

## I. The Use of Memory in Subedi's *Chasing Dreams and Dreams of Peach*

### *Blossoms*

Every event or action has some reason behind it. The act of remembering cannot remain as an exception; it may have several motives behind its springing up in the mental sky of human beings. The shoots of memory that we see in Abhi Subedi's *Chasing Dreams* (1996) and *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* (2001), too, have some grounds to stand on. Subedi's intention of using memory in these texts is to deconstruct the prevailing, hegemonic structure of history and give articulation to the subdued voices of gender, class, ethnicity and other groups of minority. In *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, Subedi makes use of cultural memory to draw the references of ancient civilization and arts, particularly of Bhaktapur city, and in *Chasing Dreams*, we see the references of the events associated with the poet's personal memory. As a poetic play, *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* sensitizes us to the conditions of arts, artists and women of ancient Bhaktapur city. Through memory, Subedi draws us close to the ancient time of Bhaktapur Durbar Square and makes it alive with the images carved in wood and stone around it. The play provides a lot of space to the pain and agonies of Maijus and the artists who spent their lives merely to raise the ego of kingship and patriarchy. The history of patriarchal feudal kingship ignores the pathos of such people. However, Subedi uses memory to hold these silences, particularly observed in the Newar culture, and sets them in contact with the consciousness of the public.

In Subedi's *Chasing Dreams*, a collection of thirteen poems, we find the use of personal memory of the poet that makes us move along with the poet's long journey of life. These poems are the natural springs out of his encounters with different critical situations of life. The poet's persona in the poems frequently remembers his mother, who inspired him in the past to seek a life 'better' and 'faster'

than he had in his childhood. As a seeker, he leaves his birthplace for city areas like Kathmandu. But beyond his expectations, he gets lost there in the "garbage hills" and feels suffocated in metropolitan layers of "invisibility" produced by disbeliefs and dishonesty among people. There are many things lost in this invisibility. However, Subedi makes them visible in his poems by the use of his personal memory.

Both *Chasing Dreams* and *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* are the poetic texts.

The former represents an odyssey of the seeker who encounters with different faces of life having both reality and myth. However, the latter represents the ethos of the Newar culture that embraces both the ego of patriarchy and the cries of Maijus and artists. In regard to *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, Carol Davis's response is notable: "Subedi's play is at once ... a harsh criticism of the historic domination of women, and a brutal demonstration of the marketing of history and heritage to foreign tourists" (189). Certainly, the text in question satisfies our critical attitude to patriarchy that dominates women merely for its own interest. It is also true that at present and in the time of the concerned text, the people were and are ready to earn money at the cost of their history and heritage. In other words, Subedi's intention behind creating the texts is to draw the readers' attention to the significance of a true history and heritage for healthy lives of human beings and their nations.

As a Director of the play, Shiva Rijal liberates the readers' minds towards understanding of the play in this way: "Directing this play for me was directing myself by exploring others' interpretations" (55). Of course, as a Director of the play, Rijal recognizes the capacity of Subedi's creative force inherent in the play that opens wider space not only for the readers and spectators but for the director as well. Such capacity of the play is the outcome of its deep attachment with sincere feelings and

pathos of human beings. The Director sees himself as a part of the organic whole that Subedi has created in the play.

What the playwright himself says about *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* contributes more to the understanding of the play: "There are innumerable possibilities for a playwright to explore and bring to focus aspects of human history, which have gone down in the pages of history as silent moments" (46). Subedi's interest in exposing the "silent moments" of human history motivates every reader to focus their critical thinking on shadows and silences of human societies. We certainly love the full moon, not the eclipsed one with the dark patch of shade. The main responsibility of a critic and playwright is, then, to make people see the whole body of moon or human history even if it is partly eclipsed or ignored.

In regard to his own poems of *Chasing Dreams* Abhi Subedi feels that "each poem represents my dialogue with the times – with the chain of events affecting my life" (5). In other words, *Chasing Dreams* reflects the journey of his life. His poems are the ideas and feelings produced in course of his passing through different faces of human society. Of course, his poems have a strange power to take us very close to the experiences and realities of a traveler who tries to move ahead in spite of his or her failures for the fulfilment of the goal set in mind. So, in one sense, Subedi means to say that these poems are the rhythms of life personally experienced in his mind while passing through different events of his life.

The responses that the texts in question have produced have certainly widened the horizon of their critical or analytical readership. However, we should keep in mind that their act of seeing the texts lacks the perspective of memory studies. If they have used the eye of memory in their interpretations of the texts, they have used it without

its association with politics. My research project attempts to see the concerned texts through memory as politics.

The objectives of the readers' study of certain texts may shape their ways of looking at them. The primary objective of my research project in relation to these texts of Subedi is to bring into light the aspects of human history that a hegemonic history deliberately leaves out to prepare the way for people who are in dominating position. Through critical analysis of the often-ignored parts that have found expression in the memory of the poet and his characters, this research aims at encouraging the subsided people to resist and deconstruct the grand narrative of the hegemonic history to brighten and widen human history as we find it growing and expanding with different steps of time. Finally, this research attempts at increasing the readers' ability to view human life with its many faces and enrich their consciousness through encounters with different layers of human life. It is clear, then, that this research seeks to focus on certain spaces of the given texts in which the memory of the speakers releases the voices that are ignored in the grand narrative of hegemonic history. For my purpose, I follow the ideas of Jenny Edkins, Avishai Margalit and other critics who believe that memory deconstructs the hegemonic history of human society. Reading *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* and *Chasing Dreams* through the concept of memory will, then, encourage me to have genuine study on the texts in questions.

My claim that Subedi has used memory in the concerned texts to subvert the hegemonic history of human society and articulate the subdued voices of the minorities gets reinforced by what Jenny Edkins argues in her *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* in regard to the function of memory: "...Practices that insist on *remembering* can be insurrectionary and counter-hegemonic. They remind us that

power is provisional and contingent..." (54; original emphasis). Of course, the act of remembering is a kind of struggle against forgetting. When human history ignores the existence of the people subordinated by the dominant power groups, the act of remembering becomes essential for them to undermine the established authority and liberate the subdued voices. While resisting through memory the hegemonic network of society is being resisted through memory, both the rulers and the ruled may realize that the power is only conditional and uncertain. Edkin's idea of resistance through memory against hegemonic structure gets further strengthened by what Sigmund Freud suggests about memory: "... repressed memories are subversive agents that cause dysfunctional behavior and even bodily symptoms in the individual. Those who suffer from repressed, traumatic memories might overreact to events in the present (qtd.in Margalit3). Freud's analytical eye towards imprisoned memories is significant for my claim in this project. Of course, the repressed memories may burst into abnormal symptoms of the sufferer's behavior and deny any boundary imposed upon them by the dominating powers. Similarly, Avishai Margalit has realized that "we usually lack an attemptive concern for the well-being of most members of the human race" (32). As we ignore others in the interest of our own well-being, that will go against the holistic sense of humanity, producing an anxiety of 'other' that will put the human society into a diseased state. Healthy human society rests on liberty in the minds of individuals maintaining a sense of love for others in the society.

The increase in the interest of oral historians in memory studies has strengthened the scope of memory as subversive agents. Being attentive to the issues of memory, they have felt oral history getting close to the role of memory, that is, to disrupt the structure of traditional makers of history. Katharine Hodgkin and

Susannah Radstone have observed the role of oral history in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* in this way:

It solicited the voices of those who have been silent and ignored throughout the centuries: the poor and powerless, workers and women who seldom have speaking parts in the historical dream. It attended to the private, the domestic, the details of daily life, rather than to great events. And it found in the memories evoked a counter narrative, a corrective to the simplifying and patronizing assumptions of the traditional makers of history. (4)

This extract shows that oral history provides a validation of memory, regarding it to be as more reliable than other things recorded in human history. The reason given above for this is that memory of oral history does not ignore the details of daily life including the private and domestic affairs that together contributed to the making of actual human history. The hegemonic way of making history works on the basis of selection and discrimination of the things around human society. However, the memory in oral history stood as counter-narrative to subvert the traditional assumptions of discrimination that have inferiorized the "others" putting some people in the privileged position. The construction of grand narrative for the structure of nationalism implies the acts of suppression and denial of what is called undesirable elements. In this procedure, those who are associated with the elite or the ruling groups are selected to be foregrounded in the narrative whereas others who compose a large portion of a nation are denied and pushed aside. Such narratives do not represent or focus on the experiences of the minority voices. In this way, the construction of nationalism produces the destruction of its large portion the details of the experiences of the marginalized mass. So, the grand narrative of nationalism takes pride in its

body eclipsed, a shining illusion in the curve with a hidden desire of having a full – moon- like posture in the world. The public memory sites like Museums, films and other such media are places not only of true memory but of intervention from the side of dominating powers. So the public articulation of memory in a national context is problematic. In this regard, Hodgkin and Radstone observe memory thus: "Memory, then, both underpins and undermines the national narrative" (170). If true memory is arrested somewhere in the national context, it gets free in the oral history in which people remember their own stories without any distortions from the rulers' side.

The act of remembering can go not only by words but by gestures, images, objects, and music. Words are themselves the symbols of limitation and selection. They cannot hold the holistic organism of human culture. However, memory with its non-verbal dream like associative power goes beyond the hegemonic structure built on the basis of selective network of verbalization. So the subversive power lies more in gestures, images, music, graffiti, and other non-verbal expression. Silence, which suggests the lack of words, is, in fact, a limitless power as it holds the organism of human history as a whole without defining the parts by producing the words that stand for the limited existence of someone or something. In this regard, Hodgkin and Radstone bring out the reference of a poem 'Between body and voice' by Assia Djébar, whose expression finds space in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* in this way, "There can be memory within silence and memory through silence (qtd. in Hodgkin and Radstone 248). What Assia Djébar has suggested through these words are well-approved by the two scholars named Hoddgkin and Radstone, who further draw the reference of music to reinforce the idea that silence and music can express more than the verbal symbols: "To continue with the reminder that 'memory is more than words', music has much to teach us about silence" (248). They mean to say that

"memory", "music" and "silence" are more expressive than the verbal symbols. It further proves that the non-verbal expressions have subversive power that can deny any kind of discriminations created by verbal networks of grand narratives in human society.

This counter-hegemonic power of memory has been highly useful to relate the past with present in terms of identity constructions. In "Finding Meaning in Memory: A methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies", Wulf Kansteiner asserts that "memory is valorized where identity is problematized" (184). The question of identity is the main issue in human society for which memory is frequently used. This is reinforced by what Anne Whitehead says in *Memory* (2009) in regard to its significance for identity formation: "Memory is concerned with the personal and is inherently bound to identity. Through memory, then, the past of the individual can be revived or made actual again, in the sense of being brought into consciousness" (7). The use of memory becomes very important part of political struggle to establish personal identity. The act of remembering the past serves the subject at present to be conscious of his or her identity. In her *Violence and the Cultural Politics of Trauma* (2007), Jane Kilby strengthens the same idea about memory: "it is no longer possible to explore memory in terms of the question of the truth of its past: rather memory is only ever a function of the present conditions under which it emerges. The past...exists only in the service of the present –day subject" (62). Kilby asserts that past is remembered not for past's sake but for present. The revival of the past is not just its repetition but its reconstruction to suit the present need. Jonathan K. Foster in *Memory: A Very Short Introduction* (2009) supports Kilby thus: "The memory... may contain some actual elements of the past ... but –taken as a whole – it is an



imperfect reconstruction of the past located in the present" (14). So, in the act of "remembering, past elements get revived to settle new construction of present life.

No doubt, in the modern political movements, the question of identity has come to be very much foregrounded. Duncan Bell too asserts its pervasiveness in the contemporary social sciences and humanities in *Memory, Trauma and World Politics*: "Identity is one of the *ur*-concepts of the cotemporary social sciences and humanities. It is usually understood in constructivist manner to refer to the relatively stable-though not essentialist-sense of 'self that either an individual or group (or both) maintain over time" (5; original emphasis). Bell's statement reflects the pervasiveness of identity question in today's social sciences and humanities. The rising concern on the issues of identity is well-evident in the contemporary social, political and cultural movements that seem to be determined to construct the identities of their own existence in the different sectors of human world. In such movements for the establishment of different identities in human societies, the role of memory has been crucial. The significance of the use of memory in the placement of identity is clearly emphasized in another statement of Bell: "Memory plays a central role in virtually all conceptions of identity" (5). In this context, what Allan Young says about memory is worth notable: " It [memory] is the proof as well as the record of the self's existence and the struggle over memory is the struggle over the self's most valued possessions" (quoted in Bell 5). In other words, memory can be used to approve the self's existence and its belongings. In fact, memory is drawn to strengthen the identity of the self as well as community. Allan Megill's argument emphasizes the idea in this way:

Memory is valorized when identity is threatened. Memory may well be central to the construction and reproduction of political identities over time but in moments of crisis people hark back to the past with

amplified intensity. As identities are challenged, undermined and possibly shattered, so memories are drawn on and reshaped to defend unity and community. (Quoted in Bell 6)

Megill's argument justifies the use of memory in constructing and reproducing the political identities. He emphasizes the inseparableness of memories and identities. Whenever identity is threatened, memory gets valorized to defend the existence of certain individuals or communities.

As a hegemonic history grows with the process of subsiding the voices and identities of the minorities, the act of rewriting the history becomes necessary. The inclusive history-writing process cannot be accomplished without searching the hidden turbulence of the marginalized people. In this context of rewriting history, memories prove to be the search lights to make us see where and how the undercurrents of subsided people flow in human society. Realizing the significance of inclusive history, David W. Blight highlights the study of memory, thus, in *Memory in Mind and Culture*: "We should write the history of memory, observing and explaining the turbulence we find" (249). Put differently, memory has the capacity to hold the hidden turbulence of people, and history-writing process should use the memories of certain communities or societies so that there will not remain any kind of anxiety waiting to be rewritten in the days to come.

Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone seem to be aware of what I have emphasized above in regard to the use of memory to include the voices of minority groups in alternative narratives. Their arguments justify the association of memory with subordinated people's awareness of alternative ways of subverting the hegemonic history. Their ideas about such alternative association go clearly in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*. They hold that there is "the association of memory with the

capacity of minority or subordinated peoples to generate alternative narrative of their –own pasts" (7). Or, the alternative narratives cannot grow against the hegemonic structure unless they are in touch with memories of the concerned groups or communities.

However, the memory is not to be considered as a process that simply draws the past life as it is. When we are talking about the use of memory to fulfil some present needs or interest, the emphasis should be given on how the past is refigured in memory. Anne Whitehead is already aware of this point, which she presents in her *Memory*: "Remembering represents a process of reflection upon an image of one's past" (52). So, it is not that memory simply produces an image of the past; rather it necessarily associates it in the process of reconstructing the present. This further suggests that reproducing past memories results in reconstruction of present life.

Reproduction of the past is, in fact, very much concerned with reconstructing the personal identity at present. In regard to personal identity, Anne Whitehead holds that "to remember is to be able to relate one incident or episode to another, and thereby to produce a version of the self" (63). The act of remembering in itself is an associative process that relates one incident or episode to another for the construction of the self. "For David Hume, it entails that what we term the 'self' is inherently a narrative or fiction, composed of a multiplicity of individual descriptions which are linked or threaded together along complex chains of association" (Whitehead 63). Whitehead's reading of David Hume reveals the point that in the process of making a personal identity, there goes a highly associating course that embraces the multiple descriptions of an individual creating his or her many faces of realities. This evidences that the act of remembering does not have to be accurate or verifiable. This is reinforced by what Avishai Margalit asserts about memory in *The Ethics of Memory*:

"Memory, then, is knowledge from the past. It is not necessarily knowledge about the past (14). Margalit holds that there is difference between memory and facts of history. Memory involves an associative reflection upon the past that distils into some achievement for the subject at present. Regarding the personal memories, Carrie Hamilton brings out the reference of Alessandro Portelli in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, where Portelli offers his view on memory in this way: "... memories which are factually inaccurate, but which tell their own history of political fantasies and frustrations.....these stories are not about how history went, but about how it could have gone; their realm is not reality, but possibility" (qtd. in Hamilton 122). In this way, we can say that repressed memories would, in fact, search the other possibilities then the actual hegemonic realities in the process of getting reflected in the personal memories.

Thus, with the act of remembering, repressed memories get alive with several alternative possibilities to subvert the imposed ideas of dominating powers and, thus, prepare the way for the articulations of the subdued voices different sectors of human society. The rulers or power holders are mainly responsible for the formation of the "unconscious parts" of human history. The power holders would like to hide or suppress the unwanted forces for ever. However, for Henri Bergson, the 'true memory' of the unconscious level records every historical events:

Nothing of the past is forgotten or lost... It is 'entirely spontaneous' both in its faithful preservation of the past and in its reproduction. It becomes available to us at times when our psychic defenses are down, as in dreams, and it is of value because it represents our point of contact with 'timelessness' (quoted in Whitehead 103).

Here Bergson has used the word 'unconscious' that inclusively records all in the form of memory-images. These images are spontaneous in preservation of things and their reproduction as well. So the unconscious offers an alternative form of knowledge that naturally subverts the norms of the power holders to provide a greater freedom of expressions and construct the identities of the individuals as well as those of the minority groups.

All these things prove that "remembering is intensely political: part of the fight for political change is a struggle for memory" (54). This concluding statement of Jenny Edkins that appears in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (2003) suggests that memory as politics has very high utility in the reconstruction of human society.

After gathering different arguments on memory, I have understood that my reading of Subedi's *Chasing Dreams* and *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* from the point of view of memory studies will lead me find the evidences in the concerned texts to reinforce my claim that Subedi has used memory to subvert the hegemonic history to give articulation to the subdued voices of minorities.

I have divided the present dissertation into three parts. In addition to this introductory part, the other two parts are completely exposed to my textual analysis and evaluations of Subedi's *Chasing Dreams* and *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*. The textual analysis will certainly be limited to memory studies. In other words, I will analyse the concerned texts using the eye of memory studies. This analytical process will pass through certain structural setting: the arrangement of the thematic statements. They are distributed in the texts without losing the organism of the overall body of the dissertation that demands proper distribution of the ideas under the appropriate headings and subheadings. Since the main focus of this study is on how Subedi has used memory to subvert the hegemonic structure of history and give

articulation to the Subdued voice of the marginalized people in our society, its chapters are divided to stimulate the readers towards the formation of the anticipations in their minds of how particular part will contribute to the making of analytical organic whole of the dissertation. For example, next to the introductory section of this dissertation is the second part of this study in which I will analyze, at first, the whole text of *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* to discover the evidences to support my claim as it is mentioned above. This part of dissertation consists of four issues. They are related to articulation of women's pathos, articulating the pathos of artists, critiquing the exploitation of cultural heritage, and significance of the blend of memory and music. Through these internal analytical sections, I will see how the playwright has used *cultural memory* to revive the subdued voices of the history and critique the exploitation of cultural heritage.

My critical analysis of Subedi's *Chasing Dreams* forms another important part of the dissertation. In this part, I will go through all the poems of the book and try to analyse them to see how the poet has used his *personal memory* to resist against the subordination and exploitation of women, motherland, nature, a village boy and his friends, and cultural heritage. This section contains six issues, which are related to articulating women's pathos, construction of the image of motherland, critiquing the exploitation of nature-mother, constructing the identity of a village boy, and the issue of nostalgic memory. These points are supposed to prove as the lampposts to lead the readers towards understanding the whole organism of this dissertation.

Third chapter of my paper bears the concluding tone of the whole dissertation. It reflects my review on the whole body of dissertation to see how far it contributes to reconstructing the socio-cultural history. More importantly, this part of the dissertation is expected to provide answer to the question of how far we can be

successful in using memory to subvert inhuman hegemonic structures of our society and prepare, thus, a highway for the subdued voices to march on.

In course of the development of this dissertation, I have repeatedly used some terms which have contributed to driving the point home in the appropriate contexts of the process. One of such key terms is 'music'. I have used this term to thicken the effect of memory in the context of my analytical text. Just like the term 'memory', music has been used by Subedi in both *Chasing Dreams* and *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* for the meaning of 'denial', 'resistance' and 'deconstruction' of any kind of imposed limitations, restrictions and hegemony. Music in its pure terms of performance catches the universal rhythms of the hearts of humanity. By his subversive texts that liberate the subdued voices, Subedi intends to strengthen the sense of humanity. I have attached music with memory in this dissertation to assert the point that they are capable of forming the alternative waves against anti-humanitarian power-structures. The next important term I have frequently brought into the mainstream of my dissertation is 'silence'. The connotative range that this term covers is very wide in the context of my analytical reading of the subversive texts of Subedi from the point of view of memory studies. In the context of my dissertation, the term 'silence' is used to signify the 'unconscious parts' of human history that has been found to suppress the voices of marginalized people. Like the 'unconscious', the term 'silence' bears limitless existence having the power of denying the deliberate designs of the consciousness of the power-holders in human society. So, in analyzing the texts of Subedi from the perspective of memory studies, this term is bound to reinforce the idea that it undermines the limitations and restrictions by its oceanic waves flowing beneath the surface of human society. Thus, the term 'silence' signifies in the context of my dissertation to deny its usual sense of pragmatic world,

that is, "Mounam sweekriti lakshanam" (Silence is the symptom of acceptance; my translation). Besides this, there is another key term I have highlighted in present dissertation, that is, 'graffiti'. The significance of this term is very high in my text, particularly in the process of analyzing Subedi's *Chasing Dreams*. The term here signifies the drawings which are scratched on the side surfaces of each poem of *Chasing Dreams*. They are just like the pictures of dreams where we see everything denying its fixed form. They are the pictures captured in their motion. So, they have the quality of resisting any kind of fixed reflection of normal photo. This sliding quality of those graffiti suggests their subversive power to break down the restrictive and hegemonic structures set in society by the power-holders to fix their privileged position for ever. My next priority goes to the term 'true memory'. I am inspired by Henri Bergson's use of this term in his *Matter and Memory* (1896). My use of this term only confirms the connotation that he attaches to it. According to him 'true memory' is pure memory residing freely in the unconscious. It is entirely spontaneous in both preservation and reproduction. For my purpose, I have drawn this term into my dissertation to set it against those memories which are secured in the media of the dominating groups in human society. Hence true memory contrasts false memory. True memory exists timelessly and it can actually subvert the temporal illusion created by hegemonic society to secure itself for a long long time, which, in fact, gets never actualized. Next important term that is frequently foregrounded in the present dissertation is 'personal memory'. This term gets thickly contextualized in the course of analyzing the text *Chasing Dreams*. Personal memory in my context is the type of memory through which the past of the individual can be revived in the present process of construction of his or her existence or identity. It has the immediacy of an individual adventures that he or she encounters in course of their struggles against the



restrictive obstacles that tend to threaten their existence or identity. So the personal memory has the warmth of its subjective immediacy. Unlike the 'personal memory', 'cultural memory', which is my another selected term to give my priority to, is mainly concerned with events from a more distant past, beyond living memory (Whitehead 132). It is characterized by its transcendence. It depends upon 'designated bearers' of memory, that is, certain specialized practices and artifacts for its transmission. I have highlighted this term in my dissertation especially to analyze the text called *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* because, in this text, Subjedi has used cultural memory to revive and improve the corrupted and deadened life of present time with the sensibilities of distant past.

## II. Articulation of the Voices in Subedi's *Chasing Dreams* and *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*

By using personal and cultural memory in his *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* and *Chasing Dreams*, Abhi Subedi deconstructs the prevailing hegemonic structure of history and gives articulation to the subdued voices of gender, class, ethnicity, and so on. In *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, Subedi makes use of cultural memory to draw the reference of arts and ancient civilization, particularly those of Bhaktapur city and *Chasing Dreams* brings out the references of the events associated with the poet's personal memory. A poetic play, the former sensitizes us to the conditions of art, artists and women of ancient Bhaktapur city. Through memory, Subedi draws before us the ancient time of Bhaktapur Durbar square and makes it alive with the images carved in wood and stone around it. The play gives a lot of spaces to the agonies and pain of Maijus and artists who sacrificed their lives merely to raise the ego of kingship and patriarchy in Newar culture. In the poems of *Chasing Dreams*, on the other hand, we find the use of the poet's personal memory that makes us move along with the poet's long journey of life. The poems consist of his sincere feelings and ideas evoked in his encounters with different critical situations of his life. Inspired by his mother, he leaves his birth place for city areas, particularly Kathmandu, hoping to catch a life 'better' and 'faster' than what he has in his village. An innocent village boy, he gets lost in metropolitan city life. He perceives that though there are many mouths to speak in city area, their words fail to represent genuine ideas and feelings. In such environment, neither his own identity nor their hearts are visible. This "invisibility" of city life is made visible in the poems through the use of personal memory. While studying the texts, my attempt will be to find the traces of memory and analyze them to produce ventilations for a healthy human history.

In his *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, Subedi has used cultural memory to articulate women's pathos. It reflects the dreams arrested somewhere in the minds of women particularly under the roof of Bhaktapur Durbar that arrogantly stands on the base of patriarchal gender-pattern. The concept of gender is a culturally created thing. In patriarchal culture, the traits of masculinity and femininity are clearly defined providing special privilege to men at the cost of women. This culture defines the female as other that lacks male power that are presumed in the patriarchal logic, which M.H. Abrams puts this way: "By this cultural process, the masculine in our culture has come to be widely identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative; the feminine has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional, and conventional" (29). In *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, we see some women characters that represent the women of ancient Bhaktapur Palace. The women did not feel safe even in their own birth places. They were thought to be nonhuman beings alien to the society which was supposed to be related to their own forefathers. The concept of family was never realized in their life. In their own blood relations and family pattern, they were treated as *other*. Merely for the cause of patriarchy, they had to sacrifice their life. They were there not to reject that culture but to accept, not to speak but to work as machine being silent. When the history gets written with patriarchal hands, it very often grows as a false history that deliberately excludes the story of women who somehow hold their life with too much burden of pains and sufferings. Patriarchy seems to be very much insensitive to women's pains and sufferings. However, by using memory in his poetic play, Subedi gives articulation to such silent currents of women's life. In the play, *Second Young Woman* gets, thus, released to suggest her actual experience under patriarchy: "I sang like peach blossoms" (65). Though she finds a position in Subedi's poetry, the only thing she can

express in her life is nothing but her painful experiences. This poetic line has much strength to hold the stories of all women in patriarchy of the time referred to in the play. To feel the actual experiences of the women, we need to enter into the real state of "peach blossoms". The reality of peach blossoms is very different from most of the other blossoms in the world of plant. Most of the blossoms of other plants appear and grow with fruits in them. But peach blossoms, do not have their fruits in their life. It is only after they have fallen down on the earth that peach fruits come up. In other words, peach blossoms never see the fruits in their life time. They die away before they bear fruits. Similarly, the women's desire for living the life of a human being never gets actualized in patriarchy. This is what we feel in the words of Second Young Woman, who breaks the women's silence, which is dramatically constructed in the hegemonic history of patriarchy. The following words of Maiju in the play, reinforce the same kind of pathos that have completely permeated women's life:

Why do these eyes – seats of love, bathe in tears?

Why do these minds split like pomegranates

That crack under the pressure of sun's arms? (63)

Women's life only knows either the ocean of tears or the unbearable or fatal exploitation of patriarchy. However, Subedi releases their pathos through memory in his text where women seem to be bold enough to ask for the cause of their sufferings. Of course, Subedi's use of memory in the play has the same function as Jenny Edkins argues: "... *remembering* can be insurrectionary and counter-hegemonic"(54; original emphasis). In other words, the act of remembering is a kind of struggle against hegemonic structure that gives privilege to dominating powers excluding the minorities. Similarly, women's experiences that were pushed aside in the history of

patriarchal kingship of Bhaktapur find space in Subedi's play to resist against the restrictions on their expressions.

The marriage culture that we find in Newar community of ancient Bhaktapur does not break through patriarchal pattern but reinforces it. The story of Maijus of that time perfectly supports this idea. In this regard, the following words of Maiju in the play are worth remembering:

How many girls did leave this place?

How many are leaving now?

Is there never a bond of love

With this land here? (63)

These words reflect the hearts of all Maijus vibrating for their motherland. The flow of the words above suggests the sliding of Maijus (women) away from their own motherland towards distant unfamiliar places that feel like a dark pit that represents death or deadened state of life without a familiar language and people to speak with. The event of their going away from the birth place reflects a kind of landslide in which Maijus are getting swept away. Being overwhelmed by this gloomy atmosphere, Maiju of this poetry is searching for some sensation of love left, if any, for women in her society that could tie them to their birth place. For the cause of being women, Maijus did not have any privilege to take decision about their own life. As the time came for their marriage, they had to accept any decision taken by the patriarchal leaders of the family about their future life. They were treated just like a gift or goods liable to be exchanged at any time and places of patriarchal society. While taking decision about the plan of where they have to go after marriage, the agents of the prevailing culture did not care about whether the place was near or far. Mostly, it was the distant places that they chose for Maijus. The naïve and deadened

Maijus were made to leave their birth places, close friends and language, and in some cases, they could never return to their homes in their life. General history of patriarchy leaves out such experiences and bitter realities of women in Newar community. However, Subedi's poetic play *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* provides a lot of space for memory in which women's poetry flow freely without any hesitation caused by patriarchal hegemony. In the play, Maiju is one among other women characters. She represents the pathos of Maijus of ancient Bhaktapur. In her speech, we find an anxiety produced by the society in which she has been sliding for years. What Guard expresses about her marriage reflects the real mood of the time that suggests her uncertain and unsafe dark future:

This girl is getting married  
 And going away  
 Forever from here  
 Where she may have to sit  
 Quietly listening to a tongue  
 She's never heard before  
 She may be thinking of that time. (70)

What touches us most in this piece of poetry is the content loaded in the words "And going away/Forever from here". Patriarchy in Newar culture throws women as the pieces of stone or waste materials away forever. Here the word 'marriage' fails to represent its true meaning. In this culture, 'marriage' does not mean a new relationship between two persons, two cultures or two localities rather it means the women's disconnection from her root for ever. When a person becomes rootless, his or her life is sure to wither. As she reaches the new place, she has to remain speechless because of the language "she has never heard before" (70). So the meaning of 'marriage' in this

culture is 'death' for its women as there remain no signs of life after their marriage. In such alienated state caused by her culture, it is natural for Maiju to express such words of confusion:

Where does it all begin?

Where does it end?

Who can tell me what I am?

A river or a woman

A joy of time or a pain? (71)

These lines contribute to understanding of her position that is drifting like a leaf in the air of patriarchal sky. In this situation, she is unable to identify herself whether she is a subject or an object or other. Finally, she realizes that there is the absence of the *other* in the position of patriarchal ego though patriarchy should know that the *other* is always already implied in the constitution of self (Ricoeur 115). Dislocation of Maiju from her origin (motherland or birth place) in the name of marriage puts her existence in more critical conditions. Maiju's existence as an alienated object in her own culture is not other than the outcome of a deliberate design of patriarchy. This is what Subedi suggests in his *Nepali Theater as I See It*: "The text [*Dreams of Peace Blossoms*] is cultural construct that visualizes the mytho-poetic world of a civilization where women's woes were glossed over by the dominant luminal rituals" (162). Women's identity question is effectively dealt with and foregrounded in the play by the use of memory. Women's invisible identity gets visible on the stage of memory in the play. Maiju, the main character of the play reinforces the idea in this way:

Listen girls!

Let's stay where we are carved out ...

I'm carved out in words and memories

So I'll go as river

You are all carved on stones and wood

You stay here under the sun cover. (75)

When Maiju has had her dialogue with her father (King), who has decided her place to stay in near future, her grief catches the way that we see in the above piece of poetry. She has perfectly realized that her father will not do anything to improve her situation. So she consoles herself and other women friends with a feeling that her identity has been reflected in "words and memories," and theirs, on "stones and wood". By this poetry she is also referring to her own pathetic situation, that is, in a moment, she will be absent in her birth place for ever. Then, the only space in which she is present or formed is memory. The identity that is ignored in the grand history of dominating culture gets written in memories. This reality is recognized by Alan J. Lambert and his co-writers in the book *Memory in Mind and Culture* (2009) this way: "... the sense of who we are as a person, and our ability to predict our own future behaviours, are likely to be based in part on our memories of our own affective responses to previous events." (198). In the context of *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, the identity of Maijus and other subdued voices get articulated through Subedi's use of memory.

The historical treatment of women in Nepal's Newar society cannot escape the critical eye of Carol Davis, who teaches at Pomona College. Commenting upon the play *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, Davis argues: "The story of women's powerlessness in the face of male supremacy touches the senses of the audience, too, and wakens them to the lineage of their customs" (186). If the quality of the audiences is strong enough to penetrate into the dominating culture, certainly women's powerlessness in the face of male supremacy will affect them to have critical attitude to their own rigid



customs. She further comments on the play: "Subedi's play is at once ... a harsh criticism of the historic domination of women ..." (189). No doubt, Subedi has presented the characters, especially women characters, through memory to deconstruct the hegemonic history of male society, particularly that of Newar culture. Maiju's bold and critical expression against her patriarchal father (King) shows the idea of deconstructing the stereotypes of women imposed by patriarchy:

A woman is such a martyr  
 Whose story is not written  
 .....  
 Your concern is history  
 That is written by swords  
 .....  
 Your history is the grave of women  
 Where you write the epitaph  
 "One inside this grave was always invisible."  
 .....  
 I know you'll not do anything for me. (73-74)

The spontaneous flow of words through the lips of Maiju is like the bursting out of volcanic eruptions suppressed under the hard stony plate of patriarchal culture. Though a woman and the daughter of a king, Maiju rises in her speech without any hesitation that patriarchy usually associates with women. She is now well aware of how women have been made dull and deadened by the violent and unnatural yoke of patriarchal ego imposed on them for many years. The above piece of poetry also reveals that the arrogant history or the projections of male's ego in the human universe is just an illusion resting on the grave of women. Now Maiju is no longer in confusion that she cannot

receive any help from her patriarchal father to improve women's history. So, they have to construct their own history themselves. Such cries and critical voices of women do not find any space in the mainstream of history. However, the poetic play by Subedi has proved to be the space for women to take air for survival, recreating the women's performances on the stage of memory. Eugenio Barba is right in saying that "memory guides our actions. It is memory which makes it possible for us to penetrate beneath the skin of the times and to find the numerous paths which lead to our origins" (47). In other words, memories of past actions can guide the communities of human beings and improve the health of history of a country.

Subedi's association of Maiju with the Bagmati river further strengthens his way of critiquing the cause of Maiju's suffering in the past as well as suggesting the impurity of present which has problematized the original image of Nepal that was like the crystal water of the river in the past. Towards the end of the play when Maiju has to cross the Bagmati river to follow the dictation of her marriage culture, we see a scene in which Maiju is standing near the Bagmati river identifying herself with her motion of crystal water. She feels the music produced by the waves of the water and cries to relieve her inner motion through the tears falling down her eyes. She washed her face with the water and offers the sacred water to the sun before she speaks with Bagmati thus:

River Bagmati!

You're the dream

That flows like my dislocation

You cannot be a river

If you cannot find a space down stream

I'll carve out my space too

I'm the perpetual flow of dreams  
 Bagmati, oh, pristine river,  
 You are the stage  
 Where I shall play my own dream! (80)

The flowing quality of the river suggests mainly two things in the context of the text: one is 'dislocation' and the other is 'motion'. Dislocation suggests Maiju's separation from her beloved homeland. It produces a sad note in our minds. However, the quality of motion suggests the power of making ways and constructing life against many obstacles. This creates optimistic note in our minds. Subedi's emphasis is on the latter quality of the river that suggests the power of deconstructing the structural patterns of patriarchy and feudalism. The river flows even through the structure of rocky mountain. Feudalism and patriarchy hold or hang on the stability of their own mechanism, but the flow of river, which identifies the wave of women's minds, refuses to get arrested in the limits. While comparing women with the river by other commentators in the context of *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, Durga Prasad Bhandari produces his remark in *The Saptahik Antarang* published in 2057 that is republished in press review section of the text in question: "*Taralata Shaktiheenatako Prateek Hoina, Shaktipoornatako Prateek ho, gatisheelatako, jeevantatako prateek ho*" (Fluidity is not the symbol of impotence, it is the symbol of vitality, mobility, and liveliness; my translation). In other words, Maiju's act of identifying herself with Bagmati river produces an impression that she would not be a static character but a dynamic one making the way for herself as she moves like the river through new places towards uncertain future. Maiju seems to have realized within herself the potentiality of the indomitable quality of the river. Otherwise, she would not have shared her feelings with Bagmati river in this way: "You [Bagmati] cannot be a

river/If you cannot find a space down stream"(80). It suggests that the river is what makes its own way itself as it flows. Thus Maiju gets inspiration from the Bagmati river and seems to be ready to face whatever comes on the way to her uncertain future.

Subedi has brought out the reference of the Bagmati river not only to focus on the state of Maiju, who is going away leaving her beloved homeland, but also to make us aware of the fact that while going ahead with modernization, we are making our present life-river contaminated with the pollution of materialism. This idea is reflected in poet's expression: "But she [Bagmati] is not what Maiju anticipated thus/Maiju's stories are carved out like this" (50). The poet has compared the present Bagmati river, which is very much polluted, with the past one, which was crystal. Maiju was completely unknown to the present state of Bagmati in which the thick pollution has now completely destroyed the original life of the river. So, the image of Bagmati that Maiju had in her mind at that time is no longer in existence. Subedi draws through memory the crystal image of Bagmati river in the text to wash out the dirt of the present image of the river. In this way, he finds inspiration from the past for the improvement of the present life.

Subedi's use of memory in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* is also concerned with taking us to the distant past to capture the reference to princess Bhrikuti Devi, whose heroism, determination, and spiritual purity have soothing effect on the scars left in the cultural body of Nepal by the exploitation of women, artists, and cultural heritage. Bhrikuti is recognized as our "national heroine for her contributions to the field of Buddhist culture in Tibet, and for her strong influence in strengthening Tibet-Nepal relations through the medium of Buddhist culture and arts" (Shakya 44). Certainly, she was a heroic figure in many ways. She was capable of raising the identity of her

motherland Nepal by showing the power of her tolerance, silence and sacrifice, the properties of Buddhist culture. However, a community or a nation is diplomatically or politically constructed through the acceptance and tolerance of women and intolerance and violence of men. A nation or the rulers do not feel or count women's personal stories of sacrifices. What they are most concerned with is not women's pain but their own ego-fulfilment, and their own identity-construction. In Bhrikuti's case, her marriage with Tibetan King Tsrong Tsen Gampo was an example of her tolerance and sacrifice, not the matter of her personal choice for her own personal happiness. She decided to leave her beloved homeland in the name of marriage merely to maintain the existence of her father's kingship and satisfy the dream desire of the Tibetan King. About the Tibetan King's dream, Min Bahadur Shakya, in his *Princess Bhrikuti Devi* (1997), quotes the words of the king himself: "I have seen in a dream two women, one from Nepal and one from China, worthy of being my spouses" (51). A nation may have vision and a ruler or a man may have some desire. While fulfilling the vision or desire, the rulers cannot wait but commit violence. After he has seen the dream, he sends a mission to Nepal with the message of both temptation and warning. As the conversation goes between Bhrikuti's father and the mission, her father, being frightened by the possible attack from Tibetan king, makes an unnatural decision about his daughter Bhrikuti this way: "I am obliged to give my daughter ... you, my daughter, have to go to king Srong Btsan Sgam Po as his wife" (54-555). He further persuades his daughter this way: "Since the king of border land knows the art of supernatural science if we reject his proposal, then he will send soldiers to kill me. Being helpless, you will be snatched away. He will destroy all our kingdom. Rather than this, you had better go now" (55). It is an irony of the time that to satisfy a foreign King's personal desire, the people of another country had to sacrifice

themselves or their personal choices and desires. What Maiju says to the king (her father) echoes the voice of Bhrikuti:

Your concern is history  
 That is written by swords  
 .....  
 Oh King, don't do anything  
 I know you'll not do anything for me  
 That will alter my story  
 That you've been narrating for so long. (73-74)

As a Bhrikuti's true descendant, Maiju releases the spring of her pain before her father just as Bhrikuti in those days of the past because both are women and leave their beloved homeland for the fulfilment of the ego of patriarchal kingship. Subedi produced *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* with an understanding that just beneath the grand history of the dominant group, there flow the undercurrents of the subdued anxieties. Subedi's text receives such turbulence of the history through memory to make it healthy and progressive. Subedi's idea is reinforced by what David W. Blight suggests about Memory in *Memory in Mind and Culture*: "We should write the history of memory, observing and explaining the turbulence we find" (249).

We see, on the one hand, the exploitation of Bhrikuti as a woman, on the other, her name encounters commercial exploitation. The commercialization of Bhrikuti's name highlights the lack of Nepalese people's genuine connection with their past. Carol Davis shows her deep concern about this condition of present day Nepal in this way: "These scenes of present-day Nepal demonstrate that authentic cultural memory is rapidly becoming a rare commodity as television bombards Nepalis with Western imagery ..." (184). Instead of associating their minds with the genuine properties of

the past to live a healthy life at present, Nepalese people are now in the tendency of selling the valuable images of those properties and, in a sense, mocking at themselves by putting them in the context of commercial advertisement as if they were merely the equivalents of the cheap products which are deliberately produced to deceive people to fulfil the moto that 'money is above all things'. In the name of modernization and economic development, our cultural life is confused and fragmented. Davis observes the problem this way: "It is the juxtaposition of past and present, the jostling, of scenes of contemporary Nepal with scenes of long ago, that so aptly reflects the tension of living with tradition while moving toward modernization" (184-185). We can see how, Bhrikuti's original heroism gets mocked at in the commercial tone of Guide and Hawker:

GUIDE. Come and enjoy the taste of momo at Bhrikuti Momo Centre.

HAWKER. And sekuwa at Kailashpati Sekuwa Corner located in the street. (184)

Similarly, on Freak street, figurines of Buddha and ancient *lings*, the phallic representation of Shiva's creative powers, are sold off at bargain prices:

GUIDE I. Please come

This is very good palace, yes, a good palace

No toilet here

But field good, you know

Nobody sees

GUIDE II. you see, this is good phallus

This king worshipped linga

Queen also, you know. (66)

By creating such dialogue between these two guides on how our origin is being discolored and lifeless due to materialistic way of life, Subedi urges us to revive cultural memories and infuse society with cultural integrity that can raise the dignity of subdued currents of art and culture for creating a healthy future of Nepal.

Like women's pathos arrested under the roof of ancient Bhaktapur Durbar square, there are tender memories of art and artists waiting to be reborn in literature like Subedi's *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*. Of course, they have grown alive in this text to resist the force of the ruler that tends to bury the real stories of the ruled community. The king of Bhaktapur palace in ancient time ruled over the people as a feudal ruler. As a typical feudal king, his first priority is to achieve his own *self* being in a position to enjoy absolute power. In his memory, the *other* is covered in dark. Thus, humanity gets eclipsed with feudalism in which *other* is always excluded. But Subedi's *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* provides space and light to the part that is buried in the dark. It liberates humanity and establishes the point that the existence of *self* is possible only because of *other*. *Self* gets dissolved in the absence of *other*. In other words, the image of *self* is formed against the background of *other*. However, the *self* ignores this fact and sees itself as an absolute or perfect image. For a feudal king, this illusion is more beautiful than the reality in which he is recognized as one among others. In real world, he gets defined in relation to others. In the formation of human history, the role of *other* is not less than so-called absolute *self*. It is an obvious fact that the beauty of ancient civilization and arts of Bhaktapur city including the palace of the king was built by the skilful creative hands of the artists and other people. They produced and raised the identity of Bhaktapur Durbar and the city around it. In a sense, they were the creators of the city. So they should have a share, at least a partial share or ownership over what they produced. However, the bitter reality of this city in



ancient time was that the king did not recognize them as human beings having the same ownership as he claimed over the beautiful life of the city. Rather he saw them as his instruments or means that could be used in anyway he liked to raise his own feudal ego. For him, their position was just like that of goods and animals. This extreme subjectivism designates itself as a solitary I. It, as Ricoeur puts, lacks "the recognition of ... foreign I, of an *other* who is always already implied in the solitary consciousness of self" (115). Ricoeur assumes that history is to be understood as the process, not as a fixed foundation of certain identity. In this process everyone gets defined as a subject whose existence rests on shifting nature of time. In the feudal illusion, the notion of memory is also understood as a fixed mirror that reflects fixed or certain image of a feudal ego as if it is a permanent truth. However, Subedi, by highlighting the memory as process, deconstructs the memory pattern of the feudal king of Bhaktapur Durbar, and puts the king's position in the space of history that his artist workers occupy. In *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, we can see how Guide One's speech puts the definition of the king of Bhaktapur Durbar into crisis:

This palace was made by the king

Good king, you know

He had twenty wives

But no, they say so

But he built good palace. (67)

The first line of this extract has tried to establish a false illusion that the creator of the palace is not other than the king himself. It has buried the fact that the palace and its beauty was constructed by the active and creative hands of the artist-workers.

Secondly, the phrase "good king" raises the king's ego so high. However, the next line "He had twenty wives" breaks down the 'good' image of the king. The sentence "they

say so" refers to the oral history that denies and deconstructs the construction of feudal ego. Katharine Hodgkin and Susanna Radstone, in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (2003), have argued that memory has two fields to focus on, that is, oral history and holocaust (6). What they say exclusively about oral history reinforces the idea of the extract above in the given context: "It [oral history] solicited the voices of those who have been silent and ignored throughout the centuries: the poor and powerless, workers and women, who seldom have speaking parts in the historical drama" (4). The poor and powerless, workers and women are the people over whom the ruler rules and imposes his false history on them. His history lacks the real experience of life. We can raise a question whether the king had the real experience of making the palace. The oral history provides genuine answer to the question. It opens the truth that it was not the king but the artists who made the palace. Similarly, we should test the "goodness" of the king by asking a question if he had real experience of doing good to others so that his goodness could be proved or justified. What oral history opens about this question is that the king was the cause of pain and sufferings of his people, particularly artist workers, Maijus and other women. In this way, memory which gets alive in oral history can subvert the distortion of the truth that the ruler imposes without any authentic experience to justify it. This is reinforced by what Hodgkin and Radstone suggest in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*:

To privilege memory as a tool of truth, through which the statements of authority may be subverted or contradicted, we must assume a direct correspondence between the experience and how it is remembered ... experience is the guarantee of certainty; distortion an ideological

weapon, opposed to the real facts, and imposed by ideological means (media, academy ...). (2)

The ruler and his supporters construct a false history by using their media and academy. History can, thus, be distorted for the interest of the ruler or dominant groups of a country. But the moment when memory works through literature, film studies and cultural studies, the ruler's castle of illusion evaporates in the air of real world.

The idea about memory that Hodgkin and Radstone present in the above extract has the same contextual implication as Avi Shai Margalit suggests in *The Ethics of Memory* while contrasting memory with history: "When history is contrasted with memory, history is habitually labeled as cold, even lifeless, whereas memory can be vital, vivid, and alive" (67). The contrast that Margalit shows between history and memory with their appropriate qualifying words in the present quotation is capable of implying the contrast that we find between the vital or immortalizing qualities inherent in the arts and artist workers and the life-killing forces present in the insensitive kingship of ancient Bhaktapur Durbar. Ideally speaking, the king should have all the sensibilities of a father for his people treating them as his sons and daughters. The traditional or original meaning of the king as God Vishnu rested on the assumption that the king was capable of protecting and promoting the lives of his people. True sense of civilizations and advancement of human society would be expressed in that way if the king of Bhaktapur palace had the sensibility of that kind. The ideal meaning of the king fell off human history like peach blossoms without bearing the fruits (meaning) in real life situations of the Bhaktapur city. With the king of Bhaktapur palace, human civilization gets coiled or moves backward towards the barbarian stage of human beings. He is so selfish and individualistic in his behavior

that he does not feel others as independent human beings but as his own means that are born to be used to satisfy his desires and needs. Neither does he know the experience of pain and sufferings through which most of the human society passes on for its survival and progress. Just opposite to the role that Vishnu is supposed to play for human beings, this king wants his self raised and grown at the cost of those people who try their best to strengthen his feudal ego. In *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, there is an artist, who carves the artistic images of wood and stone that adorn the great palaces. But the custom of Bhaktapur Durbar in ancient time was either to maim or to banish him so that he can not reproduce his royal art. By doing this, the king wanted to enjoy the uniqueness of his palace in the days to come. With the act of banishing the artist or cutting of his hands, the life of human history is murdered; the creation gets blocked, and animality weakens humanity. Of course, the "history" that the king wrote was "cold and lifeless" whereas "memory" is "vital, vivid and alive" that puts life into the things deadened by the ruler as monster. Subedi's text in question is vital and alive in the same way that liberates human memories in which the hidden parts of general history get vitalized. The artist in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* knows that he is going to be banished or maimed for his excellent artistry. He hides himself to avoid the action. He has his beloved with him now. Subedi's text gives voice to such characters who are only others or instruments for the king. Their dialogue goes freely this way:

GIRL. Where did you travel today?

BOY. I traveled over the stones

Chiselled them with love

And carved shapes out of the sky

GIRL. Where did you save this over flowing sound?

BOY. In this heart of yours and this universe of stones and wood. (62)

The general life that is coiled and arrested by the effect of feudalism gets free in art and literature of the given time. In the ancient Bhaktapur city artists venerated history into sculpture and architecture. In the above dialogue, the artist or Boy seems to have been trying to construct history of the time in the stones and wood. Though the kingship was not in favour of the fulness of artist's life and his artistry in future, the images that he carved in the stones and wood were so qualitative that they could immortalize human history of creation and freedom. In the atmosphere of Bhaktapur palace, there was no sign of love and life. The feudal king only knew how to exploit people to satisfy his feudal ego. So the history of the king cannot depict the love and life of common people. Such history can only expand the horizon of desert where the sign of life is very rare. However, the artist has "chiseled" the stones with "love", which is essential element of life. In a sense, he has given life to a burning desert by creating rhythms and images of life in the stones and wood. The universe of stones and wood in Bhaktapur Durbar is felt like an oasis in the desert. Luisa Passerini's understanding about memories gets realized in the context of ancient memories of Bhaktapur city, which is found in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*: "I have been thinking of memories transmitted without verbalization, such as those incorporated in gestures, images and objects" (248). In other words, if the verbal history of the dominant groups suppresses the real history of common people, the suppressed aspects of human history can be articulated through the images, gesture and objects that are beyond the verbal network of expression.

Subedi connects the love and pain of the artists and their beloved girls with the exploitation of culture (Davis 188). *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* connects the cultural exploitation in ancient Bhaktapur with today's tendency of commercializing the

valuable aspects of Nepalese history and the curio artifacts. Tourist guides and trinket hawkers are seen to compete in selling the icons of cultural memory and "replacing them with dollars and rupees and foreign cultural memory" (Davis 183). Certainly, a genuine Nepali would not like to see the scene in which the hawker projects cultural items of Nepal in the market as if they were merely the toys of capitalism:

HAWKER (carrying antiques in arms and bags and showing them to the tourist).

Look at these carvings

This is the picture of sky

This is very good figure

Only eighty rupees

This is the tantra, you know

Cosmic copulation. (67)

The hawker's advertising manner in the above extract is the only one example of today's tendency of the marketing of history and heritage to foreign tourists. The selling of one's own history and cultural heritage is to dislocate oneself from the origins and sources of life. Life without cultural organism has no immunity power to survive on its own. For a nation, to strengthen her cultural organism is to construct a healthy history that opens multiple possibilities of success in different directions. Humanity flourishes with its cultural organism. However, the flood of capitalism or materialism has buried different cultural roots of human beings in the world. Instead of being aware of this tendency of the world, Nepal has been too open and easy access to material forces, accepting them not as additional things but as essential elements. If we do not fulfill the roles of original performers in our own cultural time and space, the foreign forces will bury and displace the original spirit of our life on which our

identity reflects. So, by selling our cultural memories, we are selling our own identity.

It is for this reason that the poet laments over the loss and exploitation of cultural memory:

Yes, I've also seen  
 The Everest waiting on rugs  
 On the freak streets  
 This palace also  
 Wearing dust cover  
 Waiting for the touch of lovers bangles of the Bhrikutis  
 And all these girls whose lovers' arms were amputated  
 Legs cut  
 So that they may not create other monuments  
 Like these ones  
 We sell dreams  
 Wrapped in the rags of times  
 Culture is the story  
 Of the sky  
 That is torn many times with love and pain. (77-78)

In the context of the marketing of history and heritage, it is very difficult to define what culture is. However, the poet defines it as the "story of the sky that is torn many times with love and pain." Due to the lack of people's genuine love for their own culture, the symbols of our identity are getting faded: Everest is 'waiting on rugs on the freak streets', the palace of Bhaktapur covered with dust is 'waiting for the touch of lovers.' The rise of materialistic forces and the first priority that people have begun to give to it compels us to raise a question whether culture is far less important than

money. The obvious and intellectually expected answer is 'No'. Money is merely the means to serve humanity. If humanity is compelled to worship money or put it above human beings' life and culture, then it is natural for material forces to dance like monsters and consume tender qualities of human beings. Therefore, Subedi's concern is to make us aware of our origins to revive our life and save it from materialistic arrogance. Carol Davis also draws more or less the same idea from the poetic play: "*Dreams of Peach Blossoms* calls up the creative collective cultural memory of origins and traditions in an effort to stem the tide of materialism, of arbitrary cultural acquisition, and of disregard for that which makes Subedi's people collectively, quintessentially, uniquely Nepali" (189).

One of the significant associations that Subedi has in his spontaneous projection of art against hegemonic structure is his association with the contemporary Nepali artist Kiran Manandhar, who, as one of his alteregos, produces graffiti on the side surfaces of his poems in *Chasing Dreams*. About his association with these paintings, Subedi himself clarifies in his preface to *Chasing Dreams* in this way:

I consider my association with the contemporary Nepali artist Kiran Manandhar, since the late eighties, a significant experience. I have sometimes entered into a dialogue with his paintings. His interpretation of my poems in powerful lines is the most unique and important reader response of them. (ii)

This statement of the poet asserts that his text is a proof in itself of a collection of different voices. In other words, it is liberal enough to embrace responses of the readers. It grows in association with other than to have its own authorship over the meaning. So it is an open text, not the closed one. The nature of an open text is that it has includes in its body the liberal elements that deny and subvert any kind of



hegemonic network. While reading the poems of *Chasing Dreams*, we find each poem well-strengthened by responsive drawings, which seem to have grown as the inherent part of it. As we feel sad note of the frustrated persona in most of the poems of *Chasing Dreams*, Manandhar's graffiti reflect the pathos of his own as an artist representing the sufferings of other artists in Nepal, where the power holders almost always have ignored them. One advantage of the act of reading such an open text is that, while reading it, we can mix up with the given text with our own sort of projections that become in the process the parts of the text in question. It is better for one to join the subdued than to remain aloof in the process of denying and resisting the hegemonic impositions upon their lives. Subedi has expressed such harmony among the suppressed that he feels with Manandhar in the following lines:

Kiran has created this consonance

On the wall of my being

Without my knowing it

He's made graffiti

Many times

Look

I'm the graffiti

Writ on your time

Now you cannot get lost

I said that many times

Only to find your words

Written on this wall

I'll hold these motley texts-

Your time  
With such a love  
Something you only met  
In the sensation of the soil  
You were born. (44).

This poetic piece reflects an excellent ecstasy or trans-like state of harmony between the liberal hearts of the two poetic personas suggested in the extract. Both of them standing on the same ground that is unfavorable to them happen to meet at one point in the process of projecting themselves against the society that does not recognize them. Fighting against the inhuman tendencies of their times, there forms a harmony between them in which Subedi's persona feels a love and grand unity of them that is similar to the unity a person senses with the soil of his or her motherland. Though the actual condition they are in is unfavorable and hegemonic one in which they feel their identities lost, the power of their personal memories that are reflected in their arts form together a subversive projection against the unfavorable network. The expression of these artists' pathos represent those of all other frustrated artists in our country where most of the people are running after the materialistic games of deceiving others for their own selfish interests. Not only this, the people who push others aside to hold the power are misusing not only the economy but cultural heritage which has resulted in the loss of individual identities as well as that of our motherland. So, Manandhar's graffiti with their association of Subedi's poems are bitter reactions against such power-holders who are ungrateful to both their own motherland and brothers and sisters pushing them aside from the mainstream of the country life.

Regarding the role of graffiti in constructing memory and thus, resisting the dominating structures of human society, Katharine Hodgkin and Susanna Radstone hold that "school projects, advertising campaigns, television local traditions, graffiti, journalism; all those contribute to the formation of both individual and cultural memories" (14). Hodgkin and Radstone have suggested through their statement the significance of graffiti besides other memory texts to subvert the restrictions imposed by the power-holders in a give society. Subedi also has used graffiti in his text to reinforce the role of memory to undermine the hegemonic structure of human history.

While reviving and articulating the memories and silences of the suppressed beings, the blend of memory and music has been significant in *Dreams of Peach of Blossoms*. Words may fail to represent those pathos as they (words) have their own material and physical limitations. In such context of the word-failure, the painful silences and memories form music of their own being and suggest themselves as a more authentic expressions than that of verbalization. *In Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, we find several silences that are too soft to get materialized through the words. Therefore, while observing the play with such soft moments, we find ourselves empathizing with the sounds of silences getting united with the body of music that really represents the body of silences and memories. How pervasive the music is there in the atmosphere of the poetry of the subdued hearts in the play gets clarified through the musical sounds and rhythms that give force to the words through the lips of Poet and Guard, who seem to be very much concerned and attentive to the memories of ancient life of Bhaktapur Durbar:

GUARD. Listen!

There the music bursts out like peach blossoms

POET. The music breaks out like sun on the dry stone

of *hiti*, above stone spouts

[Pause]

The music rises like sun from pagoda roof in the east

[Pause]

The music rises like the breeze from the east

[Pause]

The music rises like women dancing in ripples

[Pause]

The music spreads like the first shafts of the sun. (61)

The dialogue between Poet and Guard suggests that the life of the poetic play rests wholly on music of the vibrated hearts of those characters who are in great need of expression to unfold the unsettled ideas and emotions waiting for long to find a way out. Most of the characters in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* represent those people in the given society who have been ignored for long. General course of history that is formed by the selection of words of the dominant groups excludes the problems and experiences of the life surviving in the margin. In the ancient time of Bhaktapur Durbar, Maijus, artists and their beloved girls occupied the marginal position. They were in a position to be consumed and utilized by the feudal figures. They had to sacrifice their lives for the sake of kingship and its arrogance. The poor conditions in which they were surviving were caused not only by feudalism but by the whole structure of patriarchal society. Feudalism and patriarchy treated the artists and women as their objects and goods as if they were without any sensibility of a human being to feel the things around them in the world. In other words, they were treated as 'others'. Music gets very much inspired by the waves of pain and sufferings of such

people. Poet and Guard, being themselves in the category of 'other', can feel the woes of women and artists of the time. Their capacity to feel the life around them is so high that they even experience music not only through their ears but through eyes and skin. They feel music rising like the breeze', 'sun', and 'peach blossoms'. Hudgkin and Susannah seem sensible in their argument in regard to music: "Memory is more than words, music has much to teach us about silence" (248). This quotation finds strength in the appropriate situation of the concerned text in which Fourth Young Woman remembers a Maiju, who lived in the distant past experiencing the fate of a woman in patriarchy and feudalism:

Her jar will be empty  
 Waiting for her for ever  
 To come and fill  
 The music will be her space  
 Where she will sit like the rhythms of moon beams shining over  
 successive ancient roof. (70)

Being a woman, Fourth Young Woman seems to have understood the feelings of Maiju, who had to leave her beloved homeland for an unfamiliar place in which she would have to start completely a new life without any support of a familiar language and friends. Now, Maiju is not physically present before these young women. So she is alive in their minds in the form of memory that shines and exists 'like the rhythms of moon beams'. In a sense, the extract shows music as Maiju and Maiju as music for the life of both rests on rhythms and vibrations. Describing the typical music used in the play, Subedi opens himself this way: "in this play, he [Aabhas, the musician] has used the Sitalamai music that has gone down in Newar memories as an archetype of struggle for the independence of culture and identity" (145). It suggests that the

musician has deliberately selected the type of music that has already sheltered in memories to brighten and raise the dignity of both Maijus and the quality of their music.

Both memory and music have the power to connect past and present as both fill the space of silences constructed by the hegemonic history. Subedi has provided the space for memory and music in the play to break the artificial political design and prepare the way for the expression of the pathos of the subdued minority. In other words, music and memory flow beyond the limit of hegemonic history. Ghyanendra Pandey, in his *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (2001), has distinguished history and memory in this way: "Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon: A bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past" (189). Pandey connects memory with eternal flow of time whereas history for him is merely a representation of the given events of the past. In other words, memory can be understood as the driving force that is only hidden but not dead in the past. So it has a power to deconstruct as well as reconstruct the present, leading and affecting the future way of life. Memory is thus a life in itself with its possibility of recurring in future. But history is a past record of things and events with its tendency of distorting and excluding the realities of life in the given period.

Thus, we have seen that Subedi's *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* is all alive with the charge of memory that mostly focuses on the pathos of ancient life in Bhaktapur city produced by gender, class, ethnicity, feudal ego and materialistic forces of the time. His act of foregrounding the sensibilities of women and artists including the other known and unknown agents of the history is the outcome of his realization that human history can go ahead creatively and steadily only with the assistance of plural creative hands, liberal minds and communal hearts. Any kind of individual ego-

fulfilment at the cost of communal life upsets the enthusiastic rhythms of human history. Besides this, history maybe crumpled by cultural prejudices and exclusion. In the making of human history of Nepal, there were and have been the complications caused by selfish interests and cultural biases. Due to such complications in the historical times of Nepal, the humanity cries in the form of Maijus, artists or creators and their close supporting hearts who are, in fact, the life force of whole Nepal. Being very much aware of such pathos of history, Subedi produces *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, a lightning wave in the political sky of Nepal. It suggests that there are some energetic elements existing silently in the layers of clouds. What the characters speak is a sort of pouring down of the rain. This, in effect, is sure to wash out the pollution of the sky and the dirt of the earth including that of Bagmati river. What the text suggests more is that the historically reserved forces find freedom in the space of memory. By using memory, Subedi has given life to the creative but neglected forces in the play. Whatever hidden drives of history ascend to the space of memory, they get poetic, producing the wave of the motion of emotion that has potential to deconstruct the knots and network of hegemonic reason. Subedi provides both music and memory to his characters so that they can fully express themselves against feudalism and patriarchy for they have tried to close the possibilities of creation, freedom, and justice which are the basic properties to promote humanity. In short, to revive the healthy elements of the past is to strengthen the life of present and suggest the direction for future.

Like in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, *Chasing Dreams* too associates with memory, particularly the personal memory, to subvert the hegemonic structures for the articulation of the subdued voices. In the text, the poet has used personal memory to create spaces for the issues related to gender, class, and crises of relationships, and

deconstruct the dominant structure of society. His use of memory in the text produces an opportunity for the readers to meet a seeker, his persona, who catches the motion of a journey. The journey that starts from his birth place or village penetrates into the world of cities. As an embodiment of search, he is seeking something 'better' and 'faster'- a dream destination that flashes in his mind with the inspiring voice of his mother. Most of the poems in this collection are the responses to the life that he sees in Kathmandu. It is through the free and frank expressions of this seeker that Subedi gives articulation to the subordinated voices of the metropolitan world.

Most of the space of *Chasing Dreams* is occupied by the waves of women's pathos. The reason for their pathos is not other than the concept of gender in patriarchy. Patriarchal culture has given special privilege to men to enjoy freedom at the cost of women's life. Women to them are merely the goods that can be selected, used or neglected according to the wish or the need of men. In the so-called marriage culture, patriarchy treats them not as the part of family organism but as the 'others'. They do not have the space in their own family to liberate their hearts that are intense with pain and unfulfilled desires. Mostly the cases of all women is the same whether they are from upper class or the lower one. They are made silent all over the patriarchal world. However, Subedi's persona of the poem called "Women on the Rooftops" breaks through the ground of patriarchy to make us share with the pathos of these silent beings who are somehow surviving in Kathmandu city. Though Kathmandu town shows some people having very high status of economy, they do not have the space in their minds for essential element of human life, that is, human love from which the sprouts of actual human organism and its graceful culture grow and bloom. Those women who are married to such people are not bound to get married to the hearts of their husbands. So, in the so-called marriage of such people, the marriage



institute fails to achieve its essential meaning as there is no 'union' between the hearts of the married couple. Their husbands seem to be actually married with alcohol and gambling, disclosing the reality that 'money is the root of evil things'. With the association of alcohol and gambling, men's freedom forgets home and the sensibility of family. Thus, they are living their lives without the experiences of what actual life feels. While "their little kings [husbands] drink and gamble some where" in rooms, not of their own, the wives try to fill their homes in the evening with memories and desires in their aloofness, which Subedi's persona of the poem releases this way:

Evening, with sulk, falls on their heads  
 down into darkness vacant silhouettes  
 descend the "romantic night"  
 back under roofs  
 They toss about in unwarmed beds  
 As the roovescape falls into weary eyes  
 They try to recapture ... (18)

The above piece of the poetry centres on loneliness that women are suffering from at night in Kathmandu due to their husbands' absence at home. Almost every evening comes to the women to divide and fragment their married lives. The romantic aspects of their married life would not be realized in real life situation but exist in their minds merely as "vacant silhouettes" that frequently haunt at night. The phrase "unwarmed beds" suggests that their family life does not have the warmth of a genuine human love, the essence of life. In a sense, their life has become cold or dead. Then the women's suffocated life finds itself existing in wishes and memories. The last line of the extract ends with three dots that open a door to the space of memory, the memory of the past from which they could console and compensate the wounded present. This

gets reinforced if we look into the words of Jane Kilby in *Violence and the cultural Politics of Trauma*: "It is no longer possible to explore memory in terms of the questions of the truth of its past; rather, memory is only ever a function of the present conditions under which it emerges. The past, in other words, exists only in the service of the present day subject" (62). In other words, memory of the past gets triggered by the waves of the turbulence of present situation with an effort to find peace and relief.

The element that constructs the concepts of 'class' in human society is basically the material one, that is, money or material property. However, the poem "Women on the Rooftops" deconstructs the way of defining classes in terms of economy only, and goes beyond this to achieve spiritual or human qualities to define, if needed, the categories among human beings. This poem particularly refers to the upper class people in Kathmandu that are engaged with the game of money and materialistic entertainment, which have made them derail from right track of humanity. So, the word 'upper' in its association with such people loses the strength of its original meaning. In the corrupt upper class society, we very rarely see other than materialistic arrogance that is never attached to the richness of mind that functions as a synthesizing element among human beings to construct humanity which reckons each person with due respect including a woman. The upper class society that is materialistically top but spiritually down, has been the source of dismay for women in Kathmandu. The following piece of the poem suggests the state of mind with which women have to tolerate the paradoxical realities: "At night/the roofs are quiet;/turbulence hidden beneath" (18). The juxtaposition of the words 'quiet' and 'turbulence' confuses us for some time from penetrating into reality, that is 'turbulence' which puts women of upper class society into anxiety. Materialistic arrogance has produced anxiety in women that can somehow be pacified with a ventilation of

memory. Luisa Passerini clarifies the idea more effectively: "... there can be memory within silence and memory through silence ... memory in gendered, and women's memories and silence offer different continuities and repetitions, through the specificities of their experience in different times and spaces" (248). To put it differently, women's memory gets born with their silence. Silence and memories are inseparable in their recurrence in women's life. Women's turbulence hides under silence and springs in memories to survive in the world against patriarchy.

While discussing about women's memories in the context of *Chasing Dreams* we cannot leave out the poem "Splintered Sun" in which Subedi's persona deconstructs an old war song that is very popular in Nepal to construct the voice of women in this country. The concerned extract runs as follows:

You cry, my heart  
 Like a wounded soldier  
 In the battle far away!  
*Babale sodhlan ni*  
*Khoi choori bhanlan*<sup>1</sup>  
 Tell him  
 She's wounded with a dream  
 That spreads like across the sky  
 Between us like a pain. (36)

In this extract, the Nepali word "Chhori" has occurred to destabilize the spatial position of the word "chhoro" in the original version of the song. Or, the son is displaced by daughter in this extract. The poet's creativity proves in the poem that the

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<sup>1</sup> My father will ask  
 Where is my daughter? (Subedi's translation)

stability of men's position in patriarchal construction gets deconstructed by women's memories. Sigmund Freud's words justify what the above extract suggests about women's memories this way: "... repressed memories are subversive agents that cause dysfunctional behavior and even bodily symptoms in the individual" (quoted in Magalit 3). Margalits' critical eye is able to see the strength of repressed memories that can break the imposed structure of given society. Or, the hidden strength of the suppressed elements has always the potential of recurring to erode the pressure around it.

Subedi's personal memory reflects his deep attachment with the past moment when he took the first breath of his life "... near a grinding stone/that my mother used to grind her time" (4). The root of the poet's life is attached to the 'grinding stone that is associated with his mother's existence. The image of her 'grinding stone' has many things to suggest about both the poet and his mother. One important thing that the image suggests is that by grinding stone, she was grinding her life as a woman restricted in the patriarchal culture. She struggled most of the time of her life not for her own personal interest but for the life of her family as a whole including her son and other male figures. So grinding stone refers to her sacrifice. The another thing the stone suggests is "the silence of the motion". We can connect this motion with that of the universe. This association of grinding stone with the universe is sure to elevate the position of mother, the source of inspiration for her children's life. The universe moves to move the world for ever. However, patriarchy does not recognize women as the source of its universe; rather it treats them as the subordinated objects that can be ignored any time they like.

But unlike the usual attitude that patriarchy shows to women, Subedi's persona demonstrates his deep respect for mother regarding her as the source of his life: "my

mother's grinding stone/silent, powerful/like Rodin's statues/where I see my new birth-Rodin's statues/my birth place, the grinding stone (45). By remembering the statues of Auguste Rodin, a French Sculptor, who was influenced by Michelangelo, Subedi's persona is constructing the immortal image of his mother connecting it to the immortalized beauty and life of Rodin's statues. In this context, Paul Ricoeur's idea about memory that is given in *Memory, History Forgetting* (2006): "In remembering something, one remembers oneself" (96). In other words, the speaker of the poem revives himself as he remembers Rodin's statues and the grinding stone" for they remind him of his birth place in the past.

The reference to what Subedi's mother told him in his childhood to inspire him for ever is another important art part of his personal memory that raises the position of women as mothers in patriarchal society. His persona in this poem "Chasing Dreams" brings about the reference to his childhood this way:

I used to ride a buffalo bull  
 When I was young  
 My mother said  
 You should ride something better  
 Something faster  
 Something that remains with you  
 I'm riding my dreams ever since. (51)

The poet's persona in the above piece of the poem, remembers a point of time in the past in which his mother stood before him to guide him with the words nutrient enough to drive him forward to seek something 'better' and 'faster' to ride on than the buffalo. Since then, he has realized that his mind has been pregnant with a dream that has remained as a beacon to inspire his life to go forward. What Jeffrey Blustein

suggests about individual memory in his *The Moral Demands of Memory* (2008) clarifies more about the experiences of Subedi's persona in the poem mentioned above:

Individual memory enables us to reconnect with parts of our own past, and one aspect of this reconnecting is the recollecting of past emotions ... Just reconnecting itself .. reconnecting with people, places, and experiences in one's past, is often a source of enormous pleasure and delight. (188)

If we analyse Blustein's argument on individual memory in terms of the experiences of the persona of the poem, we see that Subedi's persona also has some past experiences and emotions in his memory associated with his mother that remained source of his life. While seeking something better and faster, he realizes his own inner ability to construct the space to stay in the world with his own identity, and this brings pleasure to his life.

Subedi's dreams reflect his deep attachment not only to his mother but to his motherland. While constructing the identity of the suppressed minorities, Subedi uses his personal memory to construct the image of mother land against the exploitative tendencies of materialistically corrupted people. His motherland is personified and he feels that it has a life and pathos of the same kind as he feels in his mother. Actual rulers of the land may not feel the life of their motherland as they think that they are ruling over the land. However, the poet does not want to rule over his motherland but tries his best to serve her. There is difference between, ruling over something and serving it. In 'ruling', there is gap between the ruler and the ruled but in 'serving' there is no gap between the servant and the served because the real serving is not possible without identifying oneself with the person served. Subedi feels that people of Nepal,

especially those who want only money and materialistic property in their life, treat their motherland as an object or commodity. Their concept of 'progress' does not include the advancement of mind but increase in physical property and facilities which they misuse to increase cultural pollution. Social and cultural pollutions in Nepal have increased to such an extent that the real servants of the motherland feel suffocated. Because of this cruel treatment of the materialistically selfish people including the rulers, the beauty of the motherland has gone. As an enthusiastic seeker, inspired by his mother, Subedi's persona is searching the beauty of his motherland, and finds her in the form of dreams that subvert the ugliness established by the exploiters of the nation. He feels his motherland somewhere between his pen and paper:

Translucent  
 You've hung on the eyelashes  
 Many times  
 You've slipped like moon into the room  
 Burning without flames and smoke  
 .....  
 You've raged like dreams  
 In every sky  
 Suspended between my pen and paper. (11)

The speaker of the above piece of the poem "The Land" has the image of his motherland in his memory with her original beauty. The image has stretched to her height unchecked like dreams 'suspended between my pen and paper.' The motherland that is existing in his dreams is yet to be written on paper; it is yet to be actualized in the time and space of this world (Nepal). The power of memory to construct the

image of something is well-clarified by what Larry Ray argues about memory in *Memory, Trauma, and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present* (2006): "Memory processes have been imagined and communicated through a variety of spatial and visual metaphors that construct an architecture of internal memory places" (139). Of course, memory processes produce certain spatial and visual metaphors to convey the internal image of something to the concerned people. In the above extract of *Chasing Dreams*, Subedi constructs the image of his motherland through memory that includes the metaphors of "moon", "dreams", and something "hung on the eyelashes". In other words, memory goes with a poetic process. This is again reinforced by how David W Blight clarifies the idea of Walt Whitman on the poet in *Memory in Mind and Culture* (2009): "The poet can see further ahead by seeing deeper into the human condition than the scholar who is restricted to researching surfaces" (250). The creative power of the poet can go beyond the analytical limitations of a scholar. It is with this creative force of the poet that he subverts the products of so-called diplomatic figures in the political field. The sense of the poetic piece mentioned above is more strengthened in the following extract of the same poem "The Land" in *Chasing Dreams*:

I have become you  
 You're full of trials  
 That climb up my dreams  
 Everywhere. (12)

Through this piece of poetry the poet's persona identifies himself with his motherland dissolving all the gaps, if any, between them. His mind is all filled with the trails of the motherland. She is all printed in his memory for she is his dreams expanding all over his mental sky. The boundless image of the land growing in his memory



naturally breaks through and overwhelms the body of Nepal disfigured in the historical situations by the political exploiters. It would be better here to bring about the reference to Peter Novick's idea about memory that James V. Wertsch presents in *Memory in Mind and Culture*: "Memory ... has no sense of the passage of time; it denies the 'pastness' of its objects and insists on their continuing presence ... to express some eternal or essential truth about the group-usually tragic" (126). In other words, memory outgrows the fixed definition or boundary and form of any subject in question in the same way as the memory of Subedi's persona denies the disfigured image of the land that the rulers have produced.

An important feature of the book *Chasing Dreams* by Subedi is that it frequently reinforces the voice of women in one way or other. Critiquing the exploitation of Nature-mother through memory strengthens the women's image more. The poem "Elephant Ride in the Jungle" is the poem that strengthens the position of women by foregrounding the condition of nature-mother. For Subedi, nature is like a mother. She is the ultimate source of human beings' life. He has well understood that human beings have a life-long relationship with nature. He is so sensitive to nature-mother that whatever negative happens to her affects his heart. We can feel his elevated sensibility towards nature in the beginning lines of the poem which are as follows: "A trail runs into the wild/like a bole breaking into a tree" (17). We can perceive his noble feelings for nature by observing the way how he sees the texture of nature in the beginning of his ride in the jungle. For him, the scene of the trail that runs into the jungle feels like a bole that breaks the life of a tree when inserted into it. This proves that he loves nature in the same way as he loves his own mother and other human beings. He seems to have realized that the life that he feels within himself is merely the echo-rhythm of the same energy that is pervasive in nature-mother.

However, Subedi seems to be worried for the cause that most of the people's view on nature lacks this holistic perception. They look at nature as an 'object' or 'other' which they can use for their interests any way they like. So we can say that his poem has inclusive perspective on nature-mother that subverts the structural existence of any thing that excludes or separates nature-mother from the life of human beings. In this context, Paul Ricoeur's idea about the constitution of 'other' and 'ownness' that he expresses in *Memory, History, Forgetting* is notable: "it is 'in' the sphere of owners that the experiences of the other as foreign is constituted, at the cost of the paradoxes I have presented elsewhere" (118). Ricoeur suggests that the 'other' is constructed within the space of 'ownness'. Or, the 'other' is not other than the part of owners; it is the composition of 'ownness'. Subedi's persona of this poem too seems to assume that nature-mother and human beings are parts of each other. Or, both are parts making one organic whole.

*Chasing Dreams* also produces its rhythmic words to raise the question of identity, not only of women in patriarchy but of other minorities in metropolitan city like Kathmandu. While developing his text with the use of memory, Subedi is seen to be constructing the identity of a village boy. Inspired by his mother to seek something 'better' and 'faster' in the world, Subedi's persona seems to have left his village environment for a grand journey of a seeker with a hope of realizing the dreams pregnant in his mind in future. Motivation of his mother continuously drives him forward through several cities of the world including Scotland. However, most of the poems in this collection are the responses to the life that he sees in Kathmandu city. As an innocent village boy, Subedi's persona gets lost in metropolitan city life. Then, he feels that his dreams are getting expanded with the desire of establishing his identity as a human being in the multilayers of Kathmandu's life. His desire of

forming his identity in the city is clearly projected in the following lines of the poem

"Doing Yoga in Front of a Mirror:

I feel the muladhara

Rising slowly:

Feet tread upon a minuscule sky

And the third eye walks upon the earth

My silence

Tells the cosmos to its face

That this body

Is a force to reckon with

Not unlike the silence

Of a bamboo tree

Making the sky bend to its will. (16)

While doing yoga, particularly the pose of Sheershasan, in which the whole body stands on head stretching the feet towards sky, he experiences the hidden force of his body and feels himself the part of the universe, sharing the same existence of a bamboo tree in it. The silence of a bamboo tree does not suggest its 'nothingness' but a hidden force that works slowly and steadily with an irresistible force that is deeply connected to the grand force of universe. By comparing his body with a bamboo tree, he indicates two things: his irresistible strength and his deep love for nature. While in this pose of Yoga, he feels nature within himself; he identifies himself with a bamboo tree. Though he gets looked outwardly uncountable in Kathmandu city, what is preserved and growing in his mental life suggests the strength of his identity rooted in the ground of human universe. This subverts his position of a minority unidentified on

the surface of society. The idea of Alan J. Lambert and his co-writers in *Memory in Mind and Culture* about the construction of personal identity through memory is notable to observe in this context:

... memories of our own emotions almost certainly play a role in formation and construction of personal identity. In particular, the sense of who we are as a person, and our ability to predict our own future behavior, are likely to be based in part on our memories of our own affective responses to previous events. (198)

In this extract, Labert and his friends mean to say that memories enlivened with emotions are capable of constructing personal identity. In other words, the formation of personal identity is based on our memories of the emotional responses to some events of the past. The identity of Subedi's persona is being constructed by the emotional responses he makes to the society of Kathmandu city that does not count him as a human being. The sense of his getting lost in Kathmandu city is more intense in the poem "Get Lost" of *Chasing Dreams*. On the one hand, he is chasing the dreams produced in his mind by his mother. The dream is shining like the sun or moon in his mental sky. On the other, his shining dream or sun gets fragmented and disfigured by the layers of disbelief and treachery of city life which is crowded with masked faces. His unstable condition is well-expressed in the following lines of the poem "Get Lost":

The sky spread its storm  
 Into the open plans  
 Of the gods in the city  
 And descended upon it  
 I sat like the shattered sun. (23)

The speaker of the poem, particularly in this piece, feels as if he were in the storm, incapable of standing on his own. He is vulnerable to the devils that are in the forms of gods in the city. In this critical condition of his survival, his dream, he feels, is not getting actualized but shattered. When his actual life in the city gets crumpled, his life in memory grows like flood in the form of poetry and deconstructs the original lines of religion carved somewhere in the city:

Why do you speak?

If you speak,

Speak in a language

Carved in stone –

Om Mani Padme Hung!

Om Mani Padme Hung!

Om Mani Padme Hung! (24)

The word 'hum' in the original version gets displaced by 'hung' in the last three lines. The essential guiding line of Buddhism 'Om mani padme hum' should have inspired everyone in the city towards the state of enlightenment for the welfare of whole humanity. However, the real situation in the city is different. Instead of gaining wisdom, people are being guided by devils' manner. So the real enlightenment is arrested or 'hung' somewhere else; it is yet to be realized in the city's behavior. He requests people to respect peace and wisdom instead of violence and treachery for achieving material property:

Please let this pigeon

My mother set flying many years ago

Fly in peace

In the silence

Cascading down the Buddha's eyes

In Swoyambhu. (34)

In this piece of the poem "Splintered Sun" in *Chasing Dreams*, the persona relates the word "pigeon" with his own dream set by his mother in the distant past. Achievement of something 'better' and 'faster' symbolizes a kind of progressive movement for the upliftment of humanity. Such achievement would not be possible unless there is peaceful situation in the given locality. However, the present situation has lost the Buddha's eyes and the persona feels the storm around him.

In this situation of turbulence, the persona of the poem "Splintered Sun" remembers the song of Megha Raj Manjul, a Nepali poet, who wishes to create harmony through the sensibility of the flute. The song goes thus: "Mero sano muralima mero des naatla/tara mero muralile bhaka rakhaun bhancha (My country may be too big for my flute/But my flute says I must set a time" (35, Subedi's translation). In this son, the 'flute' represents all those people whose voices are lost in their own motherland. The word "bhaka" implies a harmonious tune or setting of a time. The harmonious tune that releases through the flute is supposed to echo the wishes of the subordinated people. Thus, the memory of the song gives articulation to the silence of the subdued persons. In regard to the importance of music to express the wishes pregnant in the memory, Luisa Passerini's argument is notable: "To continue with the reminder that 'memory is more than words', music has much to teach us about silence" (248). In other words, music is what gives life to memory. The wishes of the memory can fully be relieved through the powerful waves of music. In the context of the poem "Get lost", Manjul's song has helped to express the wishes of the poetic persona, who wants to set a time in the turbulent present.

Politics of memory in *Chasing Dreams* gets thickened with the expression of the memories of Subedi's persona as a freedom fighter. Since Subedi's persona has received the inspiration from his mother for continuing his journey of a seeker, he does not seem to be hopeless on his way to his destination. Rather he seems to have gathered more strength through the steps of struggling movement. His indomitable mentality runs through these lines from the poem "Get Lost" in this way:

Get Lost!  
 That's fine  
 I'll look for the sun  
 In the gutters  
 In the Bagmati's murky waters  
 I'll search for my time,  
 My dreams-the dreams of a village boy-  
 me,  
 in the garbage hills  
 of these metropolitan times. (28)

Pollution in natural environment in Kathmanu city seems to Subedi's persona of this piece to be an echo of "garbage hills" piled up in the hearts of people. Materially prosperous upper class people with extreme poverty of their hearts that he encounters with in city life are the sources of the sad notes of the poem. He realizes that in city area though there are many mouths to speak, their words fail to represent genuine ideas and feelings. This *invisibility* of city life is made visible in the poems of *Chasing Dreams*. We find similar tone in the following lines of the poem "Kathmandu Sun":

Kathmandu  
 With its many suns

Many mouths

Speaks

To the tourists

It speaks with an antique mouth

With a mind

Chiseled

In petrified rhetoric

But to us it speaks with engine mouths

We oscillate with the murky sun

Under a pall of smoke. (13)

After passing through the real life affairs of Kathmandu, he develops within him a critical attitude to this city. The layers of language that he experiences in this city are not the genuine signs of a well-developed system of communication to express the layers of sincere feelings among human beings. Rather they are like different instruments to be used in different situations to deceive or exploit people for the satisfaction at physical level that excludes the spiritual satisfaction which comes only from the sense of humanity. The protest of Subedi's persona against the tendency of treating human beings merely as the means or instruments is well-supported by the view of Jeffrey Blustein, who sees the subdued people as the ends in his *The Moral Demands of Memory* (2008): "Justice requires that we treat people as ends in themselves. We affirm the dignity and agency of those who have been brutalized by attending to their voices and making their stories a part of the historical record" (34). Through the dominant powerful people tend to treat the powerless as an objects or



means, memory denies the hegemonic network because its essential nature is to subvert it to establish the dignity of the subdued voice.

While rising against the inhuman tendency of the dominant powerful people of metropolitan world, Subedi's persona happens to be badly-treated by the policemen. The memory of this episode gets thus enlivened in the poem "Chasing Dream":

The policeman's bludgeon  
 Fell on my head  
 My blood wrote my desire  
 On the street  
 Half conscious  
 I was taken to a dungeon  
 Where dreams of freedom  
 Balzed and blazed. (48)

In spite of cruel treatment upon his body by the brutal force, the speaker's indomitable life force does not retreat from his goal. Rather he gets satisfied with his blood already spilled over the street for he feels that this blood has written his desire in the open space. Similarly, when he is taken to the prison, he feels that his memory gets more vitalized there with undefeated dreams of freedom 'blazed and blazed'. In fact, the energy that is raised for freedom is unyielding as it is the essential property not only of humans but of all animate things or beings in the universe. It exists because of its link with irresistible force of nature or universe. When the police force limits Subedi's persona within the cell, he gets linked with the universal power through memory, and memory very often gives way to music. This is what the piece of poetry below proves:

We linger  
 On the shadowy lanes of memories

Making music people dance –

Ghintang ghintang. (49)

Even in the confinement of prison, Subedi's persona is chasing his dream that needs freedom to get actualized. The first person in plural form in the beginning of the above piece suggests that there are some alter egos to share the turbulence of the time of Subedi's persona. The persona liberates more about his alter egos and their responses to the confinement thus:

We all dance

Into the limbo

And emerge out of it

Dancing to the medieval madal. (50)

Since their present time is terrible, they dance to be revived with the medieval tune of madal. The act of dancing to the medieval tune of *madal* seems to have overwhelmed the cruelty of present that is interestingly articulated in the following lines:

Dancing faster faster faster

To the rhythms of the past

Going round in a circle

Picking up the time fast. (50)

These four musical lines get repeated once more in the original text to suggest that Subedi's persona and his alter egos go several rounds of their dancing. Dancing to the past rhythms deconstructs the confinement imposed by their present. Musical or rhythmic nature of memory helps these prisoners to take flight into the universe of freedom. What Jenny Edkins says in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (2003) about memory can take us far to its understanding in the context of the above piece of "Chasing Dream": "The production of memory is a performative practice, and

inevitably social" (54). Edkins' point about memory seems reasonable to me in the sense that memory always has some seeds of or signs of life. Life can be best pictured in its performative movement. In the context of the above extract of poetry, Subedi's persona and his alter egos would like to engage themselves in a performative movement that would express their freedom, and the suitable performative movement in their confinement is dancing. Such dancing performance cannot be realized alone. So, not only Subedi's persona but his friends involve in it. This proves that memory is social which Edkins suggested above. This idea of memory is reinforced by Alistair Thomason's opinion: "Our remembering changes in relation to shifts in the particular publics in which we live, and as the general public field of representations alters" (quoted in Edkins 54). In other words, the way of remembering alters with the alteration of the situation of the subject, or the publics in which he or she lives.

The sense of freedom that Subedi's persona has suggested in "Chasing Dreams" does not imply the freedom only at physical level but at the spiritual one. People can achieve physical freedom when they get equal space and opportunities to lead their lives ahead. But the spiritual freedom gets realized in our lives only after we have got-rid of the way of thinking that regards material property as the ends of human beings. To its extreme limit, such attitude to physical property will produce money-minded characters who can even sell themselves for money. Subedi's sense of humanity gets ashamed at such materialistic thinking. So, as a genuine freedom fighter, Subedi's persona wants to make Nepalese people free from materialistic pollution that is deeply rooted in their minds. By bringing the reference to the present state of Pokhara city, particularly the locality of Phewa Tal, Subedi's persona of the poem "Phewa Tal" opens his door of memory to make us see how Pokhara is still waiting to be born in the mind of Nepalese people:

Spreading over the rug  
 The faked antiques  
 By the names  
 "Future way guest house"  
 "Mouth-watering deserts"  
 "Moon dance" and "Solitary" restaurants  
 "Beam beam" and "Tranquility" lodges  
 "Baby love juice centre"  
 And the ultimate  
 "Boomerang restaurant"  
 Pokhara waits  
 On the fringe of her own dreams. (19)

The intention behind the production of the above piece of poetry is to make its readers engage in recreating Pokhara with all her original heritage. Of course, Nepal is very rich in its heritage but people make fun of antiques by projecting them as the commodities of the market and selling them for money. Whatever the language is developed for selling Pokhara, it is all fake like a cheque without money in its related account. The language that is created to advertise or sell Pokhara fails to represent the genuine tone of her original heritage. The reason for this kind of failure is the materialistically hungry attitude that the sellers have towards Pokhara. True identity of Pokhara needs to be recreated with a feeling of devotion not to money but to her original heritage. In *The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theater Anthropology*, Eugenio Barba writes that "memory guides our actions. It is memory which makes it possible for us to penetrate beneath the skin of the times and to find the numerous paths which lead to our origins" (47). Subedi has realized that present time is thick with

materialistic greed and corruption. So his effort is to use memory to penetrate the present layer of the people's minds to make them aware of the fact that there is something more valuable than money in the origin of Pokhara that can add to the glory of Nepal.

The range of freedom that Subedi's persona shows is so wide that it embraces all humanity with its variations of languages and cultures. As an ambitious seeker, he seems to be seeking a broader medium of expression. In the preface to his *Chasing Dreams*, Subedi clarifies how in his journey he happened to embrace other languages with his own mother language Nepali: "The twilight of linguistic consciousness, the meaningfully absurd relationship with a foreign language are parts of my real experience. That consciousness has been enriched from my encounter with Scottish, English and American poets ..." (ii). Beyond these foreign languages, his liberal mind loves and embraces other languages of Nepal like Newari and Limbu. While singing the songs of silence and freedom, he remembers the songs of Scottish language, Newari language, Limbu language including those in Nepali language:

Step we gaily on we go

Heel per heel'n toe per toe

Natable baunna dhoka

Nepale rajeko darbara<sup>2</sup>

Wochugalli thochugalli

Makhan toya gallire<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The palace of the Nepali king  
Nine-storied with fifty-two doors (Subedi's translations)

Tumyxang hang fungse

Khepsenggo kugha

Huk nechchi phaktunglo.<sup>4</sup> (54-55)

Here we perceive different voices singing different songs in different languages. They are supposed to be singing their own times together to the rhythms of their own dreams. In different nations and ethnic communities, there may be various dreams waiting to be transformed into real life. Those who sing such songs of silence or dreams are the alter egos of Subedi. In other words, they are what Subedi experiences in his life. They reflect Subedi in one way or other. The first pair is Scottish highland song. This song which is popular in Scotland in its time reflects people's movement that goes with up and down rhythms. It implies Subedi's journey across the world seeking something 'better' and 'faster'. The second pair is an old Nepali song. It was very popular in its time. The singers of the time might have sung this song to reflect or express their own dreams or desires of having a big building in their lives. Next reason for this singing might be to express their pride in being the citizens of Nepal where there is such a big building. The third pair reflects different lanes of memories patterned in Subedi's mind. Similarly, the final song in the above sequence suggests the humble condition of Subedi's alter ego who is begging some people to get listened to. He is trying to create his voice publicly. Finally, Subedi's persona invites his alter egos to share with his dreams:

All for my dreams

Come and share them with me

---

<sup>3</sup> What is this lane, that's that lane  
It's the Makkhan lane (Subedi's translations)

<sup>4</sup> Oh brothers listen to my song  
Folding my hands I pray to you (Subedi's translations)

For we all live

On their hinterlands. (55)

Subedi's persona represents the voices of all those people whose identity is lost for the cause of gender, class, ethnicity, and the conditions of minority. So all these voices or alter egos through his poems make musical chords to experience a sense of freedom together. Duncan Bell's reference to what Jeffrey Olick argues about memory in *Memory, Trauma and World Politics* reinforces the plurality of approaches that Subedi has shown in his use of memory: "The study of memory forms a 'nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centreless enterprise, and work in different historical, geographical, and disciplinary contexts proceeds largely independently of work in other such contexts" (3). In other words, memory proceeds to subvert the stiffness of a paradigm, a centre or a locality, and liberates the space for plural voices. Subedi does the same by using memory in his *Chasing Dreams* as we can observe the voices of people having different languages, cultures, and localities in the songs mentioned above. In this regard, the idea about memory of Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey is worth remembering, which we find in *Death, Memory and Culture*: "All memories and 'Other': they always relate to absence ..." (126). To put it in another way, all those who are made silent or absent are in the risk being 'Other', and the 'Other' exists in memory. Similarly, the voices which are ignored as 'Other' flow in their own poetry of different languages and cultures.

Subedi's use of nostalgia has helped him more in penetrating into the invisibility and confusion of the present that he sees in Kahtmandu city. His encounter with invisibility caused by the layers of lies and disbeliefs in the city can be observed in the poem "Trail of Smoke" that runs this way:

I borrow somebody's dirty handkerchief

Of disbelief  
 And wrap up my heart  
 Piles of garbage-lies  
 Choke the lanes of my loving,  
 Hearts close in silence  
 Creaking. (15)

His poetic persona in this extract feels human life in Kathmandu getting suffocated due to the pollution of lies and disbeliefs having pervasive growth in the city.

Similarly, his condition as an outsider gets worse when a house owner kicks him out.

The expression of this bitter experience flows in the following lines from the poem "Home and Vision":

The first time in a while carrying my days,  
 I arrived at that place I craved to be  
 Her home  
 She parceled before me in calculated packets  
 And kicked me out of its  
 Silently creaking doors. (14)

This piece of poetry presents the house owner as representing all those people of the city who think people from outside the valley as the 'other' or the outsiders. However, the indomitable character of Subedi's persona takes this maltreatment in his own way in the poem "Height":

I see my height  
 When you pull me down  
 I feel the pain of parting  
 When you shove me around. (10)



Rather than to raise aggressive actions or expressions against injustice to him, Subedi's oceanic feeling for humanity can only evaporate into soft and humble curls of poetry,

Wishing  
 Calm will return  
 To this turbulence  
 Between the lines. (9)

Between such bitter experiences of suffocation in Kathmandu city, he creates some ventilations of nostalgic memory to breathe in and out wishing for calm in future:

Tossing the sky over the rug in darkness  
 And lying down with it  
 I imagine your spring at the bottom  
 Of your power  
 That I drank before as holy  
 Now spreading across my consciousness  
 Like a dank sky  
 I choke and shriek with shame. (33)

This extract of the poem "Splintered Sun" refers to the dream that Subedi's persona has and the past time when this dream was born in his mind with inspiring words of his loving mother in the village environment which was free from any kind of pollution. Now, when he is in the city, which has layers of pollution, his previously shining sun (dream) gets splintered. Having his dream disfigured in the gutters of Kathmandu city, he is missing those days of the past very badly. By bringing his nostalgic references of his past time to the poem, Subedi hopes to wash out the ills of the city. The pollution free environment of village life, where the pure love of mother

and communal feelings of people continuously shower, is well contrasted with the filthy life of the city in this nostalgic memory so that the sincere feelings and love would pervade the life of city area. His imaginative flight over the past to create *Mandala* at present catches the spirit of Buddha with whom he opens his heart thus:

I lie crushed  
 By the grass of your  
 Nostalgia for the Mandala  
 You want to create with me  
 God, you are everywhere  
 You called  
 I missed  
 I'm angry with myself! (35)

In this extract, Subedi's persona gives way to the nostalgic memory of peace and harmony among all human beings with inspiring image of Buddha in his mind. The image of Buddha in his mind is juxtaposed here with the splintered polluted life of Kathmandu, where the persona himself lies crushed. The idea about nostalgic memory that Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer offer in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* is relevant here to understand Subedi's use of it in *Chasing Dreams*:

Nostalgic memory has ... been seen ... as a resistant relationship to the present, a 'critical utopianism' that envisions a better future. A past reconstructed through the animating vision of nostalgia can serve as a creative inspiration and possible emulation within the present, called upon to provide what the present lacks. (83)

What the above writers mean to say is that nostalgic memory has the power of correcting or inspiring present with its 'critical utopianism' and creativity that prepare

the way for better future. Subedi's use of nostalgic memory resembles the same in the sense that remembering the image of Buddha may have an effect upon present to produce peace and harmony for all human beings of the given locality.

Thus, it is clearly seen that Subedi has used personal memory in his *Chasing Dreams* to release the woes and pathos of the Subdued 'Other' that is produced by patriarchy, the rulers or the other dominant groups, and metropolitan way of life. In each poem of this text, the poetic persona represents the experiences and feelings of the people who are in marginalized condition. By using memory Subedi has given focus to these subsided corners and supplies sounds to their silences. Among the voices that break the silences, the voice that sings women's pathos holds very high pitch. In other words, the intensity of women's voice is clearly felt in the text. Subedi's persona sings women's pathos in different contexts of the text. One of the contexts in which he sings women's pathos is produced from "unwarmed beds" of women "over the rooftops of posh Kathmandu town" whose husbands are, in fact, married to drinks and gambling (18). Next contextual source of women's sounds that the persona liberates through is "grinding stone". Grinding stone produces the sound of the persona's mother, who grinds her own life for others. Another moment at which women's voice is produced with high scale in the text is the context of motherland. The land is personified to be treated as mother by the persona whereas the rulers of the land treat her as an object to be exploited to satisfy their materialistic hunger. There is another situational opening in the text out of which flows the pain of women, that is, the nature-mother that the persona feels in "Elephant Ride in the Jungle."

In addition to the immediate women's contexts from which the waves of women's pathos are released to break their silences, there are other male alter egos that strengthen the voice of Subedi's persona who comes up in the text as a freedom

fighter. They together make a chord of music and dancing that even breaks the confinement of prison to enjoy their ideal freedom that is made possible by the use of memory in the text. In this way, *Chasing Dreams* represents the dream and desires produced by patriarchy in women and those that are constructed in the minds of other minorities by the rulers and other exploiters of the metropolitan cities.

### III. The Role of Memory in Synthesizing Voices

Reading both *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* and *Chasing Dreams* has inspired the researcher to approach the voices of different times, from past to present, in the life of Nepal. The life force of both the texts comes from the silences produced by patriarchal patterns of culture, selfish rulers, and other dominant groups of people who want to modify and control other people to satisfy their materialistic desires and interests. In such texts of silences, Subedi's use of memory has been very significant as it has helped him give articulation to the subdued voices. Though these texts prepare a highway for grand marching of male and female voices from the subsided corners of their societies, the intensity of female voice catches higher pitch level than the male voice. The reason for this may be Subedi's realization that women suffer more than men in our society.

In *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, Subedi's use of memory has brought out some women characters that hold the woes and pathos of women of ancient Bhaktapur palace. Through memory, we see the condition of women in which they did not feel safe, not even in their birth places. In their own blood relations, they were considered as *other*. When the history gets written with patriarchal hands, it often grows deliberately excluding the stories of women who somehow held their life with intensity of pain and sufferings. However, Subedi gives articulation to painful experiences of women by using memory.

Among women characters of the play, Maiju is focused more than others. In the context of the play, she appears in the sad mood for she is getting married to a distant unfamiliar place. She cannot reject it as her father king has taken decision about her marriage. In the context of this sad marriage, the word "marriage" fails to connect people because it caused the women's dislocation from their birth palces or

mother lands. The significance of marriage lies in the satisfaction or happiness of the family. However, the case of Maijus in Newar society has proved that it splits the minds of a family. It shows that patriarchy does not take any responsibility for women's sensitive life. Since Maiju has already lost the hope of getting any help from her father, she has realized that she should construct her way of life herself. At this context, she compares herself with the Bagmati river, which suffers from the dirt and pollution produced by insensitive people. Still the river flows like Maijus shifting from one place to another in the name of their marriage. Anyway, Maijus and other young women were forced to be silent in their real life situations. However, Subedi's *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* provides wide space to them through memory to breathe in and exist to deconstruct the restrictions on them by patriarchy.

Besides the pathos of Maijus and other young women, there are the woes of the artists that represent the male voices from the subsided corners. Like women, the artists of Bhaktapur Durbar sacrificed their life for the interest of feudal ego. For the production of excellent art, they had to lose their limbs or get banished to satisfy the ego of a feudal king. Feudalism used its people not as human beings but as object to be exploited. The arrogant history of so-called kingship tend to leave out such pathos of its people. But they find sufficient space in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* due to the use of memory by the playwright.

Subedi shows his critical attitude through memory not only to patriarchy and feudal ego but also to materialistic tendency of marketizing the ancient valuables in the text in question. He has realized that selling our antiques for money is equivalent to selling ourselves for money.

The problems that we find in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* prove to be more or less similar in *Chasing Dreams* due to the same root cause that are gender, class,

cultural exploitation and the silences of the minority groups. As in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, *Chasing Dreams* gives more space to women's voice through the poetic persona. Women's voice gets intense in this text due to different contexts that create women's images and pathos in addition to painful experiences of real women.

Regarding the cases of real women, the case of the upper class women of the Kathmandu city is one to be taken into consideration. The hidden turbulence of these upper class women of Kathmandu city reveals a truth in the poems that women from any sector of society are subject to suffering due to the main cause of patriarchy and its treatment of money as its ends. Another context that brings out the reference to women's painful experiences is the condition of the persona's mother in which she is continuously "grinding her time." She has sacrificed her time for the upliftment of other members of the family including her son. The contexts of the text that create the images and pathos of women are those spaces in which "motherland" and "nature-mother" are considered as female sufferers due to the exploitative tendency of the rulers and materialistically interested people.

In addition to women's voices, there are male voices that are from side-corner of Kathmandu city trying to construct their identity. Among the male voices, Subedi's persona is the leading one. As a freedom fighter, the persona fights against exploitation of women, the motherland, nature-mother, and cultural products, and men from the minority side by the rulers and other dominant groups who consider material property as the ends of their life. Subedi's critical attitude is against any kind of exploitation that disregards humanity and its cultural glory.

Thus, we have seen that *Chasing Dreams* and *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* commonly reflect the dreams of those people who are treated merely as the objects. In *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*, people like Maijus, her young women friends, the artists,

the poet and Guard fall in the category of the minority and, in *Chasing Dreams*, women and other alter egos of the poetic persona, represent the voices of the subdued in our society. In both of the texts, Subedi has used memory and music to encourage the subdued voices to flow freely constructing the way forward breaking through the hegemonic history of the dominant groups. In other words, these characters of the texts produce together the chords of their tender voices that suggest many truths and faces of our life in this world. These multiple waves of voices break down whatever come on their way to form the reverse movement against any kind of hegemony. In other words, the texts in question deconstruct the egoistic monopower to reconstruct the common organic power that produces the harmonious music of whole humanity.



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