

Tribhuvan University

Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in
Kathmandu*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, TU
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English

By

Chandra Kala Lawati

Symbol No. 00006034

T.U. Regd. No. 9-2-701-11-2011

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

February, 2020

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu*" by Chandra Kala Lawati, submitted to the Department of English, Tribhuvan University, has been approved by the undersigned members of research committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my respected supervisor Dr. Komal Phuyal, Lecturer of Central Department of English, for his scholarly guidance, suggestion and valuable instruction. Without his kind help this thesis could never have come into its present form

My sincere appreciation goes to Prof. Dr. Anirudra Thapa, the Head of the Central Department of English, my teachers, Mr. Keshab Sigdel, Mr. Badri Prasad Acharya, Mr. Mahesh Poudyal, Mr. Raj Kumar Baral, Mr. Dinesh Bhandari, Mr. Laxman Bhatta and all professors and lecturers of the Department for their direct and indirect advices and encouragements during the completion of this project.

I am deeply indebted to my parents Mr. Misir Man Lawati and Mrs. Bishnu Kumari Lawati whose blessing and inspiration made me achieve this success in my life. I am grateful to my sister Babita Lawati, my brothers Prem Raj Lawati and Tulsi Lawati whose warm affection and never-ending encouragement and support helped me to complete this work. Without their support I could not have reached in the present position.

Likewise, I am thankful to all my friends and relatives who helped me in many ways. Especially, I am thankful to Madhu Dhakal, Durga Chand, Rupa Bhandari, Manju Raut, Dev Singh Mali, Believe Tamang, Purna Kumar Rana and Sushila Rawal for their encouragement in the course of this research. I cannot forget all my colleagues who directly and indirectly inspired me to complete this research work.

February 2020

Chandra Kala Lawati

Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu*

Abstract

Samrat Upadhyay's Arresting God in Kathmandu (2001) presents modern Nepali agents on the one hand who are capable of acting on their own resist the repressive cultural, political and social orders on the other hand the old generations want the tradition to be preserved and want to protect it. This collection of short stories is full of subjects resisting the repressive social, cultural and political values. The agency is within the subjects of the society. This research paper is done under the theoretical light of Dilip Parameshwor Gaonkar's alternative modernities, Charles Taylor's making of the modern identity, Peter Wagner's concepts of modernity, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Arjun Appadurai's theories on modernity. The selected stories for this research paper are "Deepak Misra's Secretary", "The Cooking Poet", "The Limping Bride" and "This World". Different characters in the stories act in their own way. Kanti, Jaya, Giri, Moti, Rukmini, Bandana, Deepak and Jill are the main characters. They stop performing social, political and cultural values instead they resist against those values. Thus, the tension between modern subjects; the people who are self-dependent and their resistance against the socio-political and cultural values and the traditional subjects who want new generations to act according to established norms and values is depicted in the selected four stories from the short stories collection, Arresting God in Kathmandu.

Keywords: Modernity, Resistance, Self-dependent, Agency, Social, Political, Cultural Values

Samrat Upadhyay's 2001 collection of short stories, *Arresting God in Kathmandu* portrays Nepali landscape where the characters both act on their own and

resist the repressive cultural, political and social institutions. In one hand, the people from new generations are the actors of their own life. They have the power to resist whenever they feel repressed or controlled. In another hand, the old generations want to go as tradition and want to preserve it. The modern subjects want agency within themselves. Upadhyay has represented the young Nepali people by taking young characters as main characters in his stories. He finds them revolutionary against the different versions of repression. They resist to establish their own stand and to be an agent of their own life. In the name of social values, they do not want to be controlled; they do not want to be restrained by others. Prioritization of self will and actions which are done according to that will are what the modern subjects of Kathmandu do. So, there is a clash between the old generation and the new generation i.e. conflict between tradition and modernity.

This research work primarily aims at exploring the formation of modern subjects to make new society. Similarly, it studies how the pillars to preserve tradition i.e. old generations are trying to shape modern agents in a traditional way. However, modern agents bring the changes by revolting against those repressive institutions of the society. The domination through the agency of gender, class, caste, language and culture is tried to dismantle in the stories. What they question is the tradition and the old generation is defending tradition and culture by trying them to act as tradition demands. Resistance against those repressive institutions is possible when agency is with an individual. Independency is a must for the revolution. To change the societal norms and values an individual must have agency within himself or herself. In this short stories collection the characters are self-centered and self-dependent. They have the confidence that they are not doing wrong whenever they make decisions. The modern agency is the result of rationality. Through the reason they try to establish

new beliefs and maintain social, political and cultural order. Thus, this project tries to find out modern human agents' role to build better society.

The researcher has selected four stories; "Deepak Misra's Secretary", "The cooking Poet", "The Limping Bride" and "This World", from the short story collection, *Arresting God in Kathmandu* for the research. The characters of these stories are the agents of their own life. The actions they do are the outcomes of their self-dependence. They make the decisions in their own to make their life better. The main characters like Kanti, Giri, Jaya, Moti, Bandana and Jill are self-dependent. They fight against the social, political and cultural repression. Everyone in the stories is moving according to their own will. They decide to do what they like. They do not rely on someone else's permission. Kanti resists against her mother's will to get married to a Brahmin boy. She is in love with a Rana boy named Jaya. Her mother suggests her not to be so much attached with him because they are historically understood as repressive class. So, Kanti does not listen to anyone and does according to her will. Thus, the modern agents in the stories are breaking the barriers of traditional socio-politico-cultural beliefs and challenge the tradition.

Samrat Upadhyay was born in 1963 and raised in Kathmandu. He migrated to the United States when he was twenty-one. He is the first Nepali author writing in English to be published in the West. His other works include the novels *The Guru of Love* and *Buddha's Orphans*, and a collection of short stories, *The Royal Ghosts*. Samrat Upadhyay has also co-edited an anthology, *Secret Places: New Writing from Nepal*. He is the Martha C. Kraft Professor of Humanities at Indiana University. This book was published in 2001, during the period that the country was witnessing the great change in the political aspect as well as social aspect. It tries to picture out the feeling, emotions, thoughts and desire of contemporary Kathmandu people. His books

specially portray the contemporary situation in Nepal, which Upadhyay views largely through the lens of contemporary American realist fiction.

This book was published in 2001, during the period that the country was witnessing great change in socio-political aspect. Mark Liechty in *Out Here in Kathmandu: Modernity on the Global Periphery* says, "The *jana aandolan*, or Nepali "people's movement," of 1990 was an event of such magnitude that its echoes and ripples rebounded uneasily off the many facets of Nepal's socio-political landscape for years thereafter" (307). *Arresting God in Kathmandu* collects the stories of struggle for political, social and cultural change. The period that the country was about to witness great political change, the stories in this short story collection adopts the thirst of people for change. The story "The Cooking Poet" bears the witness of the historical people's movement which was led by CPN (Maoist) for the change political power. The other stories include the stories of the middle class people and their fight for the social and cultural change in the society. As a whole, this collection has the context of 2000-2010 Nepal, in that period the society was fighting for democracy and freedom. The people needed agency in their hands as they were repressed for long period. Thus, Upadhyay has captured those incidents and human psyche in his short story collection, *Arresting God in Kathmandu*.

Arresting God in Kathmandu is a collection of short stories written by Samrat Upadhyay. This work of fiction contains nine stories entitled "The Good Shopkeeper", "The Cooking Poet", "Deepak Mishra's Secretary", "The Limping Bride", "During the Festival", "The Room Next Door", "The Man with Long Hair", "This World" and "A Great Man's House" respectively. All the stories have the setting of Kathmandu city except one which also has the setting of America. Most of them have the stories of middle class people and their struggle for self-dependency. It explores the nature of

desire and spirituality in a changing society. This collection records the echoes of modernization throughout the family and society. It demonstrates the contemporary Nepali society where people struggled for the change in political as well as social and cultural dimensions. This book shows people's resistance for the better society and against the repressive legal, moral and all social classifications. The Nepali landscape during the political transformation in the period between the years of 2000-2010 is pictured in this collection.

The first story selected for this research paper is "The Cooking Poet."

Acharya, a well-known poet in Nepal, is regarded as a hero by the people. During the rule of the Rana dictators, he wrote the poems comparing the situation of him and his country revealing the hunger for freedom and their only desire was to fly away into the woods. The Ranas immediately banned the circulation of the poems and threw the poet into the jail. The king called him into the palace and awarded him several prestigious titles. Acharya was presented with an award given only to the nation's foremost poets. Now he is sixty and he had also been a mentor to those whom his friends recommended as a serious young writers. Often he judged a poet not only by his writings, but also, after careful observation, by his character, maturity, and humility.

One morning, a young man called 'Giri' came to his door. He brought an epic containing seventy pages about a young man's passion for his lover. He found that his control of the verse was so flawless. And he assured that this was his only work though Acharya was not convinced because his work was precise and flawless. Giri often spent time in the kitchen so Acharya's son named him the Cooking Poet. His father died at an early age, he was raised by mother and he has a sister who is mentally retarded. Acharya arranged for Giri to present a reading of his poems at

academy. He is so proud to be a mentor of Giri and is congratulated by his colleagues on his 'new discovery'. Acharya himself was trying to write an epic but he was not being able to write. His wife Durga suggested him to go to pilgrimage but he denied. One afternoon the Acharya family heard the news on radio that Giri died during the shooting in rally in Bhairahawaa. The protest had turned into a fistfight between the United Democratic Front and the rival party. Acharya's daughter was hit the hardest by the news of Giri's death. Durga felt her kitchen empty without the Cooking Poet. Acharya remembered his own youth but could not connect with those memories of the young poet. His epic did not come, he shut his notebook and left the study. The government announced that Acharya is going to be named the poet laureate. Acharya was honored not only for his participation in the revolution but also for his commitment to poetry and art.

The second story for this research paper is "Deepak Misra's Secretary."

Deepak Misra is now staying alone after his wife left him without leaving a single note. His secretary Bandana-ji is newly appointed to his office and probably the most highly paid secretary in the city. She even knows computer. Deepak' ex-wife was a painter and now she is in the city. Bandana-ji is kind of straight-forward woman who is busy with her work in office. She pretends to prioritize her work rather than other during office time. However, she likes Deepak Misra and wants to spend time with him. Several times they have physical relation in the office. She does not tolerate anything about his ex-wife Jill. It seems that Bandana-ji and Jill already are known to each other because when Jill sees Bandana-ji she asks that if she is still strange or not.

Deepak is still trying to patch up with his ex-wife and several times he goes to meet her at Annapurna Hotel where she is staying. Deepak still wants her in his life but she was insisting to leave and be with Birendra. Deepak revealed this during Jill's

party where he was invited. Deepak does not go to office for four days and stayed home alone. In the fourth day Bandana-ji came to his home for his signature. Every few days Bandana-ji came to his home for his sign but he stopped asking questions about the office. Whenever she came to Deepak's home they had physical relation and even in the office they have physical relation. So, one day Deepak decided to tell her to resign from the job. She did not insist to stay and resigns. He again went to Jill's party and that time he was convinced that Birendra and Jill are really lovers and he wondered why he wanted Jill back in his life that much. One afternoon, a small boy delivered a package sent by Bandana-ji where she has sent the sari given by Deepak. Then he went to Bandana-ji's apartment but she has moved from there. He roamed around the city in the search of Bandana-ji. At the end he found Bandana-ji singing for him and is pregnant.

The third story for this research paper is "The Limping Bride." Moti is nineteen and a drunkard boy. He is grown up without listening to a 'no' from his parents. He used to get whatever he demanded. His father wants him to get married. And a neighbor aunt has just found a girl called Rukmini who has a slight limp in her leg. They want Moti to get married to anyone so that his wife will control him from being alcoholic. His father convinced him several times to get married. Finally, he is convinced to get married without knowing that the girl he is going to marry is limp. Rammaya, Moti's mother is dead and he stays with his Ba (father). Hiralal works as a driver for Marwari businessman Chaudhary sahib. They went for viewing and Moti liked Rukmini. They confirmed the day for marriage ceremony. Till that day Moti was unaware of his future wife's physical condition.

The night of his marriage he comes to know about Rukmini's leg. Then he leaves the room. Rukmini is left crying inside the room. He calls his father "Bastard.

Betrayer" (69). Rukmini wakes up early in the morning and does all house hold works. Everything she does reminds Hiralal of his wife Rammaya. One afternoon Moti came home and asked Rukmini to get ready to go to cinema. Rukmini reveals that she drank a glass of beer with him but Hiralal scolds her and says that she has to make him stop drinking. One evening Moti says he has got a job in Travel agency. They are all happy for him and especially Rukmini is more cherished by this news. Hiralal finds some similarities between Rammaya and Rukmini which reminds him of his dead wife. Hiralal notices that he has feeling towards his daughter-in-law as he frequently visits her when there is no one home. Moti is busy roaming around the bhattis during the day time and returns home late night. One day he comes home in the day time and takes her to Swoyambhunath and they have physical relation there. During the conversation with her father-in-law, Rukmini calls her mother-in-law 'your wife' which surprises Hiralal. In front of Rammaya's picture he feels ashamed. However his daughter-in-law takes it easily. She says that it was bound to happen.

The fourth story for this research paper is "This World." The main characters Jaya and Kanti met in New Jersey at a wedding party. He was tall, fair with an appealing face that he looked alike Europeans. Talking to Jaya, Kanti could laugh aloud, without hesitation. She told him how alienated she felt back in Kathmandu. She was like stranger there in her own country. She says that she was restless ghost in her own country. Jaya, Somnath Rana's son, was born in Nepal, grew up in Boston and moved to New York. She fell in love with him. He had given his number to call him but she lost that. When she reached Kathmandu her mother received her at the airport. They met in Kathmandu again. They spent long afternoons in expensive hotel rooms in the city. Her mother scolded her for roaming freely with boys. He lived the world of upper class Nepali's life. Jaya's cousin warns her not to take him seriously and so

does her mother. However, she does not care what her mother or relatives say. She enjoys the time with Jaya. Her mother didn't like Jaya because he was Rana boy and used to murmur the way they flash money, they still think they rule the country. Later Kanti finds him kissing another girl in the hotel room. Then, in frustration she goes to Goa alone for spending some days.

Her mother is insisting in getting her married. She convinced Kanti for viewing in a condition with not getting married. Her mother already had talked to Prakash's family for the marriage. Prakash came back from England with a degree in medicine. Her mother wanted both of them to get married and settle in America. When she came back she started new job in a private company and stopped meeting with Jaya. Few times she saw Jaya on social occasions however they just talked formally. When Prakash came for viewing she found him easy to talk. He shared his past love affair with a girl from Kenya who never came back after she left. He also knew about Kanti's relationship with Jaya. She really didn't want to marry Prakash so she told her mother that she is not going to get married, instead she is leaving for America to get Ph.D. The day she left she told everyone she will be coming back as soon as her Ph.D. gets finished. She talks to her mother at the airport, her mother's eyes full of tears and said that she is leaving now. Kanti noticed someone who looked alike Jaya in the plane and in her imagination she saw herself studying late night, walking across the campus with new friends and professors.

In *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001), Samrat Upadhyay's characters appear with two positions; first of all, they stand as actors and then, they fight against socio-politico-cultural oppressions. The characters in the selected short stories revolt against the repressive modes of society which are performed through various aspects. The characters are self-centered and self-dependent. They make their own decisions.

Kanti, Deepak, Giri and Moti are the characters who believe in themselves rather than others. However, the old generation does not accept the things they do. They have faith in them because they are rational; they have reason to believe and follow their decisions. They think that they are right for themselves and to be the agency of their own, they do some actions in their favor. Kanti fights for class, gender, caste based oppressions which are in existence in the name of tradition. Her mother tries to bind her inside these parameters though she resists and does as she wants to do. Thus, here we can see the tension between modern subject and traditional subject where both of them claim what is right. Similarly, Giri, a poet revolts against the political change. He is against the established legal system and wants changes in politics so that the people could feel the freedom and practice democracy but the government is against that revolution and wants to continue the old system. Various critics have portrayed their views on this short story collection by raising different issues from different perspectives.

Sara Levine reviews *Arresting God in Kathmandu* as an output of Upadhyay's intention to reach western readers. She claims that he is naïve about the countrymen's suffering. Instead of focusing on the problems of poverty, corruption at every level, a totally inept government, and a widespread and enduring guerilla war he is focused on personal issues. She says that it is because of his long stay outside of native country as he has spent years of his life in America. She further claims:

As it is, there are few references to the characters' caste, education, or even their families. We have only the sketchiest notion of where they come from and are given little reason to care where they might go. They often act impulsively and if the author has insight into their dynamics. He doesn't share it with us. Why, in 'The Limping Bride', does Rukmini sexually service her

father-in law? only because the author wants to surprise the reader? If his intentions are more complex he does not give us the wherewithal to grasp them. Perhaps he supplies so few details out of a fear that they would bore the Western reader or perhaps, having lived so long outside his native land, can no longer bring them to mind. (11)

In this way, Levine claimed that Upadhyay has not brought the stories organically rather as a fiction writer he has intended readers in his mind and they are western readers. And he is focused on individual issues instead of social issues.

In an interview taken by John Schilb, Upadhyay has revealed that he is an artist whose allegiance is to his art, not to vague notions of what and how he is writing about his country. He does not write to represent his country to the West. He says:

How far have we come from the 80's, when Fredric Jameson asked that all third-world texts be read as "national allegories"!... third worlder in me takes issue. A large part of the world still cherishes the idea of national literature, one that defines their peoples and aspirations within enclosed emotional and physical borders... it doesn't escape me that in all of my four books I've repeatedly returned to Nepal for my landscape and my characters, so perhaps I do represent Nepal, not in the traditional way of "speaking" for it, but by hanging out in its alleyways, observing and reviewing it through "a broken mirror". (565)

This interview revealed that Upadhyay's characters and subject matter represent Nepal from different angle. He does not adopt traditional way of representation of the country Nepal rather he tries to show it from the broken mirrors. So is the product of Upadhyay that is *Arresting God in Kathmandu*.

Kalawati Kumari Chand comments Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu* from transnational perspective. Her work discusses the impact of globalization in Nepal to enhance the discussion of ongoing process of social transformation. She centers her study around the two stories from this book where Americanization and globalization have been applied interchangeably. She depicts the characters in terms of national and transnational contexts. She claims:

Upadhyay presented one way global flow and his characters being completely allured by global culture which lacks factual truth. His presentation of Nepal, Nepalese and effect of globalization on them is contaminated by global perspective that is why, he only presents one way flow of globalization and fails to locate the intermediary state of the characters. (44-45)

Their identities go through the upheavals created by immigration, globalization and serialization. His characters transgress the territorial, cultural and economic dimensions of the nation. In this paper she claims that Upadhyay has depicted the two aspects of transnationalism-socio-cultural and materialistic, a form of global capitalism in his stories. As she mentions that in the story "The World", the character from Nepal, Jaya and Kanti, show unusual behavior towards the native country, whereas in "Deepak Mishra's Secretary" Jill, a foreigner, loves Nepal. She further states that the characters' lifestyle, use of language, society they live and the identity they share, reflect the transnational identity.

Samjhana Phuyal claims that there is the effect of modernization on culture by adaptation of western culture. She says that the traditional value in modern society of Nepal is being neglected. The new way of life is adopted and especially the western way of life is being adopted by the people living in Nepal. She claims:

The main conflict revolves around the competing ideologies of traditional Nepal and western ideas of modernity. This conflict reaches the personal day to day lives of people living in Kathmandu. Hidden in the narratives, his pro-western message becomes more palatable to the readers... the writer also tries to show the gap between two generations and the technical advancement in modern age... they welcome the negative culture from the different part of the globe. (24)

She says that there is the gap between two generations which ultimately results tension between tradition and modernity. Modernization is the reason to bring tension in human lives is what she claims through this research. She further claims that he does not moralize any of the stories and they do not stand to make a case supporting traditionalism.

Likewise, Jana Siciliano comments this book as a full of family-driven stories. The stories are not new to the westerners however these stories become new to the Nepalese. She emphasizes on the presence of God in Kathmandu city is like the presence of spirituality where people's pray become public thing. She argues:

Arresting God in Kathmandu gives a fresh and truly bright voice to family-driven angst and dysfunction. Since topics like arranged marriage aren't all that common in your everyday American short stories, Samrat Upadhyay has the opportunity here to mine canvas of human existence that will be news to us, God has a big presence in a city like Kathmandu. A prayer is a very public thing and privacy is hard to come by. Your family is what defines you, their status in the world and your status within it. (16)

Siciliano explains that Upadhyay is succeeding to present Nepali family life, their culture in foreign land. She stresses on the presence of God and the personal identity

defined by their family in the primitive societies. But Amitav Ghosh praises the text as the one that signals the arrival of a major new talent. He says "A terrific book full of tenderness, compassion and rare insight" (12). He is impressed by the tenderness of the character which is rare sight. Ghosh appreciates the skill of the author to create the terrific book he is not aware about the reality.

Another critic Ronny Noor reviews this short story collection as it takes contemporary and familiar issues; it takes to the exotic locations in the foothills of the Himalayas. She says:

But not in "Deepak Misra's Secretary," in which Deepak, the owner of a firm, falls for his secretary with a disfigured face but a sweet voice. When he realizes that his estranged American wife has discovered them in the act in his house, he not only breaks off the affair with the secretary but also fires her from her job. But soon he feels an emptiness that only her song coming from a stereo shop can fill, giving him the "sensation of bliss." However, Kanti does not need such bliss in "This World." This American-educated Nepali girl, after returning to Kathmandu, finds that Nepali men are "too much like those Americans." They are either dominating, or unfaithful, or pathetic. So she returns to America for her doctorate despite her mother's plea to marry. (139)

In her review, she tells what happens in the stories and she comments them as the stories from Himalayas. She further says, "these beautiful stories about appearance and reality, vanity and compassion, and the temporal and the spiritual are full of tender grace, woven in words that are not only perfectly set like beads in a necklace...flawless sentence without a bump" (139). In this way, she comments on the story's creation part rather than the issue.

Kriti Shrestha comments this book from the perspective of cultural globalization i.e. the people from all around the globe live in the same culture. They have similarities in way of living and that is caused by modernity. She argues that this book helps our culture to flourish globally. She mentions, "Nepalese culture is introduced globally through this book; at the same time this book depicts how the city Kathmandu also is adopting the other foreign culture" (5). She argues that the stories in this book help non-Nepalese to know about the way of life of the people living in Kathmandu. Their way of thinking is depicted and how the people of Kathmandu are adopting the new culture from the west is depicted. The characters in all of the stories show new way of life and the way they think is different. So, here Shrestha tries to look this short story collection from the perspective of cultural globalization where culture from all over the world is becoming the same.

All of the above mentioned reviewers have reviewed this from different perspectives. Many of them have looked from the light of globalization, modernization and transnational perspective. The researcher here tries to look from the perspective of alternative modernity where the modern subjects oppose to perform repressive social, cultural and political systems. The characters have sense of resistance against the repressive models of social, political and cultural power system. Upadhyay's characters play with the country's power system, social and cultural norms and values, in this sense they are the challengers to transform the society into the better one that they want.

This research paper is based on primary and secondary resources as well as materials available in the library, journals and internet websites. This paper is done using the theoretical framework of modernity. Modernity is reflected through people's behavior where they act independently. Self-dependence is one of the important

factors for subjectivity formation. Emphasis on individual choices and desires is a key factor for subject formation. Subject is a person who has unique consciousness. The formation of subject and subjectivity is one of the serious dynamics of modernity. Every individual wants to live in their own way. This paper has taken theoretical insights from various theorists like Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, Peter Wagner, Arjun Appadurai, Harry Oldmeadow, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Charles Taylor.

Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001) presents the tension between modern subjects who are capable of fighting against the social, cultural and political repressions and traditional subjects of the society who want the society and culture not to be changed. The characters in this collection go through the transforming society where they play the role of agents for the better transformation of the society. They deny performing the social and cultural role rather they try to be self-dependent and here, the tension occurs. Upadhyay has presented the young generations as main characters and they are the actors in stories. These actors are self-centered, self-guided, self-conscious and independent. The social, cultural and political beliefs are not followed by modern characters. The characters like; Kanti, Bandana, Moti, Rukmini and Giri are modern subjects who resist against repressive political, social and cultural power. They do not accept the norms and values which narrows down their personal freedom. Thus, this collection of short stories presents the clash between modernity and tradition where two forces fight for existence in the society.

The modern subjects emphasize on individual choices and desire. Individualism is a principal feature of modernism. A modern subject raises the question against repressive social values. As the characters from four different short stories reveal themselves as they are not ready to accept the established legal, moral

and social values. The characters like Deepak, Bandana, Moti and Kanti are trying to dismantle the traditional values by rejecting those values and moving as their will. They never question their capabilities rather question others' suggestions and guidelines. As modern values in an Asian country like Nepal came in later decades, people of city areas like Kathmandu wanted to use their agency for their own life. Therefore, the tension occurred between the modern agents and traditional agents.

Peter Wagner defines historical notion of modernity. He says, "Historically, modernity often refers to straightforwardly to the 'history of the west'. More specifically, it refers to the history of Europe, and from some time onwards also of North America. Modernity then, to cut across the range of views, begins... voyages of discovery" (6). In the past the advent of modernity was always assumed to mark a rupture that leads to some specificity of the West in global comparison. The specificity of the modernity got lost because Western forms of social life and modes of social organization have spread across the world. However, historical notion of modernity is challenged by different third world critics. About the local or national level modernity and identity according to the cultural diversity, Dipesh Chakrabarty claims, "perhaps the most important contribution alternative modernities do is able to make to the questions posed in the previous section concerns the notion of 'creative adaptation', according to which people 'make' themselves modern actively construct their own notion of modernity" (17). Here, he states that the alternative modernity is not the copy of the European modernity rather a creative adaptation of secular ideas within own cultural framework. Modernity emerged in non-Western country is the self emerged and which is different from the mainstream modernity.

Samrat Upadhyay's collection of short stories, *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001) presents the revolting modern agents who are capable of fighting against the

social, political and cultural repressions. They become modern because they oppose to follow the established phenomena of the society. They want agency in themselves to mobilize them. They do not prefer to be controlled by the traditional values. They act as an agent of their life and make decisions according to their will. Most of the main characters belong to new generation and they oppose what the old generations believe. They feel like they are oppressed in the name of tradition, culture and policy. Through their actions the resistance against those established values can be clearly seen. They act because they have the agency and that agency comes to them when they have rational power.

One of the selected stories entitled "Deepak Misra's Secretary" Deepak remembers how his elderly mother had suggested him not to marry a foreign woman. His family members were not happy with his marriage and his parents died soon after he got married. His elderly mother had told him that he would suffer later. Deepak denies his parents' wish to marry a Nepalese girl and according to his will he marries a foreigner named Jill. Upadhyay writes, "He recalled how his parents, who died soon after he married Jill, had advised him not to marry a foreigner. You'll suffer later, son," his elderly mother had told him". (39) He follows his own decisions and neglects his parents' wish. Jill as a representation of foreigner does not take relationship with Deepak in a serious way. Later she leaves him saying she is not happy with him.

Jill and Deepak are the modern people who are neglecting one another's wishes and they just focus on what they want and need. The modern subjects act as an agent for their life so that they have the power to decide to whom they get married. As Jill and Deepak do the agency is within them that helps circulate the power. When

their individual choices clash, that ultimately leads to divorce at the end. Charles Taylor argues:

The new understanding of marriage naturally goes along with further individualization and internalization. The companionate marriage... From this period on, there is a steady decline in the power wielded by parents and by wider kinship groups in the choice of marriage partner, and more and more the choice is seen as the couple's. As ever, the stress on individuation and personal commitment leads to a greater place for contractual agreement... this even leads to a greater tolerance for divorce. (290)

As a result of modernity people develop new understanding about marriage. The choice of marriage partner lies in couples' hands. These all are the results of modernity where people are self-centered as Deepak and Jill which ultimately lead to divorce. Marriage, with the loss of emotions, transformed and lead to a greater place for contractual agreement. Jill seems more individualistic so she does not want to understand Deepak's feelings and emotions.

Another character Bandana-ji is self-dependent character who does not hesitate to tell what she prefers to. Both of them do not really follow the established social norms and values. They agree to have physical relationship to fulfill their desire. They rely more on reason rather than in tradition. They broke the norms where physical relationship was limited to husband and wife. Even she becomes jealous of Jill when she comes to visit some times. Both Deepak and Bandana-ji are sexually bound together not by emotional attachment. Upadhyay writes:

They had sex in the office once a week. Deepak became convinced that he had never before experienced such pleasure. Although sex with Jill had been satisfactory, she liked to talk about her paintings while he was inside her, and

that bothered him... But Bandana-ji gave her complete attention, and the sweetness that entered his heart lasted for a couple of hours after they climaxed... put on his clothes and leave, without uttering a word. (48-49)

They are together to fulfill their sexual need. The tradition where sexual relationship was limited to husband and wife is neglected here. They are guided by their physical lust which makes them forget the beliefs.

Social transformations where beliefs are not followed can be the explanations of modernity in terms of reason. The reason plays vital role in being self-dependent. The change in political, social and cultural institutions brings new perspectives regarding modern agency. The losing faith on those repressive social, cultural and political dimensions of human life is being seen as modern humans have become self-dependent. Dilip Parameshwor Gaonkar claims:

A cultural theories tend to describe the transition of modernity in terms of a loss of traditional beliefs and allegiances. This loss may be seen as coming about as a result of institutional changes: For example, mobility and urbanization are understood to erode the beliefs and reference points of static rural society. Or the loss may be supposed to arise from the increasing operation of modern scientific reason. The change may be positively valued, or it may be judged a disaster by those for whom the traditional reference points were valuable and for whom scientific reason is too narrow. (175)

The old views are washed away as people believe in reason and science. The moral ground of the society has become secondary and physical which is rational ground has become primary for the modern humans. As Bandana-ji and Deepak living in Kathmandu city, are witnessing the loss of traditional beliefs which has emerged due to the increase in modern and scientific reason.

Rationalism provokes individual choices and individual freedom is understood in non-moral terms. So called morality is left behind and there is an attempt to establish new moral ground. Moral force and beliefs are not taken as important as money and pleasure. Dilip Parameshwor Gaonkar claims: "Even where individual freedom and the enlargement of instrumental reason are seen as ideas whose intrinsic attractions can help explain their rise, this attraction is frequently understood in non-moral terms" (178). The freedom that they are enjoying comes from their individuality in the sense that is usually a phenomenon of cultural breakdown, where the loss of a traditional horizon leaves mere anomie in its wake, and people fend for themselves.

Similarly, another story entitled "The Limping Bride" presents the story of fractured family where the son is drunkard and sexual relationship between the father-in-law and daughter-in-law. Hiralal is feeling awkward after they had sex but Rukmini does not show any awkwardness. Rather she says that it was bound to happen. They are acting in rational way to fulfill their physical desire. From the rational point of view, any man or woman can have physical relation to fulfill their desire. It does not see social boundaries and limitations. Moti, a drunkard visits Bhatti everyday with sons of local merchants. Once, Rudra, neighbor to Hiralal said to him, "Why don't I ask my wife to find someone? Anyone. I think the important thing is to get him married" (57). The traditional belief that if a boy walks in a wrong direction then he should get married is followed. However, they fail in performing those values.

The public spheres like Bhatti and shops have become a space for the discussion where the participants never meet all together in one place. Human beings live together in cultures, and they no longer recognize the similarity or strangeness of the other through their class position but through their identity. Rudra and Hiralal

agree Moti to get married to anyone. Anyone here suggests a girl who might have limping legs, one with pockmarks or a girl whose parents would not mind giving their daughter in haste – even to a drunkard. Charles Taylor argues that public sphere becomes a space for the discussion linking everyone. Taylor writes:

Now the modern public sphere is a strange kind of reality in an important respect. It is supposed to be a space of discussion linking in principle or potentially everyone, even though its many participants never meet all together in one place. This space has to be sustained by a particular kind of social imaginary, one that is in many respects rather different from pre-modern modes of imaginary and that has a lot to do with specifically modern understandings of secular time and simultaneity. (190)

When Hiralal and Rudra were talking about Moti's marriage they were bringing Rukmini and her family in the discussion as Taylor says that the participants do not meet together in one place.

After Moti got married to Rukmini he was mad at his father because of keeping the secret of Rukmini's limping leg. He started spending most of his time outside home and in Bhatti. In the period Hiralal noticed that he has a strange feeling for his daughter-in-law as he visits her repeatedly while she stays alone at home. He continued coming home in the afternoon, there was something that attracted him. He was unable to explain how he feels about his daughter-in-law. He was developing unusual emotion towards her. One day he goes to Moti's room and picks up Rukmini's dhoti and rubs his cheeks. However, he feels guilty of his dead wife and stands in front of her photograph. The traditional understanding of relationship between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is questioned here. Upadhyay writes:

How could he explain to his dead wife how he felt toward his daughter-in-law? A tremendous feeling of guilt washed over him. He could smell Rukmini in the kitchen, the faint whiff of onions and body oil. He went to Moti's room and turned on the light. Rukmini's dhoti lay on the bed, crumpled, part of it spilling to the floor. Hiralal knelt down and smelled it. Yes, it had her smell. He pulled the dhoti to his face and rubbed it against his cheeks. (75)

The nature of undeniable desire in a changing society is depicted in the relation. Hiralal is controlled and directed by his desire. His intense inner desire drives him elsewhere that can be questioned by his own son and the society. The tradition is questioned here.

Rukmini seems bold enough to call her mother-in-law 'your wife' while talking to her father-in-law. She does not show any traditional values as daughter-in-law when she is only with Hiralal. She understands how her father-in-law feels about her and asks if he wants something from her. She is different from the traditional daughter-in-laws. She asks Hiralal how his wife looked like and it surprises him. She does not say my mother-in-law instead she calls her 'your wife', Upadhyay writes: "Tell me," she said, "what was your wife like?" He was surprised... "I know what you want," she said. "But you have to promise me. Once you get it, you can't ask more of me."... she asked. "Do you want to do this?"... he rested his head on her chest (79-80). Both of them are guided by their desire. They forget the familial values and challenge traditional values. The irony lies, of course, in the fact that both of them agree to follow their inner desire. The dead mother might suggest the meaning that the dead traditional values. Rukmini's calling 'your wife' to her father-in-law may suggest that how people of new generation are resisting and moving away from the traditional values. Charles Taylor claims: "As they lose their traditional illusions, they will come

together on the 'rationally grounded' outlook which has resisted the challenge" (181).

Devoid of cultural values is pure reasoning. Thus, it can be said that the traditional values are erased through rational ground.

The stories "Deepak Misra's Secretary" and "The Limping Bride" both roam around the issue of challenging traditional values. The characters through their actions challenge the traditional norms and values. Bandana, one of the main characters in "Deepak Misra's Secretary" acts in a different way than the society has given to the girls. She is bold enough to make decisions and act accordingly. She does not want to be relied on someone else. So, self-dependency which is one of the dimensions of modernity is there. Similarly, Rukmini, one of the main characters in "The Limping Bride" challenges familial values by having sex with her father-in-law. She is rational in a sense that physical desire must be fulfilled with any man. Thus, agency in modern subjects has led to dismantle the traditional values which they find narrow and repressive.

Samrat Upadhyay's 2001 collection of short stories, *Arresting God in Kathmandu* captures the resisting psyche of modern subjects as they are self-dependent and self-conscious to question the oppressive socio-politico-cultural orders. Resistance appears when they feel oppressed. The tradition plays the role of an oppressor for modern people. Kanti resists not to get married and leaves for America. By insisting to stay unmarried she is challenging social orders. He avoids her mother's suggestion to get married suggests she is neglecting traditional values. Similarly, Giri, a young poet shows his resistance for the country's power system. He wants repressive political institutions to break down and establish the new democratic powers to come. Bandana and Deepak, Rukmini and Hiralal challenge the social and cultural norms by having immoral physical relationship which has broken the limitations. Modern

agents who believe in rationality and the traditional agents believe in morality. Being rational means challenging tradition and morality. Thus, Upadhyay presents conflict between rationality and morality in this short story collection.

Another short story entitled "The Cooking Poet" brings the issue of revolution against the repressive power system. Giri is a new generation poet who wants political change in the country. Through his poems he controls every individual around him and also the country is controlled. He has an agency to question the power system of the country. Through that agency he revolts against the political system for the change. Giri as a modern subject has a thirst for freedom and better power system. Giri was a member of the United Democratic Front, the growing ultra-left group that demanded changes in the country's power structure. Acharya was surprised and perceived Giri's radical politics as incongruent with his personality. However, Acharya wanted him to be focused on his art.

Occasionally Giri missed his scheduled weekly appointment and then turned up the following Saturday with the bag of vegetables, again looking uncertain. Acharya would scold him for not keeping the appointment, Giri would apologize and say that he had had to arrange for a 'meeting'. Acharya would shake his head, thinking, your commitment should be art, not politics. But once he'd read Giri's new poems, he would feel foolish, because they were as good as ever. (27)

Giri's propensity towards politics is the result of his will power to change the country's power structure. He has the agency to question the repressive power structure of the country. Where there is discrimination there is revolution and so is the case with Giri.

Giri did not show up for his appointment for weeks. The Acharya family later knew that he left the city to join a rally in another part of the country. They were familiar with his involvement in politics. The news of the shooting and the subsequent announcement of the names of those who died came one afternoon when Acharya's family was gathered on lawn, enjoying the warmth of the winter sun. There on the radio they heard the name of Giri. "The radio buzzed on the windowsill and they heard the name: Giri Kumae Rizal. Acharya's son ran out to the radio and turned up the volume. Shooting had broken out at a protest march in Bhairaba, and among the bodies was that of Giri Kumar Rizal" (30). The news of his death left everyone in tears. The whole Acharya family was stocked in his memories and mourned for Giri. Another person had the secondhand information about the protest who told that the protest had turned into a fistfight between the United Democratic Front and the rival party. Giri was trying to break the fight and was appealing for the united protest against the government. The very moment someone fired a pistol, the bullet later was found lodged in Giri's throat.

Giri's death hung in the corners of Acharya's house for several days. He was loved and appreciated by everyone in the family. Everyone in the family was hit hard by Giri's death and Acharya's daughter was hit the hardest. The name Cooking Poet was given to Giri by Acharya's son. When Durga enters to the kitchen she recalls him because Giri used to help her in the kitchen when he was available. "Durga once more referred to Giri by the name her son had given him, the Cooking Poet – 'Poor Cooking Poet, my kitchen feels empty without him' – and soon they recalled him occasionally, mostly when they were cooking in the kitchen" (31). He is stocked in everyone's mind. His actions made him loved by everyone in the family. He did the things what he loved and what he was passionate about. Poetry, politics and cooking; through

these mediums he wanted to challenge the established and repressive power structure. The country's power structure was what he wanted to change. Cooking was feminine task but he broke the social barrier where gender based discrimination is still alive. Thus, Giri as a modern man has agency to act for the better society. His actions are oriented towards bringing change in political, cultural and social institutions of the country.

The story entitled "This World" presents how modern people living in modern cities face the challenges to live in a society, how they become so individualistic and self centered. She is an agent of her own life. She makes her own decisions. As a young Nepali girl staying in America she feels lonely. However, she has strange feeling when she went back to meet her mother in Kathmandu again she feels loneliness. She is capable of making her own decisions and act accordingly. She insists not to get married with Prakash and stay with Jaya. She believes in her decisions and sticks with that. The modern subjects' resisting psyche towards traditional values is there. She does not want to stay with the traditional values. She felt that everything has changed in Kathmandu friends, relatives, places etc. She becomes intimate with the strangers and stranger with relatives.

She told him how alienated she felt in Kathmandu; how, when she went there two years before, she was like a stranger. She liked the sound of the words and repeated them: "I was a restless ghost in my own country." He put his arm around her and said, "Poor baby," and she thought – her mind floating with wine – he is like me. (140)

She was so intimate in the first meeting with Jaya. She shared how she felt back in Kathmandu. She told him that she was a restless ghost in her own country. She has lost the connection with family, friends and relatives. She finds them irritating as

whenever they ask about her marriage and her stay in America. She probably wants them not to be around her and stay alone.

Jaya is a Rana boy living in America; Kanti and Jaya just met in the party and having a conversation entirely in English. Where she feels she is free from every stress talking to him. Unlike other gatherings where they used to talk about political chatter, the land they owned back in Nepal and people were laden with nostalgia, she is having free conversation with Jaya.

Talking with Jaya, Kanti could laugh and not to worry about how loud it sounded, or whether some senior Nepali gentlemen, a professor at a university or a consultant at a firm, would frown at her, or whether the women, with their dark, critical eyes, would talk about how she acted like a loose woman.. (140)

He was born in Nepal and grown up in Boston, then moved to New York. He does not have emotional attachments with Nepal. When he is talking to Kanti, he reveals that he does not like Kathmandu that much. He asked her, "What's so great about Nepal except for the fact that it's our home country?" He visited Kathmandu every year, hung out with his cousins and friends. "I don't even like the place that much" (140). Jaya is high class Rana member who can go and stay wherever he likes. He does not prefer staying in Nepal rather he loves to party here. He just takes Kathmandu as a destination for celebration.

Jaya and Kanti have developed a close relationship. They meet up when they are in Nepal. They roam around the city in the Jaya's car. Once they agreed to meet at a bar in a hotel she found him at a table, drinking Jack Daniel's. He said "I hate this country." He added more, "I don't know why I came." Because he laughed as he said this, she heard no bitterness in his comment. "look at them; just look at them. Pathetic" (143). He hates the country however he comes to visit again and again. He

feels pathetic for the people wearing unfit suits and jeans. On the way to home he said to Kanti: "I knew you would call me." When she asked how he knew, he replied, "You're a lonely soul" (143). Kanti had shared before how alienated she felt in Kathmandu. She talked about how she could not adjust with her neighbors and the place where she had lived before.

A Canadian theorist Charles Taylor, known for his examination of the modern self, describes in *Sources of the Self: Making of the Modern Identity* that modernity is a human subject and there is multiplicity of the self. Taking a historical perspective, Taylor showed that several strands and sources have gone into making the modern identity. A distinctly modern conception of selfhood thus encompasses a being who values freedom, possesses inner depths that are deserving of exploration, who prizes authenticity and individuality and who feels the pull of benevolence towards the suffering of others. He says that momentous transformation of our culture and society shapes our philosophical thought, language and as a whole our identity. Individuality is the state of accepting the selfhood and prioritizing the self. Taylor says:

Talk about 'identity' in the modern sense would have been incomprehensible to our forebears of a couple of centuries ago. Erikson has made a perceptive study of Luther's crisis of faith and reads it in the light of contemporary identity crises, but Luther himself, of course, would have found this description reprehensible if not utterly incomprehensible. Underlying our modern talk of identity is the notion that questions of moral orientation cannot all be solved in simply universal terms. (28)

According to Taylor, the modern conception of selfhood encompasses a being who prizes individuality. Through that freedom and individuality the modern identity is created. So, modernity has brought the transformations in the identity and selfhood.

There is a break in the relationship between Jaya and Kanti after she found him kissing another girl. Her mother was not accepting their relationship and Jaya's cousins also warned Kanti not to take him seriously. When her mother called Jaya hoodlum she shouted back at her mother, "He's not a hoodlum. His life is more interesting than yours, you with your 'what will the neighbors say, what will neighbors think'" (150). She is shouting at her mother because she does not like being interfered. Her mother does not like the way they roam around the city. The mother wants her to get married with a Brahmin boy and shouts her not to roam around with that Rana boy. One day her mother said "You were not like this before. Mrs. Sharma was from the neighborhood was asking if having a boyfriend was all you learned in America" (144). The main concern for her mother is that she cares what the neighbors say and respond about anything. She finds American values in Jaya which she does not accept. She says, "He is too much like those Americans" (144). A young and modern girl Kanti is opposing her mother's values. There she does not find acceptance of freedom and individual choices. The mother here represents tradition, duty, morality and values. But Kanti denies staying in her mother's traditional barriers where girls are not meant to roam with the boys freely.

Modernity has narrowed down the class and caste based distance. Jaya is a member of Rana family, so called high class or ruling class of Nepal and Kanti belongs to medium class family. They stay together, they eat together, and there is no such classification between them. They do not pay much attention in their caste and class. Arjun Appadurai in *Modernity at Large* claims:

We cannot simplify matters by imagining that the global is to space what the modern is to time. For many societies, modernity is an elsewhere, just as the global is a temporal wave that must be encountered in their present.

Globalization has shrunk the distance between elites, shifted key relations between producers and consumers, broken many links between labor and family life, obscured the lines between temporary locales and imaginary national attachments. (9-10)

According to Appadurai, globalization has darkened national attachments as Kanti feels when she visits back her city Kathmandu. The distance between high class and low class has obscured now as Kanti and Jaya's relationship proves.

When Kanti finished her last exam she came to Kathmandu. But she did not find any attachment with the city. She wished she were back in America. She could not understand why everything in Kathmandu had changed. She regretted coming back to her country. The way people wore the dress, the way they bragged about how much money they have, etc. made her irritated.

She couldn't understand why everything in Kathmandu had changed. So much dust, so many houses with their ugly television antennas shooting into the sky, the way people spat on the streets...the way her relatives constantly asked when she was getting married, the way her mother arranged for her to be "viewed" by dull-looking men, the way old men and women stared at her when she walked down the street wearing pants, the way her married friends carried babies in their arms...She felt eyes following her everywhere...she became convinced that she couldn't live here...I live in two worlds, she thought, perched halfway between them. (147)

Kanti could not adjust with her own people. She differentiates herself from them. The effects of modern individualism can be clearly seen. Neither, she can totally accept them as they are, nor, she is accepted as she is.

Kanti's emotion was hurt by Jaya and she told her mother that she wants to go away. Her mother understood that she needed time, some breathing space, to get over this unspeakable thing. She left for India alone. She spent two weeks in India. There she met her school friend Sushma. She was surprised to see Kanti, especially when she knew Kanti was travelling by herself. She asked her, "What? You think you're an American now?" (152). She also suggested her to search for her spiritual self in the ashram. Individual thought in Kanti was in the climax. She did whatever she thought was right. She chose Jaya as her lover as well as she understood that if she wants clarity in her life, she'd have to force herself to move beyond Jaya. She did not take her mother's suggestions rather she did what she thought was right. She acted as an agent for her life. As her mother wanted her to get married with a Brahmin boy Prakash she resisted for viewing. Her mother tried to convince and she assured that she will definitely like Prakash. Whenever she came to Nepal these traditional practices bother her. She resisted for the change in oppressive social, cultural values.

Tradition in the holistic approach is a group of activity far away from the individualism. Modern human beings differentiate themselves from others and they act in their own way. They do not want to stay in a community as Kanti does with her mother and neighbors. Peter Wagner claims:

The discussion about identity reproduces the sociological distinction between ascribed and acquired features of the human being and thus also the utterly problematic boundary between the traditional and the modern. Modern human beings allegedly choose actively their personal identities, whereas their traditional predecessors do not even know the problématique of identity-formation since they are socially determined. A similar distinction is coined in the discussion about collective identity. Social formations that are

characterized by commonality of 'natural' markers of community, such as skin colour or sex, can be distinguished on a modernity scale from others that have been created and are constantly re-created by choice, such as the (political) nation as a daily plebiscite, as Ernest Renan said. (71)

The understanding of selfhood strengthens the relation between identity and modernity so that the discourse that links identity to modernity show signs of tension. Kanti, as a modern agent is self-dependent to make her own decisions. Through that agency she establishes modern identity. And finally she chose to leave for America.

In *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001), Samrat Upadhyay's characters show two types of attributes; first, they portray the role of agent of their own life and the second, they portray revolutionary character to break down the repressive social, cultural and political orders. The stories "Deepak Misra's Secretary", "The Limping Bride", "The Cooking Poet" and "This World" are deeply rooted in the individualistic thoughts and neglect what tradition believes and what moral values demand. The characters follow personal choices and challenge the established norms and values. The new generation's characters are acting as agents of their own life. The characters of these three stories seem self-centered. They show conditional love and there is the failure in understanding of one another's emotion. Upadhyay has captured the story from streets to the castle in this short story collection. He has touched on the psychological and emotional aspect of human life reflecting the emotional and psychological situation of his characters. The stories reflect the changing mode the way of living in the city areas where the tradition is being skipped. The title *Arresting God in Kathmandu* is taken from the reference of Indra Jatra where Lord Indra's is arrested in Kathmandu valley when he came down to steal scented white parijat flowers for his mother's annual fasting ritual. This reference is kept under the story

entitled "During the Festival". So the title suggests that arrest of the God as arrest of the tradition. So, the stories are concerned with the inhibition of traditional values and adaptation of modern values.

The short story collection, *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001) by Samrat Upadhyay, depicts modern subjects' thirst for disassembling social, political and cultural oppressions. The modern Nepali subjects are those individuals who praise freedom in every aspect of the society. They have the agency to control their own life. The modern subjects are immobile by other forces such as social, cultural and political rather they resist against those values and advocate for the establishment of new value system. They have the ability to change the power system of the country. The agents are capable of speaking against suppression. Through his stories Upadhyay has explored psychological and emotional aspects of the characters dealing with their social and sexual life. He has presented the characters showing the revolting psyche of the people where they always were repressed by cultural, social and political systems. The modern Nepali people no longer want to stay repressed. They want to control the power system of the society. All of them are self-centered and desire-driven. However, Upadhyay does not moralize any of the stories and by themselves they do not stand to make a case against traditionalism. Thus, Samrat Upadhyay explores clash between modern subjects and the traditional actors who are the preservers of tradition in the transitional period.

Works Cited

- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Chand, K.K. "National and Transnational Ethos in Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu*." 2017. Tribhuvan University, Master's Thesis.
- Gaonkar, D.P, ed. *Alternative Modernities*. Duke University Press, 2001.
- Levine, Sara. "Upadhyay's Organic Stories for Western Readers" *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*. vol. 61, no. 24, 20 Feb 2009, p. 11.
- Liechty, Mark. *Out Here in Kathmandu: Modernity on the Global Periphery*. Martin Chautari Press, 2010.
- Noor, Ronny. *World Literature Today*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2002, pp. 139–140.
- Oldmeadow, Harry. *The Betrayal of Tradition: Essays on the Spiritual Crisis of Modernity*. World Wisdom, 2005.
- Phuyal, Samjhana. "Tension between Tradition and Modernity in Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu*." 2016. Tribhuvan University, Master's Thesis.
- Shrestha, Kriti. "Cultural Globalization: A Critical Reading of Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu*." 2015. Tribhuvan University, Master's Thesis.
- Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Upadhyay, Samrat. *Arresting God in Kathmandu*. Rupa Publications, 2001.
- Upadhyay, Samrat, and John Schilb. "Writing Cross-Culturally: An Interview with Samrat Upadhyay." *College English*, vol. 74, no. 6, 2012, pp. 554–566.

Wagner, Peter. *Theorizing Modernity: Inescapability and Attainability in Social Theory*. Sage, 2001.