

Chapter I

Tradition of Nepali writing in English

Among the well-known Nepali literary figures who are writing in English like Padma Prasad Devkota, Abhi Subedi, Dil Bahadur Gurung, Tek Bahadur Karki, Mani Dixit and many other younger writers, Manjushree Thapa has established herself as one of the most successful writers. These writers have tried their best to depict Nepali social life in an artistic way. Most of the writers have focused on the problems and traditions of Nepalese people and society in their writings. They have traced out the false consciousness of people and the religious and cultural propagandas as the cause of their problems. Some of the early writings are also devoted to the theme of God. Other established writers like Sailendra Sakar, H.D. Poudel, Pallav Ranjan, Yuyutsu R.D. Sharma, Nabin Chhetri, Raju Maharjan and Gopal Teji are still extending this tradition of Nepali writing in English with newer style and new subject matter.

Thapa has published numerous books like translation works, reportage, memoirs, non-fiction works and novels. They focus on the Nepali landscape, society, and the heart touching problems and sufferings of Nepali people. The social discrimination, false and useless tradition and the corruption in politics are the subjects of her writings. *Tilled Earth*, the recent volume of Thapa's collection of stories, encompasses similar themes.

Tilled Earth subverts the ideologies prevailing in Nepalese societies. Different ideologies, which hegemonise the mind of the people and shape their understanding, are found to be working in the society. It kills their critical attitude and develops a false consciousness in them. Thapa argues that this process of creating discourse and ideology has a certain politics. Since the ideology is in control of those who are in

power, it always do harm to the powerless and marginalized, and favors the powerful ones. These false ideologies of Nepalese societies are hindering the progress of people. Therefore, Thapa depicts them in her stories, analyzes, comments, criticizes and subverts them.

The word subversion means turning over. When a thing is subverted, the other hidden side of the thing comes to the fore. Thapa attempts to speak from the side of subalterns. It aims to deal the life of those who are defeated, neglected, forgotten and marginalized. In the context of *Tilled Earth*, the poor people of remote area, Dalits, women, dream differed people, drivers, servants and such other people are pushed to a dark corner in our societies. The so-called history fails to picture them in its pages and the literature of the period also neglects them. However, Thapa dares to challenge the so-called official history and documents the marginal in her book. Even the traditional mode of literary writing has been challenged in the *Tilled Earth*. The traditional writing is limited by the popular literary fashion of the age. The modern literary writing refuses the grand narrative technique of writing and presents its subject in fragments.

In their earlier works the writers are merely attempting to enter into the larger universe of global literary heritage since English has universal acceptance as an international language. Many writers from non-English spoken world have made this attempt to enter into the world of English literary writers through their writings. This is also true that despite the universal appeal of their writing many writers have been limited within their own country because of their lack of knowledge of English.

Anyway, many Nepali writers are currently writing in English. Khem Aryal, in his article “Nepali Writing in English”, writes:

The tradition of Nepali writing in English began with poetry, that too by the great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota, in the 1950s. His epic *Shakuntala*, a collection of sonnets *Bapu*, and many other poems written in English make it evident that Nepali creative writing in English started with a bang. (4)

However, the tradition initiated by the Poet Laureate Laxmi Prasad Devkota did not continue in the following decades. Nepali literature had to wait for other two decades when Tek Bahadur Karki published a thin volume of poetry entitled *Sweet Steeple*. Abhi Subedi, P. J. Karthak, and Ramesh Shrestha moved this trend still further by co-authoring *Manas* (1979). There were hardly any other writers in the decades 60s to 80s in this field. After reestablishment of democracy in 1990, Nepali writing in English acquired a new spirit.

In this second phase of Nepali writing in English, different poets like Mani Dixit, Sailendra Sakar, H.D.Poudel, Pallav Ranjan, Yuyutsu R.D. Sharma, Laxmi Devi Rajbhandari, Nabin Chhetry, Raju Maharjan and Gopal Tegi continued this tradition with new vigor and enthusiasm. Some of the writings of this period are essentially devoted to god and some other are based on social theme. However, they opened up new possibilities for Nepali readers and writers in the field of literary writing in English. Khem Aryal further adds in the same article:

In 1992, D.B. Gurung published his debut collection of poems *Whisper*. Poet Abhi Subedi's collection of poems *Chasing Dreams* was published in 1996. Two years later, Tek Bahadur Karki brought out his poetry collection *Anonymous Father and Other Poems*. A young poet Arati Dahal also wrote beautiful poems which, were collected in *A Rose for My Mamma*, Published in 1997. An anthology of poems

Voices from Nepal, published in 1999, featured seven poets, from Laxmi Prasad Devkota to Arati Dahal. Abhi Subedi, Padma P. Devkota, Laxmi Devi Rajbhandari, Dil Bahadur Gurung and Tek Bahadur Karki were the other poets included in the anthology. (4)

It is very difficult to trace out a literary line on which those writers are headed. They are diverse in style, subject matter and theme. Mani Dixit's *Nonsense Verses from Nepal* (2000) introduced what is called the limerick type of poetry to Nepali English writing.

Very few writers have worked in the field of essay and drama. We see a collection of short stories by Padam Prasad Devkota entitled *Madness of a Sort* published in 1999 AD. Dil Bahadur Gurung published his fiction *Ecoes of the Himalayas* in the same year.

In drama, it is said if Abhi Subedi had not worked in this field, it would have almost been empty. He has written some of his dramas like *Kathmandu Odyssey* (1996), *Thamel Ko Yatra* (2000), *Dreams of Peach Blossom* (2001), *The Caretaker's Sky* (2001) and *Agni Ko Katha* (2002) both in English and Nepali languages. Kalanidhi Devkota and Sangeeta Rayamajhi have also made a valuable contribution in this field with their translation works and some short plays.

A handful of Nepali writers have written literary essays in English. The genre of essay writing in English was initiated by Laxmi Prasad Devkota in Nepal. His son Padma Prasad Devkota has forwarded it a little further by publishing *A Pond of Swans and Other Essays* (2006), a collection of essays.

Similarly, in fiction writing, D.B. Gurung has tried to bridge Devkota to modern age. His successful debut novel *Echoes of the Himalayas* (1991) is highly

remarkable text which reiterates the voice of the ruled against the ruling class. Samrat Upadhaya, the most controversial writer for his orientalist prospective towards his own native country and people, has published two collections of stories and a novel. Some of them have even become successful to achieve a great literary honor in the U.S.A. His books ranges from *The Guru of love* (2003), *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2005), *The Royal Ghost* (2006), and *Secret Voice: Featuring new Writing from Nepal* (co-authored 2001).

With the turn of the third millennium, Manjushree Thapa appeared in the sky of Nepali literary world. Though she had already done much in this field through her essays, reportages, short stories and translations, she became clearly visible to public only after the publication of her two non-fiction books *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* (1992) and *Forget Kathmandu* (2005), and a novel *The Tutor of History* (2001).

Thapa's latter two books have drawn attention of numerous critics worldwide. *The Tutor of History* embraces the themes of loss of history, the slow emancipation of women, the lure and pitfalls of love and the struggles of men to be a little more than what their fates have marked out for them. *Business Standard*, an Indian newspaper, comments for Thapa's previous book *Forget Kathmandu* that Manjushree Thapa is the best kind of chronicler because she breaks down conventional modes of how history should be recorded: she acts, by turns, as reporter, activist, analyst and archivist, employing the technique of each discipline. It is a non-fiction book about the tragedy of democracy in Nepal. Generally, the book maps the various incidents from royal massacre at Narayanhity Royal Palace to the mounting crisis caused by Maoist insurgency and to the king's dissolution of the parliament.

Thapa's book *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* (1992) is a travelogue that deals with the writer's two years visit to different parts of the country. *Secret Voices: New*

Writings from Nepal (2001) is a book co-authored by three writers including Thapa. Therefore, Thapa's own experience of the world and her familial background has played a vital role to shape her outlook of Nepali society.

As the present study aspires to undertake the new historicist study of Thapa's stories, it is very essential to understand the author's position, i.e., her contextuality, which shapes how she perceives the life and society she presents in her stories. Manjushree Thapa was born in a politically affiliated high-class family in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 1968. Her father - Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa is a renowned diplomat and former ambassador to the USA and India. She grew up amidst the intense care of family and studied in three different countries - Canada, Nepal and the United States. After having graduation from National Cathedral School in 1985, her interest grew towards visual art and she got graduation in visual art from Rhode Island School of Design, USA in 1989. After the graduation she returned to Nepal and began to write for *Himal Magazine* and also worked in different NGOs. In addition, she earned an MFA degree in creative writing from the University of Washington with the full bright scholarship (1996-98). Since then she has been working in the field of literary writing. During the people's movement against active monarchy (movement against regression), she had often been seen with people shouting slogans against the government in which her father was the Foreign Minister.

Because of her sophisticated and politically affiliated family background and her study in different European and American countries, sometimes she has quite different sort of outlook on the day-to-day events in Nepal. Her foreign study and living have somewhat designed and shaped her prospective towards Nepalese culture. Sometime she seems to be diasporic in her writing. The pain of being nowhere in a

foreign land, the nostalgia for forgotten past and the continuous deferral of ambition of people are some dominant themes of her writings.

Some of the comments she made regarding the tradition and culture prevailing in Nepalese society shows her detached position from the society she depicts and she also seems to be a severe critic of the society of her own. Old and useless traditions, violence against women, the chaos of the country, and false beliefs of the people, unemployment are some of the subjects of her writings. Manjushree Thapa is also criticized of being misanthrope by many critics because she criticises the society of her own.

Chandresh Chaudhuri, on his webpage "Middlestage Homepage", writes that the stories collected in this anthology are the weariness of the people who are living a life of doubt and suspicion. Though Thapa criticizes her society and the people living there, she is not a misanthrope. He claims:

Thapa is no misanthrope, but the overwhelming mood of Tilled Earth is that of weariness shading into cynicism. Sometime, it is Thapa's characters who feel impatient with and dispirited by their circumstances, but just as often it is Thapa who swoops on how, in different ways, they either lack the courage to break their shackles or have sold out and retired into complacency. (1)

Some critics blame that Thapa is in the same line of Samrat Upadhaya. Samrat's position has been questioned by the cultural critics in Nepal because he has an extreme western outlook to view Nepalese society and culture. In his books *Arresting God in Kathmandu* and *Guru of Love* he has represented Nepal in an orientalist way. The representation shows Nepalese people as uncivilized, backward and foolish. The

culture here is strange and mysterious. Though Thapa is not an orientalist, her inclination towards west is questionable. She is elitist rather than an orientalist because she simply ignores the hypocrisy and mannerism of the middle class people. She forgets the impression of western imperialist media and only blames the activities of working class people as uncivilized. Her criticism of the inside of the rickshaw and the behavior of the driver in the story "Three Hundred Rupees" best exemplify her westernized perspective.

Nevertheless, her faithful representation of facts and satiric undertone into the representation are found to be motivated towards positive change. History is mute for the writer like Thapa because it collects only the facts about the life of some victorious ones. They ignore the defeated people. Therefore, the genre of history itself has become an instrument to marginalize others. It is unfaithful towards the powerless people. Thapa tries to challenge the history by attacking and knocking down the dominant ideologies and tries to assist the subalterns to raise their voices.

Regarding the issue of the female in the story "Soar", Nepali people and politics in "Friends" and with the question of civilization in "Three Hundred Rupees", Thapa appears to be a severe critic of Nepalese culture, beliefs, traditions and politics. There are many examples in the stories, which show that the writer refuses to follow such tradition. She ridicules them; she mocks on the poverty of thought. She wants to detach herself from whatever is prevailing there and criticizes it. She criticizes the society of her own because they are governed by certain ideologies, the ideologies created by different power centers; like feudal system of government, patriarchal system of society, racial hierarchy, and rule of armies and polices. Dr. Sanjeev Uprety, in his article entitled "The Tilled Earth", writes:

It is possible to describe Manjushree's stories as example of what has been described as the literature of Diaspora. Her stories specially the ones like 'Sounds', 'The Tilled Earth', and 'The European Fling', represent the sense of alienation, nostalgia and search for cultural roots that traces the works of diasporic writers such as Ondaatje and Rushdie; writers who "imagine" their homeland from foreign – and at least partially alien- cultural location. (5)

Thapa's *Tilled Earth* is firmly grounded in the specific period of last 15 years in the history of Nepal during the era of 2040s and 50s BS. However, some of the stories represent the ideologies of different time in the history of Nepal. During this period there was a complex types of political power relationship between different political parties with people's support on the one hand, the king with the support of Royal Nepalese Army on the other hand and the revolutionary Maoist party with its People's Liberation Army. Different types of government were being formed and dissolved. Most of the rural area was in control of Maoists with their own local administrative body. Development activities were disturbed. People were suffering from the unemployment, political instability, insecurity and poverty. Everywhere there was fear and terror. Political parties were loosing the confidence of people. Even the people living in city areas were dissatisfied of this condition. Newspapers were filled with the news of severe violence everywhere. People's rights were suspended. Within this situation, *Tilled Earth* was conceived by the author. Since it pictures the contemporary history of Nepal, it is obviously a historical text innocently dealing with the society, people and politics of the era in the history of Nepal.

Thapa's *Tilled Earth* is a recent volume of collection of short and long stories published in may, 2007 by Penguin Books, India. In this book, she has viewed Nepali

society microscopically from three perspectives: a Nepali in Nepal; a Nepali in overseas; and a foreigner in Nepal. It is a fine and firm observation of without and within. Dr. Sanjeev Uprety further comments on the text in the following passage:

All of them (stories) are sensitive portraits of people caught up between multiple cultures and shifting terrains of global modernit(ies). Most of the stories represent what Mary Louis Pratt has describe as the “Contact” zone; a space where two or more cultures, languages, rituals and histories intersect into each other; producing love and desire, but also pain and “double” alienation. (4)

Urvashi Butalia, in her article "A Few Stolen Moments" published in the weekly magazine *Outlook*, reads Thapa's *Tilled Earth* as a few stolen moments. She views the stories in the *Tilled Earth* as depiction of very private moments of various personalities as they are stolen hideously. She remarks:

From experimenting with fiction (*The Tutor of History*) to reportage (*Forget Kathmandu*) to this quiet collection, Manjushree Thapa continues to use language with skill and insight with discretions. These stories do not burst upon you with an éclat, for there is nothing to flaunt there, rather they sort of steal upon you, leaving you with a faint, almost elusive, shock of recognition. (97)

The stories collected in the book are far diverted from what we generally call traditional writing because they lack the traditional method of story writing with clear cut beginning, middle and ending. It rather brings many fragments of facts. Butalia further adds:

If you are expecting the 'traditional' story, with a beginning, middle, end, and a twist in the tail, you realize soon enough, it is not what you will get. If you think that perhaps, the little vignettes will add up to something, a story or a thread that connects them into a single narrative, even that expectation is defeated. These are simply short (and sometime not so short), reflective not-quiet-portrait-not-quiet-stories about ordinary, small people. (97)

Since it bears the quality of a fiction with some historical facts, *Tilled Earth* is coloured with the quality of modernism. She also seems as if she is a modernist writer on her choice of rhetoric and way of dealing with the things. Dr. Arun Gupto believes that "Modernism is a contested, varied, plural features of cultural conditions expressed in the arts, philosophies, and many other discipline" (5). Because of these pluralities of outlooks in the *Tilled Earth*, it can be analyzed as a modernist text.

Gupto, in his article entitled "The Bad Modernism", comments:

To be modernist for a creative writer means possessing many dynamic cultural traits. Further more, modernism also is understood as Yeats like representation of the external world by imaginative construction of the writer's inner world; or the verbal ambiguity in language of literature; or depiction of the world through fluidity of consciousness. (5)

Thapa elsewhere asserts that society is omnipresent; we cannot get away from it. Therefore, her characters are deeply rooted in the society. She says, "Writing is part social inquiry, part confessional, or can also be, at times, part crusade against (any form of) tyranny. It is a noble means to reach out to the larger masses beyond all sorts of frontiers; it is a meeting with people without met" (4).

In *Tilled Earth*, she slowly enters into the private life of a character and finds out his private world. She scratches the innermost of people and makes them to express their inner thought. Sometimes her story seems to be as depiction of psychological realism. Dr. Sanjeev Upreti comments on this aspect of her stories in this manner:

It is also possible to describe Manjushree's stories as fine piece of psychological realism. Her stories do not show too much movement in terms of the plot. The lack of action in her stories, however, is more than compensated by the accuracy of her visual descriptions- she describes the flora and fauna, sound and smells of the locations in minute realistic details –finely crafted prose, and subtle pieces of psychological penetration that becomes even more visual during second reading. (4)

Thapa's stories are somewhat plot less. Some of them are like collection of events in detail in the life of different characters with her insights. Most of the time Thapa appears to be omniscient narrator revealing their ins and outs. Many things and events, ideologies and politics, are harvested in the mind of the writer. She tries to put them with few words and with the experience of her characters. The characters seem as the mouthpiece of the writer.

D.B. Gurung views *Tilled Earth* as harvest of tilled mind in his article "Harvest of the Tilled Mind" in the *The Kathmandu Post*. He finds the complexity of characteristics in Thapa's work because of her multiple outlooks and experiences:

Albeit her themes, now and then, run in the vein of diasporic writers such as Jumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desain, or Khaled Hussein, Thapa is

profusely attuned to the rhythm and idiom of her native soils. She picks up trivial things and paltry events to make us mull over inspiring a monologue, “these dramas are commonplace... but never, thought of them seriously before”. *Tilled Earth* is absolutely a good harvest of a tilled mind. Thapa has attained a new apogee in contemporary Nepali literature. (4)

Thapa's love for her native land and culture expressed in the *Tilled Earth* is not less impressive than any other works of diasporic writers. She wants to know all aspects of her native culture some of which she is ignorant because of her living in the foreign land during her studies.

While plunging into the culture of her native land she concludes that innocency and gentility of Nepalese people is corrupted by different ideologies- political, religious and cultural. Their rationality and critical thought has destroyed by the discourses created by those who are in power. Whatever ideas were in favor of the power centers they were announced as truth. Our knowledge was limited and ordained by the ideology into boundary of those power centers. Their power was consciously or unconsciously circulated by the ideologies they create. Whoever was killed during the emergencies - a child, a younger, or an old person- announced as an armed terrorist killed in face to face battle. All the power centers were spreading their ideologies to prove themselves true. However, Manjushree finds that these ideologies are false as these are intentionally created by those who are in power. She attempts to falsify those ideologies by ridiculing and criticizing it. This is what this research tries to prove as suggested by the title "Subversion of ideologies in Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*." The ideologies prevailing in Nepalese society favor only some handful of ruling class people and those who are at high rank in social hierarchy.

She wants to bring change in society; she wants progress in the consciousness of people; she wants subaltern voice to come to the front; she wants to see a “civilized” society. Therefore, she severely attacks on those ideologies that are working in Nepali society, and also tries to establish a completely new system of thought .

The discourse on new historicism and cultural studies will be brought as a theoretical tool for this study to deal with some cultural issues as per necessity. Cultural materialism and the concepts of ideologies will also be brought to discuss on the related issues. However, this study is limited to a general survey of Nepalese culture, the functioning of ideological network into it, the on going political movement in Nepal, the writer’s way of dealing with different issues and the biography of the author. Though this study addresses various issues ranging from the ideologies about women and Dalits to other marginalized castes and communities of the Nepalese society, it may not do justice to all the issues it tries to raise.

Chapter II

Discourse of Ideology in New Historicism and Cultural Criticism

New historicism is a term applied to a trend in American literary studies in the 1980s that emphasized on the historical nature of a literary text and at the same time the 'textual' nature of history. Inspired by Michel Foucault's concepts of discourse and power, new historicists attempt to show how literary text are implicated in the power relations of their time, not as secondary 'reflections' of any coherent world view but as active participants in the continual remaking of meaning. It is different from the traditional historians' way of dealing with a text.

Traditional historians believed that history is a series of events that have a linear, causal relationship. Event 'A' causes event 'B' to happen, event 'B' causes event 'C' to happen, and such process runs in history. Everything, like different events and texts are studied in term of the spirit of the age like the age of reason or the age of enlightenment, and in terms of historical period like Neoclassical period, Romantic period or Modernistic period etc. Lois Tysen in his book *Critical Theories Today* writes that, "traditional historian simply believed that history is progressive, that the human species is improving over a course of time, advancing in its moral, cultural, and technological accomplishments" (279).

New historicists believe that we have not clear access to any history. We know some facts of the history but our understanding of what such facts mean, how they fit within the complex web of competing ideologies and conflicting social, political, cultural agendas of the time and place in which they occurred is, for new historicists, strictly a matter of interpretation.

When a fictional element is inserted in history, it ceases to be story, and eventually it becomes a bastard genre. The past and written histories are not the same thing. Because we cannot directly encounter the past, we employ narrative as the medium of exchange in our transactions with it. So, the discipline of history is best viewed as a literary artifact producing knowledge as much by aesthetic as by any other criteria.

History is assumed as a narrative prose shaped by literary conventions and the historian's imagination. Therefore, the text is not only a literary fact, but also a social one and it is produced within a context which includes the life of the authors the audience for whom s/he writes and the background relationship of various social, historical and political factors. The literary text, therefore, is enmeshed in circumstances, both in its production by the writer and reception by the reader. Hans Bertens, in *Literary Theory: The Basics* writes:

The literary text then is always part and parcel of a much wider cultural, political, social, and economic dispensation. Far from being touched by the historical moment of its creation, the literary text is directly involved in history. Instead of transcending its own time and place, as traditional Anglo American criticism had argued, the literary text is a time and place bound verbal construction that is always in one way or another political. Because it is inevitably involved with a discourse or an ideology, it cannot help being a vehicle for power.

(176-177)

A text is not just a written document that we read for entertainment. It is a package of wider cultural, political, social and economic distribution. It does not transcend the

time of its creation but it is bound to be into it and most of the time a text bears a certain politics. It serves as a vehicle for power.

The Anglo-American New Criticism argued for independence of a text from its author. The attention to the author of the text distracts from the autonomy of the text itself. The awareness of an authorial presence creates a gap between the reader and the text, highlights historical differences, and tends to weigh the text's meaning in favor of the author.

New critical mode of criticism focused on the organicity of a text. A text is organic whole and sufficient to create a meaning of its own without any touch to the biography of the author and the history of the nation. It emphasized on the close reading or finding meaning from the textuality of the text. T.S. Eliot, the leading figure of the movements, strongly protested for the 'depersonalization' of a text. His 'objective correlative' is an attempt to make literary text a powerful object into itself. On his famous essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent' he writes that any types of work of art or the "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (80).

W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley in their book *Literary Criticism: A Short History* state emphasis on the textual power a book have. Their two famous essays "The intentional fallacy" and "The Affective fallacy" attempt to construct the theoretical basis for as alternative to positivistic scholarship. In this way, new critics treat the literary text as an object essentially independent of its author and historical context rather they focused on the textuality of a text. Initiated by the ideas and works of T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richard, this mode of criticism continued and consolidated by a number of leading American critics such as John Crow Ransom, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmuir, Cleanth Brooks and Rene Wellek.

As a response to the New Critical and formalist way of dealing upon a text, new historical model of the criticism is developed during 1980s. This school of criticism views a text through the eyes of history. There is an inseparable relationship between literature and history, and literature is to be embedded within history. Nevertheless, it is virtually different from what is called the historical criticism of 1930s. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams discusses New Historicism in the following passage:

New Historicism, since the early 1980s, has been the accepted name for a mode of literary study that its proponents oppose to the formalism. They attribute both to the new criticism and to the critical deconstruction that followed it. In place of dealing with a text in isolation from its historical context, new historicists attend primarily to the historical and cultural conditions of its production, its meanings, its effects, and also of its later critical interpretations and evaluations.

(182)

A text can not be analyzed in isolation from its historical context. The historical, political and cultural condition when the writer was writing the text and the effect the text has created in the society should be brought into consideration. Not only are these, the latter critical interpretation of the text and the interpreter the subjects to be analyzed by new historicist criticism.

Since the existing power relation always bound people into certain chain, a writer and his/her text could not be an independent entity. They could not be isolated from the social, political and cultural network. Even the interpreter of a text has her historicity. Therefore, the history and culture in the context of a text are the main things that help determining its meaning.

New historicist criticism, however, is markedly different from the 1930s and 50s historicist criticism. The historical criticism used the social and intellectual history as a "background" of a text. On that background, they tried to set a literary text as an independent entity. They also attempt to view a literature as a "reflection of the world view characteristic of the particular period.

On the contrary, new historicist criticism assumed a literary or non-literary text as "situated" within various institutions, social practices, and discourses that constitute the overall culture of that period. Within those institutions, a literary text is not only a product but also a producer of social and cultural power.

This is not simply a return to an earlier kind of literary scholarship, for the views and practices of the new historicists differ markedly from these at former scholars who had adverted to social and intellectual history as a "background" against which to set a work of literature as an independent entity, or had viewed literature as a "reflection" of the world view characteristic of a period. Instead, new historicists conceive of a literary text as "situated" within the institutions, social practices, and discourses that constitute the overall culture of a particular time and place, and with which the literary text interacts as both a product and a producer of cultural energies and codes. (Abrams 183)

Louis Montrose, as cited by Abrams, describes the new historicism as "a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (183). For him history is conceived not to be a set of fixed objective facts it is like a literature that needs to be interpreted. Any text for Abram is:

conceived as a discourse which although it may seem to present or reflect, an external reality, in fact consists of what are called representations- that is, verbal formations which are the “ideological products” or “cultural constructs” of the historical conditions specific to an era. New historicists often claim also that these cultural and ideological representations in text serve mainly to reproduce, confirm and propagate the power structure of domination and subordination that characterize a given society. (183)

Different critics contributed to form the theoretic basis for this mode of criticism.

Among them Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin Clifford Geertz and Louis Montrose are prominent figures. Althusser brings the reference from Marxist ideology. He asserts, “Ideology manifests itself in different ways in the discourse of each of the semi-autonomous institutions of an era” (183). Michel Foucault views that the discourse of an era, instead of reflecting preexisting entities and orders, brings into being the concepts, oppositions, and hierarchies of which it speaks; that these elements are both products and propagators of “power” or social forces. Similarly, Mikhael Bakhtin opines that a literary text have a dialogic nature. They incorporate a number of conflicting voices that represent diverse social classes.

A critic Hans Bertens writes that a new historicist reading of a text highlights the power relations and the forces operating in that culture:

History, such as the socio-economic circumstances of a specific literary text’s creation or biographical data regarding its author, is not read to illuminate literature, nor is literature read to shed a direct light on history. Rather the historical period in question is seen as a remote culture whose various discursive manifestations- the text of all kinds

that have come down to us and which constitute all that we have to work with- need detailed attention and need to be brought into contact with each other so that the power relations and the forces operating in that culture may be brought to light. (180)

The analysis of a literary text should be viewed as a set of social, economic and political power relation in particular time and place. But new historicist are also aware that they are themselves entrapped into the web of power -created- ideology and are in difficulties. It is difficult to enter into the past era and it is also difficult to transcend beyond the living era. For instance, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* could be analyzed from the prospective of the new historicism but it is very hard and somewhat impossible to know all about the culture and socio-political condition of that era. No one knows the past completely.

There is another difficulty while analyzing a text through new historical prospective that is the impossibility of objective analysis. Considering this difficulty, Louis Tysen, writes:

Like all human beings, historians live in a particular time and place, and their views of both current and past events are influenced in an innumerable conscious and unconscious ways by their own experience within their own culture. Historians may believe they're being objective, but their own views of what is right and wrong, what is civilized and uncivilized, what is important and unimportant, and the like, will strongly influence the ways in which they interpret events. (279)

Our being or subjectivity is said to be in negotiation, consciously and unconsciously, among the constraints and freedoms offered by the society we live at any given moment. We are bound to follow it. Thus, new historicists believe that power does not emanate only from the top of the political and socio-economic structure. As Foucault says, "It circulates in all direction, to and for all social level, at all times. And the vehicle by which power circulates is a never-ending proliferation of exchanges" (281). This exchange creates a discourse. It is "a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience". (281). A fixed and single interpretation of any text is impossible because of the unstable and dynamic interplay of discourses. They are always in a state of flux, overlapping and competing with one another. And it is also true that no discourse is permanent because, though the discourse always tries to dominate other, the relationship between individual identity and society is mutually constitutive: "on the whole, human beings are never merely victims of an oppressive society, for they can find various ways to oppose authority in their personal and public lives" (281-82). Now, a question arises: what kind of analysis can new historical literary critic attempt? The answer is: It attempts to deconstruct or challenge the ideologies or discourses of the power in the text. The ideologies may either of the society represented in the text or of the writer imposed upon the text. It may also be the political ideology served by state-controlled-media to the people of the country.

To focus upon historical narratives of marginalized people is another dominant aspect of the new historicist criticism because a master narrative told from a single cultural point of view which presumes to offer the only accurate version of history, will no longer control our historical understanding. In this way, new historicism tries

to promote the development of and gain attention for the histories of marginalized peoples.

The attempt to depict the plurality of voices is also the dominant aspect of new historicism. Besides this, the analysis also involves what is called thick description, a term borrowed from anthropology which, in the words of Louis Tysen:

attempt[s], through close, detailed examination of a given cultural production- such as birthing practices, ritual ceremonies, games, penal codes, works of art, copyright laws, and the like- to discover the meanings that particular cultural production had for the people in whose community it occurred and to reveal the social conventions, cultural codes, and ways of seeing the world that gave that production those meanings. Thus, thick description is not a search for facts but a search for meaning. (285)

Clifford Greetz, an anthropologist, talks about the thick description with an interesting example of winking in a crowded room in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures*. The 'thin description' of the winking of such place means no more just than a quick contraction of the right eyelid. But a thick description of the same event could give many different meanings. It may refer to a gesture for communicating a message, or it may be a gesture of surprise, or so on. In this way, the thick description of an event into a social context tries to find the cultural meaning of a text in a particular context.

Micheal Foucault has brought together incidents and phenomena from areas normally seen as unconnected encouraging new historicists to redefine the boundaries to historical inquiry. Foucault refuses to see history as an evolutionary process, a continuous development. Neither does he view history as an abstraction, idea or ideal. No historical event to Foucault, has single cause, rather each event is tied into vast

web of economic, social and political factors. History is not set of fixed, objective facts but like the literature with which it interacts. In the introduction of *Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow writes:

For Foucault, there is no external position of certainty no universal understanding that is beyond history and society. His strategy is to proceed as far as possible in his analyses without recourse to universals. His main tactic is to historicize such supposedly universal categories as human nature each time he encounters them. (4)

Foucault believes that history has made human beings its subjects. People are the subject of a history for it records the activities of the people in the time. He argues that, "in our culture, human being is made subject. In this process of social objectification and categorization, human beings are given both a social and a personal identity" (8).

While talking about discourses Foucault focuses on power. Power always dominates other. Moreover, it continues its domination through the network of discourses. The power, at the beginning scatters certain ideology that creates a discourse. The discourse runs on a horizontal line touching all. No one could escape from the network of the ideology. Even a creative writer is on the grip of the power network. He/she is bound to express or represent what the power allows them . It may also be true that the writer him/herself be hegemonised by certain ideologies of the time which he/she is unnoticed: "What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourses" (68).

“Truth”, for Foucault, "is to be understood as a system of ordered procedure for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statement" (74). He further adds that “Truth” is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produces and sustains it, and to effects of power which it induces it, and which extends it. A “regime” of truth" (74).

Foucault does not believe that a text could go beyond the experience of the author of the text nor the author could be far from the text s/he has produced. The text has already given an identity to the author beyond his proper name. That is why the analysis of a text should go simultaneously with the analysis of the author and most importantly with the ‘discursive quality’ a text and an author bears. “The author is the principal of thrift in the proliferation of meaning” (118). Therefore, while analyzing a text the socio-economic condition of the era the biography of the writer and the inner politics of the text's production should be kept in consideration.

New historicist appeared to be "pessimistic" and "quietist" when they argued that subversion of ideology of the power is somewhat impossible because the power creates a pattern of subversion-containment dialects. This pattern refers that the power not only allows different ideologies to come into its system but also actively fosters "subversive" element and forces. This kind of logic assumes that the dominant ideologies couldn't be subverted rather the subversive element itself be produced and handled by the power in a safe and desired way. But a group of new historicist critics criticized this pessimistic view and asserted that the dominant ideology and the culture is "always under pressure from alternative views and beliefs" (186 Bertens). So they prefer an analysis of a text which brings to light the dominant social-cultural order that the text is instrument of, and also the challenges from inside to the order which it seeks to hide. Such critics are known as cultural materialists.

Cultural materialism is a theoretical movement and a mode of criticism that began in the mid-1980s along with new historicism. A British neo-Marxist critic Raymond Williams has used this term in literary criticism for the first time in his book *Marxism and Literature* in 1977. A number of critics and scholars adopted this term to indicate the Marxist orientation of their mode of new historicism. Marxist critics viewed cultural phenomenon as a superstructure which is determined by the economic base. Cultural materialists seek to draw attention to the processes being employed by contemporary power structures, such as the church, the state or the academy, to disseminate ideology. To do this they explore text's historical context and its political implications, and then by close textual analysis note the dominant hegemonic position.

Cultural materialism is a theoretical paradigm that stresses the empirical study of socio-cultural systems within a materialistic infrastructure-structure-superstructure framework. The term was coined by Marvin Harris in the field of anthropological studies in his foundational text, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968). He states that the aim of this theory is "to create a pan-human science of society where findings can be accepted on logical and evidentiary grounds by the pan-human community" (xii).

According to cultural materialist theory, production and reproduction dominate and determine the other sectors of culture. Therefore, cultural materialist see things like government, religion, law and kinship as constructs. "Cultural materialism explains the structural features of a society in terms of production within the infrastructure only" (277), but Marxists critics argue that production is material condition located in the base that acts upon and also acted upon by the infrastructure. "Unlike Marxism, cultural materialism addresses relations of unequal power

recognizing innovations and changes that benefits both upper and lower classes" (278). Marxism treats all cultural changes as being beneficial only to the ruling class.

This mode of criticism established permanent in the field of literary study with the publication of Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy: Religion, ideology and power in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporary* (1984), of Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (1985), and of two collection of essays: *Alternative Shakespeares* (1985) edited by John Drakakis, and *Political Shakespeare: Essays in cultural Materialism* (1985) edited by Jonathan Dollimar and Alan Sinfield.

Both new historicists and cultural materialists are interested in recovering lost histories and in exploring mechanisms of repression and subjugation. The major difference is that new historicists tend to concentrate on those at the top of the social hierarchy while cultural materialists tend to concentrate on those at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

The major assumptions that the new historicists and cultural materialists have, as Hans Bertens states are:

First of all, subject cannot transcend their own time but live and work within the horizon of a cultural constructed by ideology, by discourses. The ideological constructions that authors live in, and have internalized, inevitablized, inevitably become part of their work, which is therefore always political and always a vehicle for power [...]

Because it plays an active role in the creation of literature and consolidation of power relations, literature does not merely reflect the culture in which it is produced, but actively contributes to the

constitution of culture, and thus of history. Like the new historicism, cultural materialism brings to light how ideology-and thus the existing social (and religious) order tries to maintain itself or, as the case may be, adjust itself to new circumstances, without losing its grip. Finally, since the status of literature is not essentially different from that of other texts (religious, political, economic, legal, and so on) in the sense that it had no special access to genuine, transcendent truth, it merits no special treatment, but is read alongside a wide variety of non-literary texts. (Bertens: 185)

The criss-cross of the ideological network covers everything and everywhere and it always hegemonizes the mind of the people. The producer (the author) and the product (text) get influenced by other texts: religious, political, economic, legal and so on. Therefore, a text could not be analyzed in isolation irrespective of those non-literary texts.

They then suggest the possibilities of the rejection and/or subversion of that position. Analyzing the underlying differences between new historicism and cultural materialism Hams Bertens writes:

... cultural materialists object to what they see as the new historicism's downplaying of subversion and dissent or at least of dissent's effectiveness. Cultural materialists agree that literary texts will at first sight seem supportive of contemporary ideology, but see that ideology as less pervasive than their new historicist colleagues. (185)

Raymond Williams adopts Gramsci's view of hegemony and says 'no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy and

human intention' (186). The dominant culture is always under pressure from alternative views and beliefs:

So while cultural materialist analysis of literary texts bring to light how these texts are (inevitably conservative) instruments of dominant socio-cultural order, they also demonstrate how the apparent coherence of that order is threatened from the inside, by inner contradictions and by tensions that it seeks to hide. (186)

Cultural materialism attempts to bring the inner contradiction of a cultural order. Though there is a dominant ideology as the superstructure of a society or culture, there are so many societies or culture; there are so many other resisting ideologies at play in a particular given culture. Moreover, it is especially in literary text those contradictions and tensions can be addressed and worked through.

Focusing on the cracks in the ideological façade that texts offer, cultural materialism reads even the most reactionary texts against the grain, offering reading of dissidence that allow us to hear the socially marginalized and expose the ideological machinery that is responsible for their marginalization and exclusion (187).

In the introduction of their book *Political Shakespeare*, Dollimore and Sinfield have written that cultural materialism does not attempt to mystify its perspective as the natural, obvious or right interpretation of an allegedly given textual fact. On the contrary, it registers its commitment to the transformation of a social order that exploits people on grounds of race, gender and class. Therefore, cultural materialism is found to be Marxist oriented for its transformative motifs, while new historicism rests on bringing to light the hidden power relations in a cluster of Renaissance texts.

Cultural materialism sees to find instances of dissidence, subversion, and transgression that are relevant in contemporary political struggles. It is interested to find out how a work of literature is made to function in later period.

To know the super structure or the text one should necessarily turn to the base structure or the culture of the society. This assumption gave rise to another similar mode of criticism known as the cultural criticism.

Cultural criticism is an analytical approach which began during mid- 1960s. Cultural criticism in its narrower definition of the term argues that other criticisms have misunderstood and undervalued the working- class culture:

The dominant class dictates what forms of art are to be considered 'high' culture, such as the ballet, the opera, and 'fine' art. Forms of popular culture, on the other hand – such as television, situational comedies, popular music, and 'pulp' fiction- have been relegated to the status of 'low' culture. (293 tisen)

Cultural criticism disrupts the so called hierarchy of 'high' and 'low' culture and tries to analyze a text on the ground of cultural work they perform. In other word, cultural study studies the role of cultural production in the circulation of power. This production ranges from cultural celebration to following of rituals, publication of books, cultural dance show, opera, and almost all social activities. Even publicly giving speech could be included in it.

Though they have distinctive differences, cultural criticism and new historicism share a good deal of the same theoretical ground. Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* opines that

cultural criticism share with new historicism the view that human history and culture constitute a complex arena of dynamic forces of which we can construct only a partial, subjective picture. Both fields share the belief that individual human subjectivity develops in a give-and-take relationship with its cultural milieu: while we are constrained within the limits set for us by our culture, we may struggle against those limits or transform them. And both fields are interdisciplinary, for both argue that human experience, which is the stuff of human history and culture, can not be adequately understood by means of academic discipline that carve it up into such artificially separated categories as sociology, psychology, literature and so forth. (292-93) .

In a broad sense, the term cultural criticism is often used to refer to any kind of analysis of any aspect of culture. Any criticism like Marxist, feminist, lesbian/gay/queer and postcolonial criticism are parts of cultural criticism because they explore some aspect of the culture of a particular time and place. It tends to be much more politically oriented than new historicism in its support of oppressed class. Because of this political orientation, cultural criticism often draws upon, Marxist, feminist and other political theories in performing its analysis. Very often, we also see that cultural criticism has taken interest in popular culture.

Another important difference between political theory and cultural criticism is that even while analyzing the operations of working class people it does not view oppressed people as helpless victim. “Rather, like new historicism, cultural criticism view oppressed people as both victimized by the dominant power structure and capable of resisting or transforming that power structure” (294). Therefore, we see a very close connection between a literary text, the culture in which it emerged, and the

cultures in which it is interpreted. It examines both high and low culture, and tries to map the changing ideological functions that a given cultural production performs at the hand of those who respond to it. For example, while dealing with the problem of dalit or analyzing the Maoist issue we should find out what strategy they follow to resist against their trouble. Lois Tyson makes some question to make clear the approaches to literary analysis employed by new historicist and cultural critics:

How does the literary text function as part of a continuum with other historical/cultural text from the same period...? What does these literary works add to our tentative understanding of human experience in that particular time and place, including the way in which individual identities shapes and is shaped by cultural institution? (297)

He further writes “How can we use literary work to ‘Map’ the interplay of both traditional and subversive discourses circularity in the culture in which that work emerged and/or the culture in which the work has been interplayed?” (297). “How does the text promote ideologies that supports and/or undermining the prevailing power structure of the time and place in which it was written and/or interpreted?”(298).The other questions that a cultural critics asks about a text are “What does the literary work suggest about the experience of groups of people who have been ignored, under-represented, or mis-represented by traditional history?” And “How has the work’s reception by literary critics and the reading public- including the reception at its point of origin, changing responses to the work over time, and its possible future relationship with its audience- been shaped by and shaped the culture in which that reception occurred?”(298). Taking these questions in consideration this dissertation of the new historicist reading of *Tilled Earth* will see how literary text participate in the circulation of discourses, shaping and shaped by the culture in which

it emerge and by the cultures in which they are interpreted. It also attempt to plunge into the socio-political-intellectual-economic situation of those who have made different comments on the work. The commentators are not free of their own bias understanding of the text. They have their own beliefs and interests. They might have faith on certain religious, cultural, racial or intellectual beliefs. That means they are guided by certain ideology which shapes their outlook. So, let's see what do the term ideology refers to.

Ideology is the beliefs, values, and ways of thinking and feeling in a particular context. It gives human being a specific perception that they use to judge and explain what is taken to be reality. So it is a system of thought and reasoning and ultimately creating a/the truth.

When a religious leader develops a system into which all the value systems, attitudes, shape of behaviour, daily activities, food habits and almost everything is defined in a systematic way that forms as religion later. As the thinking between two leaders differs, the whole religious system differs.

Marx views ideology as an instrument of social reproduction. He proposes a base/superstructure model of society and claimed that a society's dominant ideology is a part of its economic superstructure. The base refers to the means of production of society. The super structure is formed on top of the base, and comprises that society's ideology as well as, its legal system, and religion. Because the base structure determines the superstructure, Marx says, the base structure, including ideology, basically serves the interest of ruling class. Therefore, "ideology is a false consciousness" such as the fetishism of commodities. Marx further says, "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (150).

Slavoj Žižek, the editor of *Mapping Ideology*, defines ideology as “a doctrine, a composite of ideas, beliefs, concepts and so on, destined to convince us of its ‘truth’, yet actually serving some unavowed particular power interest” (10). Roland Barthes, in his mythologies, proposed the notion of ideology as the naturalization’ of the symbolic order.

Louis Althusser in his essay, "Ideology: Ideological State Apparatuses", states that “ideology is a system of the ideas and representations which dominates the mind of a man or a social group” (120). Ideology originally meant the scientific study of human ideas, but later Marx defines ideology as an imaginary assemblage, a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the ‘day’s residues’. He says, “ideology interpellates individual as subject” (151). It acts or functions in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals, or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects. He has proposed many ISAs, i.e. ideological state Apparatus and discussed the functioning of them. Ideology bears the class character. Terry Eagleton writes “Since truth or theory, in other words, are no longer to be strictly counter posed to ideology; on the contrary, they are just ‘expression’ of a particular class ideology...” (181). He further comments on the Althusser’s ideology in the following passage:

Ideology is not primarily a matter of ‘ideas’: it is a structure which imposes itself upon us without necessarily having to pass through consciousness at all. Viewed psychologically, it is less a system of articulated doctrines than set images, symbols and occasionally concepts which we ‘live’ at an unconscious level. Viewed sociologically, it consists in a range of material practices or rituals (voting, saluting, genuflecting, and so on) which are always embedded in material institutions. (218-19)

So, the ideology works through the representation constituting and imposing a system in our consciousness. It has a material quality rather than concept or ideas. In this sense, Linda Hutcheon cites some lines from Stimpson's book in her book *The Politics of Postmodernism* in the following manner:

Like every great word, 'representation/s' is a stew. A scrambled menu, it serves up several meanings at once. For a representation can be an image - visual, verbal and aural....A representation can also be a narrative, a sequence of images and ideas...or, a representation can be the product of ideology, that vast scheme for showing forth the world justifying its dealing. (Stimpson 1989: 233)

Terry Eagleton, in a talk with Pierre Bourdieu, comments that, "language is as much – or is perhaps more – an instrument of power and of action than of communication" (265). Language bears the ideology of the speaker. Bourdieu further adds that: "To describe a statement as ideological is very often an insult, so that this ascription itself becomes an instrument of symbolic domination" (266).

To find out the hidden motifs of the ideological production, the new historicist reading of a text attempts to see the effect of different ideologies in the given society and the people. Since most of the dominant ideologies are in favour of the powerful class, new historicism problematizes those ideologies and challenges them by taking side of marginalized groups. *Tilled Earth* is a powerful attempt to challenge the ideologies of the powerful and subvert them.

Chapter III

Subversion of Ideologies in *Tilled Earth*

Texts are generally believed as having 'context' - the literary, intellectual, political circumstances which surround their composition or which they evoke. It is in this light this present dissertation attempts to see Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth* as a representation of the historical, social and political context around the era of 40s and 50s in the history of Nepal.

She is not a historicist to all her intent and purpose, though a close reading of her collection of stories the *Tilled Earth* and also her other works reveal that they depict the history of Nepal and Nepalese people, their thoughts, ambitions, problems, and aspirations. She seems as a realistic narrator but she does not miss a single chance to criticize the social follies and bad traditions severely. She wants change in the consciousness to people but she hates politics because it has degraded from an ideological mission to a means to reach the end. As has her book *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy (2006)* combined history, reportage, and travel writing, Thapa's *Tilled Earth* tries to record the historical fragments not through the life of the king but from the experience of common people. She has great sympathy to her characters. In her fictions, she expresses her pain, frustrations, and dissatisfactions, emotion of hatredness and mood of sorrow. Therefore, she favors the voice of marginalized people that challenges the ideology of those who are in power.

In her stories like "The Secretary of The Student Union Makes a Career Choice", "Friends", "In This World As Hard as Beetle Nut" and "The European Fling" she selects very common people and most of the time they are dream-differed people. They are deceived by different circumstances and found to be leading a dissatisfied

life. She chooses such situation and instances where her characters are found (mis)guided by false ideologies which are most of the time found to be false.

The interpretation of a text helps the reader understand the meaning of a text. Knowledge of a text description and of relevant historical context and references presupposed must be supplied before interpretation begins. The interpreter's task is to make the text speak again and again in a diverse way for any one else. It is a challenging job to interpret a text because the social, historical, personal context and other possible phenomena that the writer had undergone through should be kept in consideration. Perhaps that was the reason Derrida quotes Montaigne in his essay "structure, sign and play in discourse of human science", and says "We need to interpret interpretations more than to interpret things" (108).

'Outside of a text' has great influence to make a sense of what a text is referring to. Therefore, only by reconstructing the past, we will be able to see more clearly the real meaning of a text.

Every age has certain relationships with its past. A text is a thing that records the events of a particular time and place. Nevertheless, the writer could not go beyond the society nor could the text cross the boarder of socio-cultural horizon. Historical force shape literary text and the text reflect the historical force. The depiction of real people, similar political events, economic developments and such things makes a work more as a historical text. In the context of the *Tilled Earth*, Nepalese history flows thoroughly from story to story.

It is historical fact that within the Shah dynasty, around 1903 B.S., Rana people came to power in the history of Nepal. Junga Bahadur Rana inaugurated the discriminatory and brutal familial rule with the help of his cunning tricks and

treacherous villainy. Nepal had to go through the cruel rule of Rana regime for about one hundred and four years. When Junga Bahadur Rana came to power, he changed all the previous social and political systems and imposed an unequal law to people. Banning all schools, the succeeding Rana rulers scatter the myth through different means about the divinity of their ruling rights. Discourses have ideology which construct truth and ruth has power. The Rana -created ideology has cast a shade to the reality of society and hegemonized people's mind. This is why, Heera Maharjan highly respect his former patron Shree Dhar Jung Rana even after his death. Heera's creativity is paralyzed with the imposition of the false ideology. Manjushree Thapa describes it in her story "Heera Maharjan Loses His Way" in the following manner: "He did not want to be late for the feast offered on this day once a year, on the death anniversary of his former patron Shree Dhar jung Rana, a man of such infinite fortune it was said he had owned a house in all seventy-five district of the country" (2).

Heera Maharjan, a prolific woodworker is in service of a Rana family member. While working in that family his mind is totally paralyzed by Rana ideology. This is why, he regards his master as a man of such 'infinite fortune', for he owns houses in all seventy-five districts of Nepal.

Manjushree Thapa mocks up on the ideology created by Rana regime. She is dissatisfied with the situation where even now people show high respect to those tyrants. Heera's story is also the glimpse of the history of that era which tells about the rapid growth of urbanization in the Kathmandu Valley. The open fields before a year have now covered with houses and even the local inhabitants lose their way. The field no longer exists now. Everywhere there is house and house.

The Rana regime was overthrown by people's revolution in 2007 B.S. but the discriminatory ideology did not sweep out. Women, dalits, and indigenous people

were pushed to far back, and this system got a long-term continuation. Women were taught to worship men. It was assumed as a duty of a woman. In "Soar", a story in this anthology, Manju writes, "There was such resilience-in Nepali woman. The maid was lithe despite being middle aged" (4). They do not know even that they are dominated and oppressed. The social discrimination against the woman has not been stopped. Witch system is another example of this discrimination. Even now, the pages of newspaper are covered by the news concerning violence against the woman. Manju states such example in the same story. The title of the news in the newspaper 'Woman Considered Witch Forced to Eat Faeces by Villagers' (4) is a good example of this sort. Such incidents were common to the people since they were happening from long past.

Manju intends to relate such incidents with the social context of Nepal where many people are poor and uneducated. Women are dominated. She questions: What is the reason behind all these things? Why do women have to bear this discrimination? Why they are not free? Why youths are depressed? To find answers of these questions it is necessary to point back to the social and political history and the cultural beliefs (ideologies) in the context of Nepal.

History shows that, since the beginning of feudal system, the women are being under domination of man. The one who tries to go otherwise of the so-called social rule is blamed as witch. Moreover, witch is commonly believed of having some craft that can suffer people. And it was obvious that any one, who don't like the woman, could go against her because of their social affiliation to go against her face to face. This is why the woman in the news in *The Kathmandu Post* is forced to eat faeces by the villagers in the story "Soar". The woman is alienated from society and dominated

in this way. Manju subverts the ideology of witch commenting it through the mouth of an educated girl who reads the newspaper headlines with a critical undertone.

During the Rana rule, school and educational institutes were completely closed. Gaining education was blamed as illegal activities. People were living a life of a slave. Women were thought as a means of entertaining males. This is why most of the Rana and Shah Kings had more than two wives. The situation of the country was going worse. For the first time in the history of Nepal people fought against the discriminatory rule of Rana regime in 2007 B.S., which was followed again by the peoples' revolution in 2046 Bs. The continuous coming and going of the Democracy and coming again over the span of Hit Bahadur Khadka in thapa's story "Solitaire" refers to this fact.

The first revolution overturned the Rana regime and established Democracy in Nepal. People became free from the chain of Ranas. Education became open for all. Many schools were opened and the children of common people started going to school. However, there was lack of quality education and still there was racial and sexual discrimination inside educational institutions. The democracy did not last for long. The ambitious ruler King Mahendra dismissed the then primeminister B.P. Koirala from his post with the help of his Royal Nepalese Army and started ruling autocratically. He also banned social and political activities and declared them as anti-national movement. The social problems remained the same. The practice of discrimination on the ground of race, cast, culture and ethnicity was still at work. The discarding of the Dalit student in school is reflected through the recollection of Keshav's past school life in the story "The Sound That the Tongue Learns to Make".

Manju spines her outlook on the problem of racial discrimination in schools in the Punchayat system in the story "Sounds". Keshav, a Nepali boy, recalls back his

school days. He says that there was such rule in the school that "banned dalit students from entering the classrooms or sharing tap water" (17). This story exemplifies best the working of the discriminatory ideology concerning the hierarchy of cast which dehumanizes the so-called untouchable cast of people and serves the interest of those who are at the high level in the social rank.

Thapa's *Tilled Earth* includes those historical facts, which, the so-called history of Nepal fails to include. The peasant land, innocent people and their educational status, grievous poverty and many aspects of village life is pictured and analyzed with a realistic detail in almost all stories.

Class conflict and unequal distribution of the wealth was also causing problem in society during those days in Nepal. The children of well to do family were given much care on the education while the children of poor were deprived even from gaining basic education. In the story, "I Don't Like Shanta Khanal" Manju depicts the situation in this manner:

We all laughed at the boy, who was so stupid he cried. Sir goes to Shanta's house twice a week to coach her math, her house is on the hill and her father has even got taxi. [...] Shanta Khanal gets better grades than us because her father pays for private tuition. I stole her maths book at recess when no one was looking. It was so new. (68)

Those students who were from weak financial background could not perform well even if they join to school. Some of them do not have book also. If they have, they were torn. So the newness of Santa's book tempted the 'I' character of of the story who stole Santa's book one day. This incident could be analyze as class conflict in micro level in the sense that the have not's stole the book of haves.

The pathetic situation of educated people is also exemplified here. Why does the math teacher go to teach the daughter of a millionaire after school? What was his problem so that he had to lose his dignity as a public school teacher and visit as a paid worker into the house of a millionaire? Manju has tried to analyze them from the depth.

Manjushree Thapa has very carefully set a background for her book on Nepalese history. She starts picturing Nepalese society beginning from Rana regime, passing through active monarchy during Panchayat system and ending in the apex political turmoil during Maoist insurgency.

The Panchayat system of regime lasted for about 30 years in Nepal until people revolted against its brutality in 2046 B.S. This revolt became successful to reestablish the lost democracy in Nepal. A new hope circulated into citizens. A new constitution is declared and people voted for their representative to form House of Representatives with hope that this new government will bring a great positive change in the life of the people. Instead the leaders of the political parties only remained busy on dirty pranks of selfish politics. None of the government after this lasted to their full term. Many types of government formed and dissolved. So "scores of ministers" passed in the single life of Mr. Hit Bahadur Khadka in 'Solitair'. Dirty games were practiced in the name of politics. The question of development and transformation of country towards new light became secondary in comparison to their selfish private and party profit. Social discrimination in terms of race, cast, culture, sex and ethnicity was same to same. All hopes turned into despair. In this situation, people wanted a new revolution. The Communist Party Nepal (Maoist) chanced to lead the movement and started a bloody revolution. A dreadful battle held all over the country especially in the western part of Nepal where people were most suppressed, oppressed and were

untouched by the development. The Nepalese police could not control it nor the RNA. The mobilization of army against people resulted to the rapid growth of revolution. Change was inevitable. National media was busy on expanding false ideology that created confusion on people.

The effect of propaganda created by national and other imperialists' media during the period of Maoist insurgencies upon the people of the world in 50's era is also shown in the story "The Sound That the Tongue Learns to Make". Before going to visit the remotest hilly area, Sara, a tourist from America, asks about the possible presence of Maoists in that area. Now she is confirmed because "she had heard from all the expats in Kathmandu that this trail was safe. There were no Maoist (t)here" (7). Foreigners are scared because they had heard that there are Maoists who are cruel and they misbehave people. It was the propaganda created by the imperialists and state controlled media because then Maoists were no more than just poor people of Nepal fighting an armed battle for equality, emancipation, and justice. Thapa herself has stated in a context that if she has born as a girl in such a remote rural area and was poor and uneducated she would have joined in the Maoist.

Thapa's insight is very keen upon the frustration, unemployment, and many social problems during that time. She brings different reference to depict different challenges beard by Nepalese youth in the decade of 50s in the history of Nepal. The system of unequal marriage was still in practice in Nepalese society. It is felt quite natural to have wide age difference between two couple. Even those so-called educated and politically conscious people follow this practice. This historical fact has been exemplified by the writer in the story 'Nineteen Years His Junior'. Urmila, a girl of around twenty, had got married with a party's central committee member who was nineteen years senior to her. Hardly, we can think a boy marrying a girl nineteen years

to his senior but it is common to think the same in case of a girl. Thapa has casted a critical outlook onto such ideology.

Political leaders were not sure about the future of their politics and career in the decades of 50s. Nepalese politics had melted like the ice in the midday sun. Day after day, month after month new governments were forming and dissolving. Once a party got chance to make his government the people supporting that party shamelessly involve into politics to get better job through their relation to the party but if the government is dissolved people come out to enchant slogan to prove failure to the newly made government. Nepalese politics has been sacked from its ideological motivation and turned to be a means to get rich overnight. This is why 'Ramesh' gets into politics again in the story "The Secretary of The Student Union Makes a Career Choice" after the failure of the government of his opponent parties.

Some of the stories in this anthology also covers such story which also talks about the bad habit and jealousy housed in the mind of Nepalese people. After being deceived by his own supervisor, Kamal, a computer-graduated boy expresses his bitter experience that "how small people think here and how they destroy others to make themselves feel good" (51).

The painful picture of backwardness of Nepalese civilization and the underlying ideology into it is shown with vivid example in the story "The Three Hundred Rupees". Rohit, a new visitor to Kathmandu, gets on a three-wheel auto-rickshaw to reach at Chetrapati and was victimized by such situation. As he got into that vehicle, the driver told him to close the door in an irrespective manner. He was supposed to say 'would you mind closing the door please?' but the driver says, 'close the door'. The other things he came to approach in the vehicle were very shameful.

Manju writes:

The inside of the rickshaw was lively, with red and yellow linoleum mats. The walls were plastered with pictures, pictures of naked woman. Rohit first thought was, how shameless! What if he had come with his wife or daughters? How humiliating that would have been! Shyly he examined the pictures. One salacious drawing had a naked woman holding a giant cigarette between her legs. (56)

Manju tries to criticize the people in power who dominate the poor people and deprive them the light of education and economic opportunity. It was not the fault of the driver because he himself was ignorant of the social effect of his actions or he was the prey of it. It was the fault of the system -social and political- that deprived him from getting such critical knowledge and learning the so-called good manners. He was poor and it was acceptable in his cultural milieu. Perhaps, this is why very often we happen to see such things inside vehicles in the cities like Kathmandu.

The driver again continued behaving on his own manner. He spat from the vehicle roughly. Manju writes, "The driver leaned out and spat, and Rohit saw the saliva streak past him" (56). Representation of this context has also its political references. The spitting of the driver has its symbolic meaning. It refers to the driver's extreme hatredness toward the so-called civilized society. He hates the civilization where many poor people like him are deprived of so many social and political rights. They are made poor and are dominated. Since they had to work in the smoke and dust of the city. So sneezing and coughing is natural to them. Could they go to a bathroom to cough and spit into it every time they cough? Is it possible for them? Really, it is impossible!

The people, in power and are educated, construct ideologies that are followed by powerless and marginalized one. That ideology takes things in granted and

declares something as true. That level us of being 'false' or 'non social' or the like if it is not in accordance to the ideology. The spitting of the driver in "The Three Hundred Rupees" is just an action of throwing of unnecessary saliva from the mouth.

Civilization is not the saliva. It is equality; it is commonality between people of the society and nation. In this way, Manju has successfully subverted the ideology of so-called civilization in the eyes of the elites.

The discourse of marriage has been subverted in an artistic way in the story "Love Marriage". It is pervasively believed in Nepalese societies that the arrange marriage is the best system of marriage. Generally, we see that the arrangement of marriage is often occurs in condition of how much profit will the bridegroom get after the marriage. It happens with a selfish condition regardless of the sentiments of the two. The bride is asked whether she has all the thirty-two attributes or not but the groom is never asked such thing. Therefore, Manju, after knowing the deeply hidden black aspect of arrange marriage. She writes, "That was the first time I thought about how loveless arrange marriage were" (74).

It is also a painful historical fact that Lumbini, the birth place of Buddha, is losing its purity for the last few years when the big constructions project started around the birthplace of Gautam Buddha. The writer has found no spiritual connection between Buddhist ideology and those big Monasteries and Bihars. Rather, the simplicity and greatness of Buddhist ideology is mocked by artificial glamour of those structures. The suffering and pain of Hindu and Muslim religious minorities of the area is simply ignored. Their lack of good school, the poverty they are experiencing, and the problem of unemployment felt by the youths of that area proves the building as a useless and meaningless house. it is symmetry. Manju has even questioned to the facts available about different activities concerning Buddha since

his birth to this era. They were misleading also. She found some of the buildings are only like the grave. So the ideology on the purity of the birthplace of Buddha has been subverted in this story.

Not only this, Thapa has also cited the involvement of her characters in different NGOs, which are currently working in Nepal. Many of them are found to be working in different remote part of countries for the sake of the social welfare. Governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and international non-governmental organizations are also the subject mater of new historicist reading. The motifs of these organizations, the role they are playing in the society, their impression on people have many things to do. They have certain politics. Most such organizations are found to be working with hidden motifs under certain disguise identity. They are not only NGOs but FGOs also. In this context, a critic Roshan Kissoon, in one of his articles in "The Mukti Yatra" writes, "The term NGO is really a misnomer, as they are really FGOs or Foreign Governmental Organizations" (25). So, Manju is dissatisfied with the unnecessary intervention of foreign institutions in our social and religious affair. She wants to say that these institutions are not only assisting us rather they are creating a misbalance in all aspect of our life and fulfilling their selfish aim. Perhaps, this is why, many construction projects are running in the Lumbini area with the name of Lumbini Master Plan Commission, under UN. The Lumbini Development Committee is in New York. "Five years, and over a million dollars, were spent on producing the Lumbini Master Plan" (112). However, the poor people of Lumbini are still poor. The big buildings are mocking their poverty. Thapa's mistrust on NGO might have come from her own bitter experience of working in different NGO sectors. They pay well but make people a carrier of their ideology. In

this way Manju subvert the concept regarding the NGO and INGO as self less social service organizations and reveals their real nature.

The revolutionary writer Manju does not like women being teased, vexed, and insulted by boys. She wants change; she wants revolution in the attitude of people. She finds that even the educated women are not conscious of their social position and rights. They want men as their guardian thinking that female are not sufficient to protect their own life. The ideology that education gives critical outlooks to people is subverted here. The newly appointed chemistry professor was thankful for the protection the man provided her in a story "The Newly Appointed Chemistry Professor". To think as if he had saved her from mischievous boys is false consciousness.

Manju questions, why the newly appointed chemistry professor thought that way. Since women themselves are sufficient to do for themselves, they should not think that male people are their savior. It is only male ideology to make them think powerless. This is why *Tilled Earth* is her endeavor to subvert such ideologies and beliefs of people.

Sometime history comes to be the central concern of Thapa's works. As her previous works like *Forget Kathmandu* and *The Tutor of History*, Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth* is also a social saga, which carries multiple themes and heterogeneous contents ranging from political to social and religious ones.

The images and narratives do important cultural work in a text. They function as a kind of workshop where cultural problems, hopes, and obsessions are addressed or avoided. So a text should be based on its historical contexts and at the same time it struggles to do the work of literature, it should reflect society and try to work

through it. What the characters do and what they do not do should be interpreted through the contemporary cultural eyes.

The entire volume sets the mood of frustration, dissatisfaction, and the feeling of lost. When hope turns to be despair; when there is no one to share the pains, when one's dream collapses and ambition has broken into pieces they live a life that is meaningless for them. Many characters in different stories of this anthology are living such life. Just a representation of the life of those defeated is a kind of challenge to the so called official history writing. It is a new historicist way of history writing too.

Hit Bahadur Khadka, a former clerk at the ministry of home affairs, is now indifferent of the on going movement in Nepal. He rather learns to play solitaire on the computer. He is frustrated of the on going political movements around country. He does not care them. Manju writes:

Democracy had come and gone and come again over the span of his carrier. Movement had started, a war had been fought. Scores of ministries had passed through his life. Nineteen and a half years had waited for visitors. He had more six months left till retirement. He was learning to play solitaire on the computer, late in life perhaps. (5)

It is his frustration and distress towards political movements, which makes him to be indifferent of it. His enthusiasm has been dead. Now he is living a retired politically conscious life.

In another story of this anthology "The Secretary of The Student Union Makes A Career Choice", Ramesh, a multi talented student and a former secretary of the student union, makes a carrier choice. His dialogue with his mother creates a pain into the heart of anyone who reads it. His main problem is that he is unemployed even

having multiple skills. His restlessness and shifting choices are got expressed with the crafted hand of Manju in this manner:

Ramesh had left the hostel to buy a back up battery so he could work on the computer even when the light went out, but he had come back with a bag of fresh vegetables. It seems to indicate to him that he was not sure what to do in life. It was true: Sometime he thought he should work in the software industry; other times he thought he want to be an actor. He did not know anyone in the cinema industry who could get him a role. (29)

Ramesh is good at doing many things. He is a software engineer, a good actor, a scientist, a novelist, a painter, a yoga teacher, an anthropologist, and also a psychiatrist. However, he was employed nowhere. So, once his mother had told him “your problem is that you have too many talents” (30). His skills couldn’t sustain his life rather it has created problems. Manju seems to be asking questions: do skills make us independent.

Another story, "Friends", depicts a painful picture of a young computer programmer. Who had ambition to be (study?) in England because some of his close friends are living in different foreign countries like UK and the USA. He is Kamal Malla, who “strolls by Tenzing’s store every evening, on his way back from work. He is charmed by this part of city, so different from his own staid, duty bound part of Kathmandu” (33). His pain is expressed when he views the politics of Nepal while talking with his friend, Hrishikesh. He says, “We could do programming in Nepal, too, but the government is too unstable – who would like to invest money? Every six-month a new government” (40). Kamal had applied for Thailand, but his supervisor

hid his letters from there. As he noticed about it, his all hope dies. In despair, he makes his mind to start a new business. Manju reports:

If nothing ever comes of the Asian Institute of Technology – AIT, AIT – he could resign from work and start a business – may be a computer store – to support himself anyhow. And the worse come to worst, he'd do what it took: he'd become a partner in his uncle's new bakery. (45)

Manju Shree Thapa generalizes the problem of youth in these particular historical situation. Youths are not getting a suitable job to be involved into. On his anger, in the story, Kamal murmurs with himself telling that:

My parents are proud I am a computer engineer. It is big thing for them. But if I have to spend my life at this kind of job, doing nothing, earning one-two thousand, I feel why I studied? Why I worked so hard? He tried to smile, but could not, and continued, I do not want to spend my life thinking twice before having a cup of tea. Every ten rupees is a big thing when you work in the government. (47)

The message these stories try to pass is that from the view point of the marginalised people the commonly accepted set of ideas about education, skills job and employment are not true. They are partially true and they are true only for those people who are enjoying power.

Frustration and unemployment are the central issue in most other stories also. *Tilled Earth*. To the question of Omnath, B.B. Khatri, a lyricist in the story "In This World as Hard as Betel Nut", answers that, no one had given him inspiration rather they gave suffering and pain to him. He questions, "What inspiration, where? I do not see. Only suffering, pain, and who wants to hear about that? And get more depressed

they already are!”(85). He, therefore, does not want to sing a song on the subject of suffering and pain. Khatri's comment indicates that the pain and suffering is the most common things in everyone's life. The so-called democracy and development and use of modern scientific technology do not necessarily bring happiness in the life of the common people.

Cities are growing in Nepal; highways and subways are getting filled with expensive vehicles; people seem to be happier and prosperous than before. However, Manju mocks to these people and sceneries and tries to show the inner reality of the people by depicting their life full of pain. Majority of the people are living a life of suffering. They have problem of hand to mouth but the majority of marginalised sector is hidden by the handful of upper class people in representations like history and literature. The dialogue between Omnath and B.B. Khatri bring this issue to the light.

Likewise, Manju's camera has not left anyone while focusing on the different problems of the people in the society. A retired government official feels himself alienated in Lumbini during his visit there. He comes to approach very big big buildings on the one hand and the lack of proper school for poor people on the other. People were busy on constructing Buddha Bihar and Temples around Lumbini under supervision of Lumbini Development Trust, to develop Lumbini into an international pilgrimage site, as for UN master plan. Manju makes him comment that millions and millions of US dollar is being spent on the monastery of the Monastic zone but the common people are living a miserable life. She says: "Rupandehi district has a higher than average population growth rate, but a lower than average percentage of economically active people. Over seventy-five percentage of people here relied on subsistence farming" (121-122).

The man is frustrated because his country had not done any things to him. Now he is retired but nothing is in his hand as the return for his lifelong service to government. He expresses his dissatisfaction with the following words:

This country needs me, it needs people like me. It should be grateful that I even live here any more. How many secretaries have taken green cards and move to America? Am I like that? Did I line my pocket when I had a chance? I have devoted all my life to serving my country and now what does my country do? Just discard me like a used rag. Just leave me to wait for my death... (128)

When the state appears to be indifferent to its people, the citizens do not get any reason to be proud of their own country. This is the best example of the situation when even after serving to the nation for life long time how Nepalese people are being helpless. Many patriotic youths of the country have done many things for the sake of their country, but in the time of need, it turns its head to other side. This is why; youth are declining to foreign countries. They are highly aware of their condition. However, there is no way out. The whole state craft is under control of some handful of corrupt political leaders .They always distribute a false dream and say "We are the poor people of a poor, developing country" (133) but do nothing.

Thapa concludes that the poverty, unemployment and frustration of people were the main causes of beginning of the Maoist insurgency from western hilly region of Nepal covering the whole country. In one context she has told that, if she had been born as a girl, to a poor family, in a remote area, and had uneducated and unemployed, she would have certainly been a Maoist. The state ideology in those era that to be a Maoist is to be a terrorist is subverted with Manju's stories.

Thapa's characters are found longing to pull the past and future in to the present. They fail to do so and the story suffuses with sadness that finds expression through that eyes for telling details is not an exactly hopelessness. As with the shopkeeper in the story "Friends", in each of these stories there is an acute desire for something better in higher order of personal politics. It is a desire that remains often unfulfilled leading people towards deeper frustration but just the articulations of it through lived lives is a perfect measure of Thapa's empathy as a storyteller.

Depiction of such inner reality challenges the ideology about Nepal as a small, beautiful and prosperous country. She questions that if there is such pain into the heart of the people noone could say today's Nepal as beautiful and prosperous country. Instead, it is ugly, corrupt and full of pain and suffering.

The voice of diasporas and marginalized people are the dominant issues in Thapa's work the *Tilled Earth*. As this book has born in the era of globalizations, it is very natural to bring forth such issue that has pervasive effect in today's society. People believed that the financial prosperity and a chance to get into foreign land for study bring a higher satisfaction. So, most of the students aim to be either of an American or of the European country. She has subverted this assumption by portraying people sink into sorrow in the western lands. Foregrounding the voice of diaspora itself is subversion of traditional way of the history writing because it deals only the dominant race, culture and empire.

Those people who have left their native land and now they are living in a distant land with painful feeling of lost and nostalgia in "other's" land, are diasporas. Manju herself once being a diaspora has depicted the feeling of such people in the story like "Sounds That The Tongue Learns To make", "Friends", "The European Fling" and many other stories in this collection. When a person loses its cultural roots,

s/he finds herself nowhere. Such persons suffer by nostalgia- a deep longing for the lost blissful past. The people of this era have a compulsion to stay over there in a foreign land to fulfill their ambitions. When they find themselves into a hybrid cultural zone – a person of both identity or none of any fixed identity -they became dissatisfied with their choice. The feeling of alienation haunts them and they start creating their homeland into imagination. Michael Ondaatje has created his homeland by involving into different activities like collecting photograph, talking with older person, listening to their saying, in his book *Running in the Family*.

Salman Rusdie, a well-known English writer, has undergone the same feeling of loss of his homeland. He expresses in his different novels. In his non fiction work *The Imaginary Homeland*, he creates a homeland by fusing his imagination with some reality of the past. Homeland is homeland that is full of cultural and geographical roots that one loses while living in a foreign country. *Tilled Earth* is also a book where its characters are in search of their lost self-identity.

There is a common belief among the people that material prosperity of the foreign land comforts one's life. It gives all kinds of satisfaction. So People imagine the happy life in a foreign land and want to be there. Manjushree thapa wants to say that the suffering and pain of being alone and the "other" in a foreign land is more than the happiness it gives. Not only in the land of other but also inside the country of one's own a person feels alienated when he found the place and the people in their odd. Such people could be said as internal diaspora. In many of her stories such internal diaspora are found living an alienated life inside the country. Depiction of the diasporic people itself is a great challenge to the world history since it never accounts their life into its page. Diaspora are marginalized and some what forgotten in

the traditional history. It matches with the aim of the writer who always raises the voice of the marginalised and subalterns.

It will be relevant to cite some lines of Dr. Sanjeer Upreti from his article in *The Kathmandu Post*. He views the *Tilled Earth* as a literature of diaspora:

It is possible to describe manjushree's stories as examples of what has been described as the literature of diaspora. Her stories – specially the ones like 'sound', 'The Tilled Earth' and 'The European Fling' represent the sense of alienation, nostalgia and a search for cultural roots that trace the work of diasporic writers such as Ondaatje and Rusdie.

Writers who imagine their homeland from foreign – and at least partially alien cultural location. At the same time stories like "In This World As Hard As Beetle Nut" and "The Buddha in the Earth Touching Posture" show that one can become a cultural alien within one's own land and peoples. (4)

Thapa's heart is filled with such feeling of diaspora. As we know that Manjushree Thapa was grew up in Canada and the United State as her family immigrated there. Most of her early life, she passed in foreign land during her study. She lost her cultural root. She wants to know about people and culture in Nepal and tries to involve into it but her foreign study and her inner transformation as diaspora caused difficulties adapting into it. Perhaps, this is why, she appears to be critical of her own society. Therefore, a mixed expression of criticism and loving of the native society is the characteristic of Thapa's stories.

Sarah, a foreign girl in one of the story "The Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make" tries to comfort herself by learning to speak Nepali with the help of her

Nepali guide, Keshav when she feels alienated during her visit to some remote western hilly region of Nepal. Even though she speaks a little Nepali, her speech lacks the flavor of culture. When Keshav says 'timi mero saarah sansar hau', she could not feel that he is telling she was his entire world. The charm of the rural house and the light of innocent heart could not drag her here forever. As she came to know about literacy of village people, the wage rate of the workers, the political movement in Nepal specially yet unsolved Maoist problem and the black cloud of uncertainty in the sky of Nepal she feels frustrated. Therefore, she immediately replies him telling 'Djaane' –meaning, certainly go – when Keshav asks, "Bholi Jaane?" Shall we return (go) tomorrow?

the story 'Friends' brings together many people like: Kuber Sharma, Dilip Basnyat, Lal B. Rai and Hrishikesh Pandey who had once lived far from their homeland and also those who are still roaming around the street of Thamel like: Tenzing Namgyal, a Tibetan boy, and other foreigners in this city of hybridity. They share their pain with the coffee and deeply sink into their imagination of their lost cultural land.

Kamal Malla, a computer engineer, is living a painful life in Nepal as most of his friends left him and went to foreign land. He feels alienated and lonely in his own homeland. A computer bachelor, he has been employed in a lowly paid job and has deceived by his own supervisor. Since then he abandons his dream to go to Thailand and starts a shop. He is poor and indebted and so is alienated. He says, "What I have is something else a life filled with debt and obligation. Alone all day I now sell books, magazines, tapes, and also Johnson and Johnson sun block cream, Nescafe, Kraft cheese, Pantene pro-v shampoo. But I still can't pay back our debt" (53).

Kamal's imaginations of foreign land and Sarada's experience of it and Gyatso's reminiscence of his cultural past has contrasted in the book. Kamal finds his friend in better financial position but he was living a life sink into debt. He thinks that if he had been there, he would not have to live such life. But on the other hand the pain of Sarada in foreign land is even bitter than Kamal's. After being left by her friend she easily agrees to follow a stranger, a Tibetan boy, and has sex with him. It shows how people follow different ways to kill their frustration and dissatisfaction. Foreign land does not give any satisfaction at all.

In "The European Fling" Sarada, a Nepali girl living in Europe, tries to kill her feeling of being rejected and loneliness by involving into physical intercourse with Gyatso, a boy of Tibetan origin. Very often, she thinks about Nepali people and social value system in Nepal.

Even the boy Gyatso is not happy on his foreign living though his predecessors were also living there after they leave Tibet. He has the feeling of loneliness. His thought about his homeland is stronger. While talking in a cafe with Sarada, Gyatso express his feeling of Diaspora in the following way:

‘I’ve got so many Jewish friends in new York’ he said. Sometimes I wish I were Jewish. I’ve always liked their sense of being part of a Diaspora a scattered wandering mass. Even they are not into Zionism. But I don’t know any more. I can understand people wanting to have a homeland. Some people you really belong. It would be so important to you if you don’t have one’, he said. ‘Like the Palestinians, the Kurds. The East Timorese’. He said, ‘You know I just don’t feel at home in America. (167)

Our attachment with native culture is very deep .It has lifelong effect. Lose of the cultural root creates the feeling of alienation. The material prosperity could not erase the feeling of cultural loss. Gyatso prefers to be a Jewish because they have at least the sense of being part of diaspora but he had brought up with a rich Tibetan culture.

Therefore, while contextualising her text with Nepali history people and society, Manjushree Thapa had done a detail survey from the sense of marginalized to the people in power.

The feeling of cultural alienation has suffered not only youths but also to the retired elders. The retired government officer in ‘The Buddha in The Earth-Touching Posture’ is frustrated and feels alienated from people and society. Instead of salvating him from pain and dissatisfaction, Lumbini, the birth place of Buddha cast him to sinks deep into the ocean of alienation. He even weeps thinking whatever he had done in the past.

The confusion about the life itself, longing for the bliss full past’ problems and obstacles in foreign living, the loss of identity and a space to live is clearly examined through lived life of different characters in Thapa's stories. The character ‘I’ cast her eyes into the foreign land, culture, cities, languages, the laws for alien, and almost everything into American context. Those things were completely nonsense and rather frustrating. She finds that the foreign people do not have tolerance even to listen the pain of others. In a paragraph entitled ‘Dell’ into the story, *Tilled Earth* Manju has illustrated this situation in this manner:

‘Yeah,Yeah’. ‘No way’. ‘Sure things’. ‘See you’. ‘Hey there’. ‘Later’.

‘Get out of here’. Dot your I’s and cross your t’s. Words seems to mock her when she tries to speak about her life in Nepal to one of

her housemates, Mariana, originally Russian, and now American, who seems to be irritated when she has to stop to listen. (143)

In the country like America, people do not have time/interest to listen to other's pain. She is unhappy to see the landscape of America and irritated by its people and law.

In this way the ideology which glorifies the foreign land and their material prosperity and believe that it will give a great satisfaction has subverted in the different stories of Manju. She shows the dissatisfied life of different characters. It makes readers question the common beliefs about the foreign land.

Thapa's *Tilled Earth* can be regarded as a collection of the sorrows and pains of the marginalized people. Women and Dalits are discriminated by society; and the people of remote region are totally neglected by government. They are out caste even by history and literature. Manju's siding of these voices more or less dares to challenge the so-called history. The history and the writer of the history are enslaved by power knowingly or unknowingly and so are serving them. On the process of her survey, Manju does not forget to capture the feeling of even the humble rickshaw driver. Hardly we get anything else written about their life and feeling in the so-called official history.

About the domestic violence, the social injustice, ill treatment and brutality against women are the vital issues in Thapa's *Tilled Earth* which are discussed even in other chapters of this research. Manju might have surprised by noticing the fact that people are indifferent of such news in the newspapers. It is almost everyday there are such news on the brutality against helpless woman that gets place in newspapers. They were burned, beaten severely, forced to eat faeces, chased from village, and mentally tortured but these incidents are not touching deeply to the average people.

Such incidents are thought as common incident happening everyday in every society. Why is it so? Manju questions. These incidents are heart rendering thing for a writer like Manju which she uses as a sharp weapon in her writing..

The issue of social discard against Dalit or socalled untouchable people and the obstacles created for them by society like banning them from entering into temples; restricting them to take water from tape or well; barring them from entering into houses, disallowing them to admit into school are accountable facts which make Thapa's Tilled Earth as a collection of marginal voices. It is the voice of minorities and feminity.

Most of her characters in different stories like the woodcutter and a servant Heera Maharjan, the jobless Kamal Malla, the uneducated driver in 'Three hundred Rupees' poor and war-suffered parents in 'The Girl of No Age' are some of the marginalized characters. Depiction of these marginalized people makes Thapa's work more inclined towards subaltern studies and a great effort to construct history from below.

In new historicist writing, subaltern studies aims to combat all the biases to listen to subaltern voices. Such history has denoted the limits of history writing and disrupted the disciplinary consensus among historians by supporting heterogeneity.

Devi Bahadur Rai, on his thesis dissertation on Thapa's previous work *The Tutor of History* writes that:

The discussion of elite class has been unduly left in the favor of these wretched characters leading a rampant life within frustration, intensity of feeling, and perpetual dismay. The daring choice of such technique gives a voice from the corner and it also hints the novelist's anger

against the history that talks much of elites. To do so she has come to adopt a multifaceted theme. Drawing a number of characters from the subaltern groups, she has inaugurated a novelty and in addition, it gestures the limit of hitherto established historiography. (64)

In other words, Thapa supports the subalterns and raises a strong voice from the side of subalterns. Moreover, it means to support the marginal and include them in the chapters of history. She intentionally replaces the elite class, their stories of success and a hero or the king's adventurous life from her writing that proves her aim of subversion of ideology. Not only in *The Tutor of History* and the *Tilled Earth* she has headed on the same path in her other works as well. By subverting particular ideology of a society and analyzing small incidents with their hidden politics, she prepares a whole document on the topic. Thoroughly, from the beginning to the end she has brought to light the functioning of ideological network and its hegemonic effect on the everyday life of the people. We find the underlined satire and mockery, and some time a severe eroticization of the thought and behavior of people.

Thapa's complex attitude is mirrored hither and thither in the stories. Sometime she emotionally supports the Maoists after having visited to the people of the remote region of the country like Rukum, Rolpa, Dang, Mustang and some even remotest region of the country. Making different controversial remarks and sometime supporting the armed battle by girls in the sense of their empowerment she shows of her split attitude. She explores the role of women in the extreme leftist armed insurrection and writes that if she had grown up in one of these villages, and were young, uneducated, unqualified for employment of any kind, and as a female, denied basic equality with men, she would have joined Maoist too.

She appears to be the supporter of extreme leftist wing, in her stories like "The Girl Of no Age" but sometimes she also appears to be like an orientalist because she severely criticizes the activities of the poor and uneducated people with derogatory words in the stories like "Three Hundred Rupees." Her family is extremely rightist. Her father was one of the ministers who have decided to shot people in the peaceful demonstration of 2062/063. However, Manju was walking with people even sacrificing her blood in the movement. Therefore, it can be concluded that her split personality and viewpoint is because of her internalization of the western culture and her self-revolutionary attitude towards the things around.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

No doubt, the present study seeks to prove how Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth* subverts the existing ideologies in Nepalese society. A dominant ideology is always found to be working in each society at a particular time. Thapa's *Tilled Earth* highlights the dominant ideologies and subverts them by foregrounding the voices of marginalized people.

The new historicism is the critical practice that seeks to understand the text as a process not as a passive embodiment of historical condition in which the texts are produced. This approach evaluates the text in historicity and historicity in a text. In other words, it assumes the text as an ongoing process. The meaning of the text goes on changing according to time and place. The same text refers to different things in different time and place. As there is possibility of applying multiple theories, there remains the emergence of multiple meanings from the text. New historicism brings the multiple conflicting voices to the fore. It tries to go deep into the cause of different incidents and tries to find out the politics of different ideologies and networking of power relations in the society.

Manjushree Thapa finds the problem with the ideologies prevailing in the society. She wants to bring the voice of marginalized and subalterns to the fore. The new historicist approach enables one to look into Thapa's stories in such a way. Various conclusions can be derived from a research like this, which aims at studying and analyzing the historicity as represented in the text. In this context, Thapa's *Tilled Earth* can be considered as a representative text, which recreates a slice of the Nepali history which basically covers the years from 40s to 50s. As *Tilled Earth* unfolds the

historicity, the subject of this thesis covers the analysis of the major events of the era. Manju's perception of these ideologies and her attempt to problematize them are the main concerns of my thesis dissertation.

The age during 2040 to 2050 BS in the history of Nepal was affected by different national and international politics. Manjushree Thapa, the eminent Nepali writer in English, has given a higher degree of her creative and critical expression through her text. In the light of the socio political events, her stories have been analyzed in the present study. The Heera Maharjan's story depicts how the feudal system, i.e., the Rana regime ideologized the poor people like Heera Maharjan. Some other stories in this collection like "Soar", "Solitaire" and "I don't like Shanta Khanal" show that the Panchayat system was founded on the basis of feudal ideologies where common people were disintegrating from one another on the ground of race, cast, sex, ethnicity and class.

Analyzing these issues in the question, how the writer's understanding of these situations is different from that of others and how she has subverted them in the stories are dealt in detail. Testing the event of the text by the touchstone of the real historical and social events in Nepal and judging how far the representation are found to be true have constructed the texture of the study. The rhetoric of the text, her writing style, use of symbols, metaphor, and simile are also, more or less, brought into consideration.

The word classical or classic itself refers to high. There is common belief that what is classical is great and the other is low. New historicist analysis gives more space and emphasis to what is considered low. It challenges and subverts the already established beliefs, concepts and assumptions in the traditional mode of discourse. It also disrupts the demarcation between a literary and non-literary text and also a text

and a history. Thapa frequently moves back and forth in history and literature. She sometime writes extremely short story like "The Hungry Statistician" and sometime long ones like "The Buddha in The Earth Touching Posture" in the same anthology. Her rhetoric has also played a role to meet her aim of subverting the ideologies.

Thapa's faithfulness in the representation of the historicity has also convinced me more to be involved into this research writing. The way she criticizes the ideology of society, mocks upon it and falsifies it has a strong underlying effect which subverts the ideologies prevailing in the Nepali society. In the story like "The Girl of no Age", a girl of about 8 to 12 is killed by the state but the state controlled media presents the poor girl as an armed terrorist killed in an encounter with soldiers. Manju refuses to believe the propaganda of the state media and says that the girl is an innocent village girl whose age was unknown even to her parents. She was not a terrorist. Thapa exposes how she has been ruthlessly killed by soldiers nearby her house.

In brief, Manjushree has attempted to represent the historical reality of her time, the working of different ideologies and the voice of marginalized people and finally has subverted the ideologies prevailing in the society in her *Tilled Earth*. The ideologies and the discourses of the era, i.e., 40s and 50s, have been falsified by foregrounding the oppressed voices. By raising the voice of marginalized and subalterns, the dominant voice of the powerful class has been subverted. Not only does the subversion support the subalterns but also does it assert a challenge to the traditional mode of history writing. In a way, Thapa's *Tilled Earth*, though a collection of short stories, is also the rewriting of the history from below subverting all the ideologies of the society.

Chapter V

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