

Dominant, Residual, and Emergent Forces in Gao Xingjian's *Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather*

*The interaction of history and literature has always been an important subject among literary scholars. Cultural materialism believes that it is not only history that affects literature but literature also could be effective in understanding history. So, the relationship between literature and history is inseparable. This research paper is an attempt to analyse Gao Xingjian's story collection *Buying a Fishing Rod for my Grandfather* in the light of cultural critic, Raymond Williams' concepts of Dominant, Residual, and Emergent in one side and the major concern is to find out the reason of using such narrative technique by the author in another side. Some stories in this text show the domination to the working class people in different places like offices, business, and even at working places and some of them reflect the drastic changes in existing social phenomenon. Change always remains in the favour of those people who tend to change the society. It may not satisfy the local people every time. When the people get dissatisfied with the social change the ruling force dominates and impose the new social system. At the same time, the local people follow the system which is newly constructed though they do not agree on it is linked with 'Dominant' in Williams' term. In this phase, the marginalized group cannot forget the old formation of social system or the common people remember their past days and miss the previous practices which Williams' calls 'Residual' force. Similarly, when people do not accept the change in social structure, they cannot adopt with the newly constructed social formation. The working class people neither can forget the old state of society nor adopt the new formation and ultimately search to something another new social practice that is linked with 'Emergent' force in Williams' terminology. Finally, while analysing this text I come to comprehend that the author uses such*

narratives to show his dissatisfaction or to criticize the Cultural Movement, Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, which had held in China during 1970s.

Keywords: cultural materialism, dominant, residual, and emergent

This research paper aims to analyse Gao Xingjian's story collection, *Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather*, in the light of Raymond Williams' theory of Cultural Materialism. Xingjian, winner of 2000 AD Nobel Prize for literature, is a Chinese novelist, screenwriter, playwright, and a painter. He is the first Chinese recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature. His writing is considered to be fundamentally bizarre especially they cover the horizon of modernist creation.

The stories in this collection were written between 1983 and 1991. They take place in a parallel universe in 1980s, Chinese history, Chinese Cultural Revolution. Later on, it was translated into English by Mabel Lee in 2004. The stories in this collection are richly diverse. Everywhere in this collection are powerful psychological portrayals of characters. This collection transports the readers to the moments of day to day life experience of contemporary Chinese society. The author demonstrates different kinds of issues of the society like working class people and the characters who are victimized from the mainstream history. He attempts to portray some glimpses of Cultural Revolution which brings drastic change in Chinese society. Consequently, the characters are in dilemma and are waiting for the undecided future. This collection also reflects the past memories of the narrator. So, it is based on real life experiences.

Xingjian compiles six different stories with different subject matters to shape a historic text. It is based on some sorts of historical background. He attempts to reflect the Chinese Cultural Revolution and its consequences. The lifestyle of Chinese people has been clearly shown in a sentimental way. The stories are imbued with the characters from working class family, people compelled to migrate from their original

place, and rapid growth of industrial development. The writer remembers the past events experienced in his childhood days but they are drastically changed now. He only can remember but cannot re-establish them as they were before. Xingjian recollects the past experiences of contemporary history, before Cultural Revolution of 1970s, and attempts to present it in literary form.

Analysing the stories in terms of Williams' Cultural Materialism, it is recognized, in one dimension, that the stories are full of tragic lives of characters living in the bureaucratic society of China. According to Williams, there are clashes between cultures in a society. He also believes that the dominant culture constantly changes and it would not let the other cultures to become the leading power in the society. This tragedy is not an individual experience, but is like a collective consciousness. Each and every character is doing his or her best to change their condition into better but is opposed by the dominant. This is exactly in the line with the idea of Williams' term 'dominant' which is able to project its own ideology and way of seeing the world. The subordinates accept it as something natural and common. Although there are different types of hegemony including economic and cultural ones, hegemony is mostly declaration of the relations between economic and super-structural aspects of it. Though this collection is partly autobiography, the major concern of this paper is to show how the author fictionalizes the contemporary Chinese history and reflects the way of life of Chinese people in this collection. And the objective of this paper is to identify the purpose of author to write this text in such a way.

Different scholars have distinct opinions on this collection. In Alan Cheuse's view this collection is completely based on modernism rather than a beach book. Hearn, *Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather* is certainly not a beach book. It is a rarefied and sometimes rather beautifully composed series of prose pieces that fly

a flag announcing that China, or at least one self-exiled Chinese fiction writer, can now offer the world a full-fledged modernist fiction writer worth any serious reader's close attention" (15). Xingjian is completely modernist fiction writer who always attracts the attention of readers. To provide the abstract meaning of real experience by composing the literary text is the major feature of the writer which we can find out from this collection.

Every literary production is based on the social condition and the scenario of the time. We can identify the time period and the context by observing different aspects of products. Either they are daily use products or any literary products, they reflect the status of the existing social system. Whatever products they are, they directly or indirectly belong to the contemporary society. Xingjian creates such kind of text in order to reflect the history and historical impacts on local people. He attempts to show different lifestyles of people in the society which are caused by the change. So, in contrast to Cheuse's review, I am analysing the relationship between history and fiction in this paper.

I have chosen a British cultural critic and a Neo Marxist thinker, Raymond Williams' concept of "Dominant", "Residual", and "Emergent" which belong to Cultural Materialism to analyse this text. In *The Long Revolution*, published in 1961, Williams develops a broader definition of culture as a way of life. Drawing the ideas from Williams, M. Payne and Rae Barbara state, "A culture is composed of a set of relations between dominant, residual, and emergent forms is a way of emphasizing the uneven and dynamic quality of any particular moment" (201). The history of culture is to explore the process of dynamic change in the society and its phenomenon. The dynamic change in the society also changes the feeling of people accordingly. After getting change in the existing social structure the Dominant, Residual, and Emergent forces are developed to explain the ideological negotiations and changing feature of

the feeling structures during the time of change. Y. Jung clarifies Williams' notion as follows: "Williams' concepts of "Structure of Feeling" and Dominant, Residual, and Emergent are developed to explain the ideological negotiations and changing feature of the feeling structures during the time in addition to the dominant and oppositional forms emerged from the change and dynamism" (qtd. in Mahtabi and Eslemich 166). The idea of 'Structure of Feeling' is used by Williams to include the whole scope of the society and in an attempt to re-define the three notions of Dominant, Residual, and Emergent. In fact, 'Structure of Feeling' refers to a stage before the direct expression of disagreement against the dominant or hegemony. It is the unconscious feeling and the origin of the emergent. It means the term dominant, residual, and emergent are the factors which are created due to the change.

The 'dominant' culture refers to the state where there is the agreement though there is dissatisfaction in one's decision. It is practiced in the society in different ways. For the same concept, Gramsci calls as hegemony by which he means, "Hegemony is the active social and cultural forces" (Williams 108). He adds, "culture, as a 'whole social process,' in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of 'ideology' in any of its Marxist senses in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest" (108). The person who has the power always decides in the favor of own which may not apply to all the junior classes. In this condition, the worker or the working class people or the people who are in junior level are compelled to follow the system upper class made because neither they can avoid the work nor can revolt against it.

The dominant perspectives are the most widely practiced ones or the ones practiced by the ruling class. Within the dominant values of any culture, there are many elements of the past, or residual elements, but these elements of the past are filtered so that they can be incorporated into dominant culture. If a residual element is

truly oppositional to the dominant, the dominant tries to forget or marginalize it. In some cases, one culture becomes the dominant due to the fact that it is the culture of the majority. This type of dominance can lead to a conflict since the dominant culture wants to lead smaller cultures together while they struggle to survive.

Residual can take two roles in fundamental nature. The first role which can be assumed for it is a form that corresponds to the dominant culture. In fact, it can be a system which acts along with the dominant and according to its rules. The second role it can take is an oppositional or alternative way which is a role that takes actions against the dominant. Both of these roles can also be assumed for the emergent.

Cultural emergence is based on the creation of real, systematic conditions of transformation and it breaks the pre-determined limitations of dominance to move forward. The process of emergence, through which an emergent comes into existence, is constantly repeated in alternative and oppositional classes which are strictly limited by the including trade unions, working-class political parties, and working class life styles.

The culture refers to the overall practices from birth to death. An infant gets birth with a vacant mind and learns everything else from the society. It absorbs the issues of women, children, day to day life experiences of all people living in the society, marginalized groups, the inheritances from the past, tradition, rites and rituals, festive, and ceremonies like, birth, naming, marriage, and death. Besides these issues it also absorbs the economic status not as the base but as the superstructure. The people from different professions, who follow different religions, and who are from very low economical status are focussed in the same manner. All the people have their own culture, though they have variation in their status. Rich people have their own tradition in their home whereas the poor also have their own kind of practices. They

have variation in their celebrations but they equally satisfy. In this stand Raymond Williams states:

Culture is ordinary: that is where we must start. To grow up in the country was to see the shape of a culture, and its modes of change... To grow in that family was to see the shaping of minds: the learning of new skills, the shifting of relationships, the emergence of different language and ideas. ..Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning... We use the word culture in two senses: to mean a whole way of life- the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning- the special processes of discovery and creative effort. (92-93)

Culture is different according to the people's lifestyles. They have their own traditions, values and the cultural meanings. Different social groups have different purposes to continue the tradition. But it is fact that every society has its own cultural practice and the tradition according to the livelihood.

Xingjian initiates this story collection with the story "Temple" which depicts different people from different social strata. In the story, a newly married couple plans to visit a new place for their honeymoon. An unnamed first person narrator requests a half month's leave but the job officer does not allow him the time he has asked for. Though he has filled up the leave form for a half month, he has been compelled to reduce his leave only a single week for the honeymoon vacation because he does not want the salary be deducted. The narration unfolds:

That director of mine was so miserly: anyone who went to him requesting leave had to haggle; there were never instant approvals. The two weeks I had written in my application he changed to one week,

including a Sunday, and it was with reluctance that he said, "I'll expect you to be back at work by the due date." . . . "Of course, of course," I said. "We wouldn't be able to afford the salary deduction if we stayed any longer." It was only then that he signed his name, thereby granting us permission to go on leave. (Xingjian 3)

The job officer behaves him very unkindly. He is very miser to his workers. Anyone who goes to request for leave should bargain a lot. His disagreement to provide the leave to the workers shows his superiority and bourgeois behaviour which is dominant in nature. He has reduced the leave of two weeks into a single week including Sunday without understanding the narrator's psyche. The narrator also easily agrees with the officer's decision without any objection because he has the anxiety of salary reduction. From the narrator's defeating bargain with the job officer for the leave, we can understand that the narrator is the member who represents the working class family and is dominated by the senior class officer. The agreement to deduct the leave days is directly linked with the term 'dominant' in Raymond Williams' perspective.

The 'dominant' culture is such a state where an institution or a single member agrees to the decision whatever the dominant class makes. A member or any group of a society agrees to the decision though they are not satisfied in this situation. A British scholar and the cultural critic, Raymond Williams argues:

The dominant culture in a society refers to the established language, religion, values, rituals, and social customs which are often considered as the norm for the society as a whole. . . . The dominant culture is usually in the majority and achieves its dominance by controlling social institutions such as communicational systems, educational institutions, artistic expressions, laws, political processes, and business. (Mahtabi 167)

One remains superior and another is compelled to be the inferior though they are not satisfied in dominant culture. One social group becomes the ruling class whereas another remains the ruled class. Ruling class always remains the dominant where as ruled class as dominated. And the ruled class neither can escape the ruling class nor can remain with satisfaction. So, so-called minor group always agree to the dominant group. Even in the story “Temple”, On the one hand, the narrator with his bride is dominated by his job officer in his work place. He is not given any opportunity to enjoy his honeymoon. And on the other hand, he easily agrees to deduct his leave and also to return to the work before the due date.

The narrator in this story tells that he cannot go to the restaurants with his friends. He gets the salary at the beginning of the month but that does not last to buy a pack of cigarette at the end of the same month. He also expresses that he needs to search the coins in the drawers. He adds:

I wasn't a bachelor anymore. I had a family. I would no longer be able to go off to restaurants with friends as soon as I got paid at the beginning of the month. I wouldn't be able to spend so recklessly that by the end of the month I wouldn't have the money to buy a pack of cigarettes and would have to go through my pockets and search the drawers for coins. (3-4)

This story is one of the perfect examples that demonstrate the real scenario of the poverty and working class people of contemporary society. There is a newly married couple who has faced the crisis of money. It is clearly shown that the boy is from middle class family. If he had been from an aristocratic family, he would not have to care about the expenditure in his honeymoon. He realizes his responsibility after getting married that he should not spend the money as the bachelors do.

In the premises of temple in the story “Temple” a man appears with hard and rough palms. The bag he carries is also torn. He has worn the leather shoes with soles made from rubber tires. And the clothes he wears are torn in many places. The narrator, noticing to the man who is coming towards the temple, says:

He stopped in front of the incense burner and, striking it with one hand, made it ring. His fingers, gnarled and rough, looked as if they, too, were made of cast iron. In his other hand he held a tattered black cotton bag. He didn't seem to be a commune member who had come to tend the vegetables. . . The eyes under those thick eyebrows had become less stern, and he appeared well meaning. He was wearing leather shoes with soles made from rubber tires, and the seams had split in places. The legs of his trousers were wet, so it was obvious he had come across the river from town.(12-13)

The man who appears in the premises of the temple does not belong to the commune member in his appearance. The people's commune was the highest of three administrative levels in rural areas of China for three decades from 1950s. The communes had governmental, political, and economic functions during the Cultural Revolution. These members directly represent the bureaucratic personnel and simply known as the rich people. So that they are not supposed to present the way a man appears in the temple. We easily can analyze that man as the members are the representative of the working class people in China. The burnt face by the sun, his rough hands as cast iron, his leather shoes with soles made from rubber tires, as well as the split wears display the real status of a working class person. According to the narrator, the man's appearance does not seem to be very the rich.

Similarly, the author creates such a character who does not smoke readymade cigarettes in, the title story, “Buying a Fishing rod for my Grandfather” too. He tells

that those cigarettes do not taste as the tobacco. He rolls the tobacco in to a piece of newspaper and licks with his spit then smokes them. The narrator says:

My grandfather didn't smoke ready-rolled cigarettes. He ridiculed them as paper smokes and said they were more grass than tobacco that they hardly tasted of tobacco. I would watch his gnarled fingers rub a dried tobacco leaf into shreds. Then all he had to do was tear off a piece of newspaper, roll the tobacco in it, and give it a lick. . . Still, he kept on smoking until his face and fingernails were the color of his tobacco, and he himself was like a dried tobacco leaf, thin and brittle, and it worried me that if he wasn't careful and bumped into something, he might break into little pieces. . . Every summer the crack grew longer, and she kept waiting for a mat mender to come; she waited many years, but no mender came. (64-66)

The status of narrator's grandfather does not seem as a high class family. He smokes the tobacco by rolling the newspaper and licking to paste it. His body structure is very sympathetic and poor that looks like a dried tobacco leaf, thin and brittle senses us that he directly belongs to the working class person. He continues smoking though his face and the fingernails are turned into the color of tobacco itself. These all evidences prove that the narrator's grandfather represents the socially marginalized and belongs to the low economic status.

As every literary text has some sort of contextual effects, Xingjian's stories also cannot be exceptional from the contextual references. In another words, it can be directly understood that the writer has fictionalized the Chinese history of Cultural Revolution through the literary text. Xingjian writes this text in order to remember and address to the destroyed heritages. He can only remember but cannot establish as they were. He also gives the foreshadowing of his life through his story because he

writes this text just before his exile to Paris, he had got French Citizenship in 1998. When he goes to Paris then he surely carries the baggage of Chinese culture and remembers his past experiences in China.

At the time of writing this story the whole structure of China changes. So the writer compares the contemporary China with the China before there was Cultural Revolution through such narratives. The unnamed narrator and his new bride alter their honeymoon plans to pause in a provincial town. Fangfang, the bride and the major character in the story "Temple", shows the destructed materials on temple. The broken piece of tile is hanging on the edge of the temple and may hurt anyone in anytime. The narrator states, "A broken tile at the edge of the eave looked as if it were about to fall. Probably it had sat that way for years without falling. "That tile is about to fall," Fangfang said. She, too, had noticed the broken tile hanging there precariously. "It would be good if it fell. Otherwise it might injure someone," she mumbled." (15-16). Though the two members are blissfully happy, they find the town's inhabitants and its Temple of Perfect Benevolence vaguely distressing. A muted reference to the Cultural Revolution may explain the anxiety through these representative people. The bride and her husband hope to be blessed as the perfect benevolence in their temple's visit, their expectation to be purified from their problems gets lost while visualizing the destroyed temple.

The writer, in this collection, directly does not show the base/superstructure model of mode of production. Ronald Stanley Neale quotes the idea of Raymond Williams, the father of cultural studies, that "Williams argues that culture is not merely a reflection of economic reality, 'the base', nor an expression of process in it" (199). According to Williams, the change in the context of village in the title story is not only the matter of economy but it is the way of life of people. The change automatically occurs in the course of time. Economy is a means of development but

there is not any base which completely determines the drastic change. Jackson argues, "The notion of "cultural materialism" seeks to reintegrate culture with the same material, natural world as economics. From a cultural materialist viewpoint, all of everyday life, including economic activities is cultural and reproduced by material means; culture and economics are no longer separable" (222). As Jackson states, every culture and the economics are inseparable. Each and every culture is run with the economic practices. So, the development in "Temple" as well as in the title story is not only the product of economy.

There is the crowd of people in the street for shopping on the way to the old Temple. Some of them running horses, carts, and other simple vehicles have suggested that senses that it is semi-urbanized place which is the product of economic activities. Jackson argues "Culture usually denotes the whole way of life of a society, not merely artistic activities. It follows that economic behaviour, along with everything else, has a cultural side and that the work of anthropologists should be relevant to economics" (226). There are different economic activities in the story, "Temple" as well as the title story. First of all, a newly married couple visits to the provincial state through train and the whole changing structure like road construction, filling the river and making the park in the title story is also the contribution of economy.

Xingjian focuses on the condition of huge change in narrator's village. The road is constructed, bridge is made, and every old cultural heritage is being destroyed to build a new one. One critic, in this response, quotes the idea of Michael D. Bristol, a cultural materialist, who criticises new historicism that "Power is everywhere, it is insidious, it has a million disguises" (Sinfield 34). According to Bristol, the power is used in various ways. The total village has been changed by constructing the new

structures in "Buying a Fishing Rod for my Grandfather". So, the power has been used everywhere in its various ways.

The narrator in the title story visits his old house and finds everything changed. The new construction has replaced the old and cultural heritages along with the language accent. The narrator of this story states:

When I stop two young women and ask them, they just laugh. "Goose" doesn't understand why they're laughing. They laugh so hard, they can't answer, and their faces look like two pieces of red cloth. Their faces aren't red because they, too, are wearing bras, but because when I say "Nanhu Road," I also say nanbetween the back palate and throat, and it sounds funny to them. (71)

When he visits his grandfather's home, he cannot recognize the way to home properly. He asks two women then they respond differently than his expectation. He does not find out the way to 'Nanhu Road.' The way in his mind and the newly construction remains drastically changed. The way of life of women also changes. The women had never used bras in his childhood ages but now they, he notices, do. The local people's lifestyle along with the language accent changes due to the development in the local place. A cultural critic, Ronald Stanley Neale argues:

Williams argues upon the fact that verbal signs are not signals, verbal signs are polysemic and their signification changes over time. Therefore, argues Williams, 'conventional' rather than 'arbitrary' best describes the status of verbal signs, because conventions, while binding, are only more or less binding. They may be changed by and through human social activity. Therefore, language should be thought of as activity, constitutive and rooted in material practice, rather than structured. (204)

The village is changed in such a way that even one cannot recognize the way to the home. The development does not change only the physical structures but also changes in the social customs and behaviors. When the narrator returns to his grandfather's home after long time, the local people cannot understand his verbal language he used to speak in his previous days. Similarly, the local people also cannot recognize the place the speaker asks because the whole name and the structures get changed unpredictably. The people are surprised when he names a place. He adds, "I ask where Nanhu Road is. But people look at you with surprise as if they can't understand what you are saying" (70). He wants to ask the way to the home but the people stare him as they understand nothing. The local people cannot trace the exact location the speaker asked because the speaker has been there after a decade or more. During the time the local government changes the name of places and the whole social structures of the village. He exclaims further:

Later, I find an older man and ask him where the lake used to be. If I know where the lake was, it will be easy to find the stone bridge, and when I find the stone bridge, it will be easy to find Nanhu Road, and when I find Nanhu Road, I'll be able to feel the way to my old home. The lake? Which lake? The lake that was filled in. Oh, that lake, the lake that was filled in is right here. He points with his foot. This used to be the lake. . . The stone bridges were all demolished and the new ones use reinforced concrete. You understand. You understand that what used to be no longer exists. It is futile to ask about a street and street number that used to exist, you will have to rely on your memory.

(71)

The village gets changed such a way that one cannot understand and recognize the way to reach in specific place they want to visit. All structure of the land, famous

places, river, bridges, and other structures have been replaced by newly constructed structures. The old things which were in the memory are only for memorizing. All unpaved roads are paved, the old existences are getting demolished, and new ones use reinforced concrete. The existence of all things even the street and the street numbers are completely changed. From these evidences we understand that the author of this text has shown the material world and the chronological development of cultural practices. William Alexander Jackson argues:

The motivation behind cultural materialism is to demonstrate that all cultures are adapted to, and explicable through, their material environment. Cultures may be differentiated by geographical region, with no universal pattern of development, but in all cases the evolution of a culture is determined by the ability to cope with the challenges of the material world. (227)

The writer even in the title story shows the pattern of development in different ways. Though the people are not happy with the developmental activities, the physical changes have been occurred in the villages. The physical structures have been changed in such a way that a person even cannot recognize the way to the old home. It means the things they used to be are no longer in existence now. The structures along with streets get absolutely changed which is the contribution of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The major objective of the revolution was, according to Xing Li, the founder of a website named FanFiction.Net:

Production, planned wealth distribution and resource allocation, struggle for elimination of economic and political inequalities and class privileges, utilization of human potentials, dominance of the interest of the immediate producers at the workplace and of working people in all spheres of society including control over politics and

ideas. Secondly, a Dengist China that is returning to market capitalism based on privatization of ownership, marketization of the means of production and resource distribution, acceptance of economic inequities and political privileges, emphasis on science and technology as the primary productive forces, promotion of the interests of the privileged, professional and entrepreneur classes, and commercialization of welfare and social security benefits. (Li 137)

As the goals taken by the Chinese revolutionist leaders, the existing social system remained drastically changed during a decade. The purpose of the Cultural Revolution is to abolish the old things and to construct completely new formation.

The narrator in the title story shows the devastation of old heritages. He states, “At the end of the needle is a dead city. Is it the ancient city of Loulan? The ruins are right below and you can see the collapsed walls. The palaces have all lost their domes: here the ancient cultures of Persia and China once fused then sank into the desert” (83). The speaker reaches nearby his grandfather’s home. Whatever he visualizes is only the devastation of old heritages and the collapse of the ancient city. Only the remains of collapsed walls, the palaces that do not have any domes on the top, and the entire valuable and important places are changed into desert. These all incidents are the product of The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution.

Xingjian attempts to portray the glimpses of Chinese Cultural Revolution and the way of life in these stories. He addresses different factors like politics, economics, history and other changes brought by the Movement in the contemporary society of China. According to the motto of the Cultural Revolution, change in old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habit, the revolution devastates the whole bourgeoisie structures like temple, statues, monuments and other cultural heritages and creates new things to replace them. The narrator states:

I never imagined that the fish would all die, that the sparkling lake would turn into a foul pond, that the foul pond would then be filled in, and that I would not be able to find the way to my old home. . . I ask where Nanhu Road is. But people look at you with surprise, as if they can't understand what you are saying. (70)

When the whole structure is getting changed the narrator becomes surprised. Even he did not think such kind of change and ruin in the village. The Chinese Cultural Revolution that had taken place in 1980s which had drastically brought changes in various sectors of Chinese society like public places, buildings, statues, and other various infrastructures as well as the human lifestyle. Many structures were broken and destroyed during revolution. The speaker again conveys his dissatisfaction that:

Alone in the middle of the ruins of Loulan, you look around. You make out the brick room in the courtyard with the gate screen depicting Good Fortune, Prosperity, Longevity, and Happiness. It is where Blackie used to sleep and where my grandfather kept his little iron bucket for the worms: it is my grandfather's room. Before the wall collapsed, my grandfather's shotgun hung on it. That should be the passageway leading to the back courtyard, to Zaowa's home. (86)

However, the previous structure was in existence the new construction cannot give the satisfaction to the speaker. He assumes the old heritages as the symbols of purity, prosperity, longevity, and happiness but they have been devastated now on which he regrets.

The title story, "Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather," employs collages of memory and haunting daydreams to mourn the destruction of the village of narrator's grandfather. The speaker starts his story from a new shop that sells fishing equipments. He wants to change his grandfather's old fishing rod. He remembers his

grandfather very much because of change. He tells the story in flashback. He returns to his village after long time to fulfil his homesickness. He narrates, "I should visit my old home to get over my homesickness" (69). There is massive change in the village which led him remember the various aspects of past experiences. The narrator directly expresses that:

I remember being a child, things that happened when I was a child. I remember that if my grandfather heard someone was going to the provincial capital, he would be sure to ask the person to bring back fishing hooks for him, as if fish could only be caught with hooks bought in the big city. I also remember his mumbling that the rods sold in the city had reels. . . I remember that I broke my grandfather's favorite fishing rod when I fell. He was going fishing, and I had volunteered to carry the rod. I had it on my shoulder as I ran on ahead. I wasn't careful, and when I fell, the rod caught in the window of a house. My grandfather almost wept as he stroked the broken fishing rod. (64-65)

The narrator remembers the past experiences when he faces the changes in the place where he was born and passed his childhood days with his grandfather. When he reaches to the village he gets each and everything changed. He remembers the childhood experiences that his grandfather's purpose to bring the fishing hook to them who are going to the provincial state. He again remembers that once he had broken the fishing rod while he fell off. And he also remembers his volunteering to his grandfather while fishing. So, it is a perfect memory story which can be directly connected with Raymond Williams' concept Residual.

Residual is meant to those beliefs and practices that are derived from an earlier stage of the society and which may reflect the different social formation than the

present time. Residual beliefs may remain dominant even after the social conditions that made them dominant disappear. Some residual practices may be very old and archaic but their presence is still felt. In other words, residual is what is left from the past. In contrast, Raymond Williams states that residual “has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (122). According to him, residual plays an active role in the present time since in practice it is a part of the dominant norms of the current society. Even more, dominant culture decides and determines the survival or removal of a residual.

The narrator remembers his past experiences while he is in the old village. It also conveys the past experiences and compares with the destructed heritages. The narrator in this story, time and again, remembers the past events and the things. Everything the narrator used to see gets changed in the village such as foul pond, river, the Nanhu Road, Gandi Temple, which were in existence in the past but not now as they were. So, he is recalling his past experiences as he turns the paper of an interesting book. He finds the things no longer are same as before. Then he compares them with previous things with which he used to be familiar. Xingjian writes:

But the village has changed so much you can't recognize it. The dirt roads are now asphalt, and there are prefab buildings, all new and exactly the same. On the streets women of all ages are wearing bras, and they wear flimsy shirts to show them off, just as each rooftop must have an aerial to show there's a television in the house. A house without an aerial stands out and is regarded as defective. And of course everyone watches the same programs. From 7:00 to 7:30 it's the national news. . . and from 10:00 to 11:00 old movies. The movies

aren't aired every day: on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, it's TV series instead. (69-70)

The Cultural Revolution in China brought such a change in the existing social structure that cannot be compared with previous status. The Revolution abolishes the whole social system in order to establish the new social formation that is ruled by the proletarians. And in the name of preserving the Chinese Communism the revolutionists impose the Mao Zedong Thought which is simply known as Maoism. The Maoists' "Down to the Countryside Movement" drastically changes the villages from their root standing. The road expansion occurs everywhere in countryside. The achievement in various sectors changes the lifestyle of local people. The revolution provides the great expansion of road transformation, electricity, communication, and the way of life. By which the local people just can remember their past experiences and compare with the present situation.

By standing on the base of Cultural Revolution, the author carries the major character who was taking part in the mission that was implemented by the contemporary government. He shows the real experience of the first person omniscient unnamed character's experience. In this story the narrator and his newly married wife Fangfang, the major character, have gone to the provincial state for their honeymoon celebration. On the way to the Temple of Perfect Benevolence, they needed to cross a semi-urban town. At that time he immediately remembers his past experience that he had one visited there for the help of rural people for their personal, political, social, and economical growth to which we can connect with Williams' concept Residual. Fangfang's newly married husband memorizes the place that, "It all felt so different from the time when we were graduates sent to work in the countryside. Now we were just visitors passing through, tourists, and the complicated relationships between the people here had nothing to do with us. Inevitably, this made

us city dwellers feels somewhat superior” (7). The government once had compelled to the city dwellers to go to the countryside and serve the people of countryside. At that time all the aristocratic people and the city dwellers were implement the governmental system to go to the rural are for several years. The real witnessed man and the founder of the FanFiction, Xing Li argues in response to the government’s rule to serve the countryside to develop the nation that:

During the CR, the policies of "intellectuals going to the countryside" and "agriculture linking with industry" brought a large number of technicians to the rural areas. As a result, the benefits to rural development were far-reaching, and many communal and village technologies and enterprises were developed during this period. Even some severe critics of the CR admit that the policy of promoting communal and village enterprises reduced the gap between urban and rural areas, and the present success of township enterprises should be seen as an extension or continuation of communal and village enterprises. Therefore, these developments, whose impact remains significant, must receive an objective assessment. (156- 57)

During the first phase of the Cultural Revolution rural development was prioritized. For the rural development all the skilled manpower of city area were appointed to the countryside. At that time all the facilities like; health, education, communication, and other various kinds of services in town were banned.

The current structure remains different from what he had known. And remembers his past experiences. The narrator again asks to the lake. After he understands that the lake is filled up then he asked Guandi Temple. Suddenly he remembers that, "Guandi Temple burned down after being struck by lightning, but that was before I was capable of remembering anything" (74). He remembers the

previous structures when he sees them different now. It means the change leads him to the 'Residual' mood in Williams' term. Raymond Williams in his book *Culture and Materialism*, distinguished between residual and emergent based on the fact that:

Residual includes experiences, meanings and values which cannot be verified in terms of dominant culture. While, the emergent includes the new meanings and values, practices which are continually being created and there has been, much earlier, a concern to be included in dominant culture. Within the dominant, there are also the emergent elements that are considerably alternative to the dominant. (40-41)

These must be distinguished from those novel elements of the dominant. The emergent practices those elements unconsciously developed while the society changes out of a new set of social interactions. They are often very different from the dominant and actively challenge it. They may eventually become dominant themselves, but that is not an inevitable process. The emergent movements usually begin at the margins of a society but become less marginal later. However, this loss of marginality never changes into centrality. That is, the dominant practices were first emergent but it does not mean that all of them could become dominants.

The speaker of the story remembers his grandmother and his own past experiences that he used to jump from rock to rock, as well as his grandfather in which he used to take him when he reaches to riverbank in the title story. He frequently goes in his past and recently comes in his present time. A sparkling lake has been paved over, and the river where the narrator and his grandfather used to fish is dry. He sees the things and immediately remembers his past experiences. He remembers the dog, Blackie, the rooster, and his grandmother's pet on the way to his old home. When he reaches nearby a destroyed home, then he remembers the wall, grandfather's room and other things. He also remembers the place his grandfather

used to hang his shotgun and others because they are no longer same which were pasted in his mind. The speaker recalls his past experiences that:

I see my grandfather sitting on a small wooden stool, his back hunched, sputtering on his pipe. *Grandfather!* I call out to him, but he doesn't hear. I go right up to him and call again, *Grandfather!* He turns around but is no longer holding his pipe. Tears stream from his ancient eyes, which seem bloodshot from smoke. In winter, to get warm, he always liked to squat by the stove and burn wood. *Why are you crying, Grandfather?* I ask. He wipes the snivel with his hand. Sighing, he wipes his hand on his shoe but it doesn't leave a stain. He is wearing old cloth shoes with thick padded soles that my grandmother made for him. Without saying a word, he looks at me with his bloodshot eyes. *I've bought you a fishing rod with a hand reel,* I tell him. He grunts deep in his throat but without any enthusiasm. (76-77)

The narrator reaches his old ruined house and he has hallucination because he looks his symbolic grandfather who is crying in distress over there though he is alive now. He attempts to call to grandfather but does not listen. The grandfather wipes the snivel with his hand on old shoes with thick padded soles which were made by his grandmother. He tells that he brings the fishing rod to his grandfather but now he shows no enthusiasm on such stuffs. Once he used to ask to bring fishing rod to anyone who had gone to provincial state but now he finds it at his home but he remains indifference on it because of Cultural Revolution. That means he is not in favor of it.

The narrator remembers the conversation with his grandfather about haunting in past. He was in his childhood age at that time. He rarely could understand his grandfather's objection. When he reaches in the ruined house and he remembers the

same discussion about the bad people's bad activities. The narrator in the title story states:

Grandfather, when you saw the tiger were you scared?

Bad people scare me, not tigers.

Grandfather, have you ever run into bad people?

There aren't many tigers but lots of bad people, only you can't shoot people.

But they're bad!

You can't tell right away whether they're good or bad. . .

The law can't control bad people, because bad people are bad in their hearts.

But they do bad things! (81)

The speaker remembers the dissatisfaction of his grandfather. His grandfather calls the revolutionaries as bad people. By referring to the social activators, he accuses them as law breakers. They destroy the old monuments, temples, and valuable heritages which are against the rule of nation. The people who destruct the old heritages, the grandfather calls, are bad people which is directly linked with Residual in William's term.

The author has used the past experiences in "In The Park". The first person narrator remembers his past days while meeting with his childhood friend after long time. He remembers the detail practices he used to do in his childhood days. He remembers:

"I remember when I was a child, I really liked coming to this park to roll around on the grass."

"I used to come with my father and mother."

"I really liked it when there were other children."

“Yes.”

“Especially when you were there as well.”

“I remember.” . . .

“I don’t remember, but I liked playing with you and I even used to kick a rubber ball with you.”

“Nonsense, you didn’t ever kick a rubber ball! You used to wear little white shoes and were always afraid of getting them dirty.” (19)

The two friends, from their childhood days, have talked about their past experiences whatever they had experienced in their past time. The speaker tells that he used to come usually in this park to roll on the grass with his parents. He also remembers that he was playing with his other friends along with the girl friend with whom he is talking now. Such kind of remembering to the past experiences is, Williams, called Residual part of the life.

The experience we recall our past is called Residual. Mandy Payne and Rae Barbara, the cultural critics, re-define it as, “Residual does not exist within or alongside the dominant culture. It operates in a process of continual tension, which can take the form of both incorporation and opposition within it. Residual forms are different from archaic ones in that they are still alive; they have use and relevance within contemporary culture” (201). It demonstrates a previous institution or tradition which is still active as a memory in the present, and therefore can reinforce the dominant culture or, on the contrary, it can provide the materials for an alternative or opposition to it. Even in the story also we find the residual part of speaker’s life. The narrator again remembers his past evidences while seeing the devastation of his grandfather’s house. He adds:

At the bottom of the dune lies the dead fish that cut your finger without drawing blood. Fish blood and human blood have an odor, but dried

fish can't bleed. Ignoring the pain in your finger, you dig hard and uncover a collapsed wall. It's the wall of the courtyard of your childhood.

Behind it was a date tree, and once you sneaked off with your grandfather's fishing rod to knock down dates that you shared with her. She walks out of the ruins and you follow, wanting to be sure that it is the girl with whom you had shared the dates. (86)

The narrator time and again goes to his past life while facing the absolute change in the village. He starts to dig out the wall of his ruined house then he finds out the dried fish under the dune. Though it cuts his finger he continues to excavate the wall by ignoring the pain and bleeding. And he finds out the remaining of the tree where he used to date to a girl named Zaowa. From these all evidences we can easily understand that only the change in existing social system cannot satisfy the people.

Gao's the title story gives many glimpses of Cultural Revolution through a character who has returned back his grandfather's village after long time. When he returns back from the town, he finds almost structures are changed. First of all, he wants to change the fishing rod of his grandfather when he was child. And secondly, he is coming to the village by carrying a new fishing rod for his grandfather and amazes with the physical changes in the village. He has remembered his past experiences as well as thinks for the coming days. He thinks that:

It is riddled with rust and bits of dirt are falling out of it. I should visit my old home to get over my homesickness.

But first I must find a safe place to put the rod. If that young son of mine sees it, he'll wreck it. I hear my wife shouting at me, *why did you have to buy that? It's cramped enough in here already. Where will you*

put the thing? I put it above the toilet tank in the bathroom, the only place my son can't reach, unless he climbs onto a stool. (69)

The narrator in this story has merged the experiences of his childhood days and the child now he has. Sometimes he remembers the days when he used to do different kinds of mistakes and compares them with his son's behaviours by which he can protect the fishing rod he brings with him. From this point we easily come to know that he wants to save his fishing rod from his small son by remembering his own days. This state Williams terms as 'Emergent'. Mandy Payne and Rae Barbara argue,

"Emergent cultures also develop in relation to dominant formations, and in practice there is not a clear cut distinction between residual and emergent forms since both of them consist of private or marginalized spheres of experience which the dominant culture initially fails to acknowledge or recognize. For example, new social forces of feminism and green politics challenge both the dominant culture and residual oppositional forms such as the traditional labor movement, yet may themselves base their identities on selective traditions, or on residual notions of nature". (201)

Though the Residual and Emergent do not have clear cut distinction, Emergent does not remain only in the past as Residual does, it also forwards to the future. In the title story, when the narrator reaches to his grandfather's home by caring the fishing rod then he directly remembers his past experiences that he had broken his grandfather's fishing rod and wants to protect it with his son. The appropriate place he searches to put the fishing rod safe is the Emergent part in the term of Williams.

"In the Park" is a story which portrays the clear picture of past memories and the unexpected achievements. In this story a woman is frequently crying. The childhood friends, who meet in the park, try to convince her but they cannot. She

seems lamenting on anything which is caused by destruction due to revolution. The condition of woman is very sympathetic and underprivileged. According to her evidences it is understood that she neither can forget her past experiences nor can adopt the newly formed institutions. The author creates such a character that cannot console own self. The childhood friends, who have met after long time, frequently notice her that she is crying by looking to a direction. They easily come to conclusion that she was waiting for someone.

The marginalized character knells her head, cries, and looks far away by expecting someone to come and meet but no one visits there until sun set. The author presents, "On the slope it is becoming dark in the grove and the young woman on the bench is sitting with her head bowed. She seems to look at her watch and then stands up. She is holding her handbag but decides to put it down again on the bench. . . She's waiting for someone. Waiting for someone is awful" (23-24). The woman presented in this story is the representative of other people who have lost their parentage and family members. We can see the great problem in the life of woman. The suffering of a woman symbolizes the problems of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution. The commitment of the leaders in contemporary China before Cultural Revolution and the common people's waiting for that promise is linked with "Emergent" in Raymond Williams' terminology. He states:

Cultural emergence is based on the creation of real, systematic condition of transformation and it breaks the pre-determined limitations of dominance to move forward. . . Moreover, emergent cultures also develop in relation to dominant formations, and in practice there is not a clear cut distinction between residual and emergent forms since both of them consists of private or marginalized

spheres of experience which the dominant culture initially fails to acknowledge or recognize.(167)

The woman "In the Park" is in Williams' emergent position because she has any expectation that something will be fulfilled that was promised before. It also can be analysed that the Cultural Revolution does not only affect positive in transformation of the society but also separates the family members with each other and makes some people in the state of orphanage as well as widowed. From the woman's condition we easily can understand that she is waiting to her family member who will never return to home.

The same condition is created in the first story, "The Temple", too. In this story the newly married couple reaches to the Temple to the provincial state. A gentle man comes to the Temple where the couple is already there. They talk about many things and finally a small boy comes there addressed to gentleman as uncle. He immediately departs from there when the gentleman sends him from there and the couple inquires:

"Is he your son?" I asked.

The man didn't reply, but said to the boy, "Take some melon and go play. I'll catch grasshoppers for you later". . .

The man watched as the boy ran off with the wire cage in his hand.

There were deep creases at the corners of his eyes.

"He isn't my son," he said, looking down and taking out a cigarette. He struck a match and dragged hard.

Then, sensing our surprise, he added, "He's the child of my paternal cousin. I want to adopt him, but it depends on whether he's willing to come and stay with me."

Suddenly we understood that this stern man's heart was churning with emotion.

"What about your wife?" Fangfang couldn't help asking.

There was no reply. He puffed hard on his cigarette, got up, and left.

(14-15)

The small boy in this story has lost his parents. Now the gentleman wants to adopt him because he needs the parental care. The scenario reflects the problem of the Revolution held in China in 1980s. The small boy loses his parents where as the gentleman also loses his wife because he cannot reply the question of Fangfang while querying about his wife. That means some of the people lose their property, some of them lose the family members, and some of them their parents during Cultural Revolution in China.

Xingjian explores the simultaneous scale and vagueness of death in "The Accident". A man on a bicycle with an attached baby buggy rides, either carelessly or deliberately, collisions into a bus. The man is killed but his young son survives. A crowd forms passing around rumours, while the group take away the bus driver and the blood congeals on the road. The writer attempts to historicize the contemporary history through the literary text.

"What a tragedy. If he didn't have the child with him, he would have got across long ago!"

"Is there any hope for the man?"

"His brain came out?"

"I just heard this plop—"

"You heard it?"

"Yes, it went plop—"

"Stop all this talk!"

“Ai, life’s like that, a person can die just like that . . .”

What happened to the child?” someone who has just arrived asks.

“The child wasn’t hurt, it was very lucky.”

“Luckily the child was saved.”

“The man was killed!” (51-52)

The writer indicates the contemporary Chinese history of transitional point of change in one dimension. This story reflects the dead of old traditions, norms, and belief which is indicated by the death of the old man and his young son’s survival indicates the new and energetic forces are there now in the power. And we also can analyse this text from the loss of parents in another dimension. When there is the loss of parents there is the loss of culture and cultural practices.

The author shows his dissatisfaction of such disastrous Cultural Revolution through the literary form. The story, “Buying a Fishing Rod for my Grandfather” depicts the clear picture of his past experiences. He had a small dog named Blackie which was very innocent. He does not harm anything to anyone except once he pulls some feathers of his grandmother’s pet rooster. His grandmother punishes him with a broomstick until he lay his front legs flat on the ground. That means he is very obedient and sincere. But the people killed him accusing of killing their chicken. The narrator states:

Blackie was our dog, but he disappeared. Sometime later someone told my grandfather he saw Blackie’s fur drying in a courtyard. My grandfather went there, and the people claimed that Blackie had killed their chicken. It was lies. Our Blackie was very obedient, and only once was he rough with our rooster and pulled out a few feathers. He was punished with a broomstick by my grandmother until he lay whining, front paws flat on the ground, begging for forgiveness. . .

From that time on, Blackie never bothered chickens, just as a good man never fights with a woman. (79)

The narrator expresses his disappointment of killing such an innocent creature. The writer attempts to compare the innocent victim with the Cultural Revolution. The dog, narrator assumes, is not the harmful creature however they have killed it. Though the dog was innocent the people accuse it as the destructive factor. Xingjian, through this story, endeavors to express his dissatisfaction of revolutionary attempt during Cultural Revolution. The revolutionaries have killed the innocent people as well as devastate the valuable properties that lead the society into disorder.

The narrator favors the old properties and the constructions. He shows the value of old things and heritages. The carving woods used in the doors, the serpent's head on the door, he assumes, are the good luck, prosperity, longevity, and happiness. He also traces out the children's concept on the dragon's head. The narrator articulates the significant of old as:

My childhood home had an elegant, old-style courtyard. The gate screen had a relief mural inlaid with carved stone images depicting Good Fortune, Prosperity, Longevity, and Happiness. Old Man Longevity, who had half of his head missing, held a dragon-head staff. The dragon's head had worn away, but we children were absolutely sure that Old Man Longevity's staff was in the shape of a dragon's head. (72)

The narrator is regretting on his lost heritages. He remembers the old style courtyard that was fully decorated with carved stones and two dragon's head joining from opposite side exactly at the middle part of the entrance gate. It is believed that the carved stone images and the dragon at the entrance gate depict the good fortune, Prosperity, Longevity, and Happiness. Therefore, the speaker feels the loss of all these

fortune along with the destruction of the house. It means the writer is in the favor of old heritages. He valorizes the things however they are existed.

According to the Chinese history the revolutionists start to impose 'Mao Zedong Thought' which we simply understand as Maoism in China. They want to change the whole structure by destroying the old thing was not the decision of the people but the ruler's. When the society does not accept to change and construct the new formation then the ruling class directly starts to impose the provision which is the cause of Residual to the local people. When there is the conflict between ruling class people and the citizen, the government imposes the programs in the state which we call as dominant. From this, I mean to say that rejection by people on any social formation leads to domination where the people who are in the power becomes Dominant. The working class people then neither can accept the new system nor avoid it while a social group becomes dominant in the society. Then the Dominant factors directly results to the Residual mood. To remain in Residual state, we simply understand, is the dissatisfaction with the running social system. When the situation of dissatisfaction creates the marginalized group either roams in the past or expects the distinct social formation. To search for the new social practice, Williams calls, is Emergent stage. In this phase the victims and the marginalized group expect something new for the coming days.

While analyzing the stories through Raymond Williams' perspective, the author does not seem to be in the favor of change and destruction that was applied in China during 1970s. The stories have some sorts of problems, dissatisfaction, or lamentation on physical and Cultural change. The cause of Dominant, Residual, and Emergent is change in social structure. When the people oppose the change then the ruling power imposes the provisions at the same time the common people become dominated in one side. On the other hand if the people are not satisfied with the

change they either expect the previous social structure or something new. If the people cannot adopt themselves or do not like the new system they every time remember the past infrastructures and the experiences. The same kind of physical change has occurred in this story collection too. In the story, various structures like road, temple, park, monuments, and the infrastructures have been changed which results the characters to remain in Dominant, Residual, and Emergent mood. Therefore, it can be concluded that the author, in this collection, has problematized and criticized the Cultural Revolution which brought drastic change in Chinese society and the way of life of Chinese society.

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