heise analyzes Ozeki’s novel *My Year of Meat* in terms of transnational shift in American literature as it juxtaposes American culture with Japanese culture. Heise points out that Ozeki has raised the ecological in the novel and destruction of native birds and plants in her novel. The European fungus, called Kudzu vine displaced American native plants. It is genetically engineered plant that brings disbalance to the native ecology with its parasitic quality. In the wake of eco-criticism in American Studies, the environmental concerns raised in Ozeki’s novel are important according to Heise. The resistance in Ozeki’s novel is seen in the line of Heise’s observation about the new movement of environmental justice in Ozeki’s novel: “The environmental justice movement, then, plays a role in ecocriticism that is broadly comparable to that of multiculturalism for American studies; however, there

has not to date been an analogous shift in the vision of political resistance from the sub national to the supranational” (386). It is clear that Ozeki’s novel goes beyond just a political resistance to supranational level; the environmental concern over culturally powerful countries imposing environmental management to the culturally powerless countries. The resistance takes new turn in the novel; it becomes a resistance against the management of local environment by the use of media and market.

Julie Sze also has got an eco-critical study of Ozeki’s novel *My Year of Meat*. She focuses on the human body, the chemicals and preservatives-generated pollution and the need of environmental justice. The beef production company of America exports beef to Japan without caring about human health and pollution it generates is the central concern of the writer. Thereby, she underscores the need of environmental justice as demanded by Ozeki in her novel. Basic concern of Sze is to design a course in environmental justice in American Studies, so, she looks for the novels that have raised the issues of environmental justice prominently. She comes to Ozeki’s novel on the process as it has raised the issue of chemical pollution environment and human body underscoring the need of environmental justice. Sze points out her concern to instruct students but to turn to the environmental history of their ancestors: “It is difficult for students to see work as a marked category in their lives. I don’t make assumptions about their class background or their family’s relationship to land and labor. In fact, I have them write about their grandparents’ environmental history” (126). In Ozeki’s novel, Jane turns to the environmental history of her Japanese grandparents and the current management of Japanese environment by media and market. So, her resistance against the management of the environment of powerless countries is the resistance to neo-colonial interests of America in Japan.

Various studies as well as our discussion point out that Ozeki raises the concern over manipulation and management of both cultural and environmental spaces of the powerless countries by the powerful countries. She points out the problematic, hegemonic relationship between the powerful and powerless countries as harmful to the people and cultures of the Asian or any other powerless countries in her novel. It makes the novel as a critique of neo-colonialism.

Ozeki's novel is valorizes the diversity in the age of migration and celebrates multiculturalism which itself is a post-colonial concern. Obviously, meat and beef are at the core of the novel, but more often they are in a supporting role rather playing central. They help to expose America and its neo-colonial motive in the markets of the Asian countries. The narrator reveals many secrets of beef industry dissolving the boundary between fact and fiction. The narrator, Jane Takagi-Little is a first generation Japanese American with Midwestern roots and a self described, "polysexual, polyracial, perverse" (18). She is a documentarian of post-colonial situation whose faxes, script copy, letters, poetry, and recipes narrate her experience working for the beef industry in Japan.

Jane is in search for the weekly star of the show she produces called *My American Wife!* Ozeki has used the Beef Industry as the neo-colonial, manipulative power behind all the activities in the novel. Every character in the book is affected by the nameless beef industry and it possesses power to shape perspectives of the people, society, and knowledge. Ozeki resists the neo-colonial, manipulative and capitalist motive in the business of American beef. Ozeki paints a grim picture, revealing the effects of beef production on the environment and our bodies and criticizes the manipulation of the neo-colonialism of the food culture by the means of control over market and media.

One of the major tropes of colonial fiction, cannibalism, is also criticized in Ozeki's novel. As the Euro-centric colonial fictions use cannibalism as trope to show the colonies more exotic and adventurous, Ozeki points out the existence of cannibalism and sense of violence even in developed countries like America. No place is free of human vices and sense of violence and irrationality but the English novelists present the Europeans or the people of First World as civilized and the people of the Asian and African countries as uncivilized, barbaric, and cannibals. Jennifer Brown writes,

Since cannibalism (along with incest) is considered the ultimate evil and taboo in civilized society, the accusation of cannibalism against a people was a means by which their colonization was justified. In the scramble for profit as Africa replaced the Caribbean and South America as the source of material and labor, it also became the new site of savage cannibals in need of civilizing and enlightenment. (19)

Cannibalism serves the colonial need to justify their presence in the colonies. So, English writers use this trope out of their necessity to gain advantages over Caribbean and South American worlds and extract the profit of materials and labor from them.

The development of cannibalism as a trope in literature is typically colonial in motive and it has been developed in the eighteenth century and developed throughout the nineteenth century beginning from Daniel Defoe's fiction. Brown further elaborates:

Cannibalism becomes an interesting trope in colonial fiction on different levels . . . in the eighteenth-century fiction of Daniel Defoe, and later in Rider Haggard's and R.M. Ballantyne's nineteenth-century novels, cannibalism is seen as a means of differentiation between civilized and savage. The cannibals

in these tales are seen to be in need of education, civilization, and salvation from their barbarous ways. As the empire reached its zenith and tales of imperial atrocities, such as the Boer War and Leopold II's brutality in Congo, became common knowledge, cannibalism fulfilled a different role. (21-22)

Brown points out that the development of cannibalism as a trope developed over the eighteenth and nineteenth century English literature served different interests of colonizers. It serves the primary motive of comparison between European and non-Europeans, civilized and savage and the fact that savages should be educated that justifies their presence in their native land and to exhort them to work for their interests. This led to the imperial/colonial violence, and worked as an excuse for different wars and atrocities.

It is clear that colonial cannibalism is a construction of the English literature because it was much needed for their own existence as a binary of the undeveloped and developing world. The savage, cannibal was revived again and again in various forms of representation. Brown writes about the revival of cannibalism in Italian films, "Colonial cannibalism did not disappear, however, and suddenly, in a post-colonial world of turmoil and power snatching, cannibalism appeared again in a boom of Italian cannibal films" (22). It was revived in Italian films even in post-colonial world even though it was criticized harshly by various anti-colonial activists and theorists. Brown informs about purpose behind the revival:

These films are effectively a culmination of most of the above factors: there are wild cannibals in the jungle in need of civilization; the natives are driven to extreme savagery by interfering Westerners; the Westerners are as savage as the native tribes; and the question of truth and representation in the media and film is central. In all of these works the colonial cannibal represents fears

and desires of the West with regard to the Other. (22)

Though the West has become as savage as the natives for them in post-colonial circumstances and cannibalism as a constructed category is well-established, the films made about the cannibals were focused on the probable existence of wild cannibals in jungles. This representation again justifies the need of civilization in the jungles of the Asia and Africa and natives are driven to the extreme forms of savagery. Those colonial cannibals are the representation of Western, colonial fear and desires to keep the othering of the natives alive.

In resistance to the notion of colonial and neo-colonial savages constructed in the literature, Ozeki has pointed out that even the First World like America is not free of cannibalism. It is unnecessarily idealized but it is full of violence and savagery. So, her cannibalism mentioned in the novel is a post-colonial critique of the colonial and neo-colonial cannibalism that is located only in the exotic Third World. She narrates her exploration of America as a violent nation:

I started collecting local stories and would test them on the boys as we drove around in the van. If they liked a story or found it surprising, I would use it in the show. I was a full-fledged director now, and I'd promised Ueno I would do my best to satisfy the "unique sensibilities" of the Japanese television audience; since I wasn't Japanese, I used the boys as my barometer. Traveling across America, they were astonished at how deeply violence is embedded in our culture, how it has *become* the culture, what's left of local color. We are a grisly nation. (65)

As a director of the documentary, Jane travels across America and tries to see the things from Japanese angle using her Japanese crews. She has to do this because she was Japanese-American and she needed to satisfy the Japanese audience. As she

travels across the country, she comes to realize that American culture is full of violence. She for the first time sees violence embedded in the American culture; in America, violence itself has become the culture and America is a grisly and irrational nation. Then, she proceeds to a strange tale of cannibalism in America she hears from a bartender in Wyoming.

In Green River, Wyoming, a bartender told us a story about a rancher who was traveling into town, when he spotted a campfire. As it was growing late, he rode closer, glad of the company and the promise of a good meal. Sitting there were two scruffy-looking men, stirring a large pot full of delicious-smelling stew. The rancher asked if he could have some, and reluctantly they agreed. He sat down and ate a bowl, then, finding it quite tasty, he asked what it was. “Pigeon stew,” they answered somewhat curtly. (65)

In Wyoming, a bartender tells the strange story based on a rancher’s experience. The rancher was getting late and he was hungry too. He spotted a campfire and went closer to it with an expectation of some meal and company. There are two scruffy-looking men; the representation of those two men as scruffy-looking suggests that they possess certain amount of irrationality. They are cooking some stew in a large pot. They appear humane as they let the rancher have some stew though unwillingly. They name the stew as “Pigeon stew” and nothing seems unusual with that. But the rancher finds them less sociable and they do not seem to entertain him with their company. So, he takes a leave. Soon, he is amazed to find out the horrible truth that a local farm worker named Lloyd Pigeon had disappeared few days back:

They were not very sociable, so rather than linger, he rode on into Green River, where he stopped at the bar for a drink. The bar was crowded. Seated to one side, he overheard some townspeople discussing a doctor back East who

was looking to purchase clean human skulls. On the other side, a couple of cowhands were talking about the mysterious disappearance of a local rancher named Lloyd Pigeon. “Sooo *da ne . . .*” said Suzuki, considering.

“Cannibalism is interesting to Americans.” “We Japanese eat mostly fish,” explained Oh. (65)

The instance of cannibalism in America is clear. A doctor trying to buy a fresh human skull at the public place like bar, the mystery of disappeared rancher Lloyd Pigeon and the experience of the rancher having the stew of ‘Pigeon’ from the unsociable and unwelcoming, scruffy-looking men all point to the horrible reality that cannibalism is a practice in America itself. The writer draws a comparison between this cannibalistic American culture with Japanese culture where fish is the meal.

In her novel, Ozeki uses cannibalism with post-colonial interest and criticizes it as a practice that is both in the mind of Western people as well as their culture. She demonstrates that the places outside the First World eat fish and the charge of cannibalism is mere a construction to justify their interference and colonial, neo-colonial domination of the natives. But it is reality for their own culture; the violence and cannibalism pervade their own thoughts, actions and cultural practices. The definition of cannibal is similar for the post-colonial scholars as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin define it in similar terms, “This term for an eater of human flesh is of particular interest to postcolonial studies for its demonstration of the process by which an imperial Europe distinguishes itself from the subjects of its colonial expansion . . .” (37). It is a post-colonial concern as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out:

Originally proper name of the man-eating Caribs of the Antilles’ . . . is itself a very good demonstration of two related features of colonial discourse: the separation of the ‘civilized’ and the ‘savage’, and the importance of the

concept of cannibalism in cementing this distinction. To this day, cannibalism has remained the West's key representation of primitivism, even though its first recording, and indeed most subsequent examples, have been evidence of a rhetorical strategy of imperialism rather than evidence of an objective 'fact'.

(37)

The imaginary cannibal constructed in Western literature in the Asian and African countries is found to be just a rhetorical strategy of imperialism and it has nothing to do with fact is being established. At the same time, as Ozeki points out, the cases of cannibalism have become the reality of Western culture as well as imagination. Thus, colonial cannibal is countered by the novelist and cannibalism of West has been exposed as a critique of the idealized image of West and the colonial world.

Conclusion

This research has studied Ozeki's critiques of neo-colonial discourses basically from three angles and reached to the conclusion that she resists the neo-colonialism in her novel. Among the three issues the first is Ozeki's critique of extension of American meat market to Japan with idealized hence false image of America in media representation. Ozeki is aware of the falsehood of the discourse that is used to promote beef in Japanese market. She shows the American value is not wholesome as the discourses claim rather it is just a media representation that is gathered into fragmented pieces and kept together and presented as a whole. The second critique of Ozeki is to expose neo-colonial management of the environment of Asian countries to gain profit that is raised by the Third World writers over time as a subject of critique. Ozeki shows how the American beef uses the hormones like DES in the meat and is creating health hazards with the management of Japanese market environment. Finally, Ozeki uses post-colonial image of cannibalism in America for

the subversion of the colonial image of cannibalism that appeared in the Western literature and films over time. Future researchers may study these critiques further and may point out numbers of other issues like racism, gender discriminations as they also appear time and again in the novel.

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