

Tribhuvan University

Ethical Gray Zone in War Writings: Reading Ondaatje, Collins and Adichie

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for M. Phil. in English

By

Binod Subedi

University Campus

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

Binod Subedi has completed his dissertation entitled “Ethical Gray Zone in War Writings: Reading Ondaatje, Collins and Adichie” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2071/02/15 to 2072/4/10 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Prof. Dr. Beerendra Pandey

Supervisor

Date: 2072/04/10

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Approval

This dissertation entitled “Ethical Gray Zone in War Writings: Reading Ondaatje, Collins and Adichie” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Binod Subedi has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Binod Subedi

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Abstract

This research looks into Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*; Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Collins's *The Curse of Caste* from the perspective of how ethics, empathy and humanity fade during war, crime against humanity, genocidal violence and racist practice. The sphere of ethics and humanity is invaded by the impact of brutality, war, terror and other callous practice. This issue is probed from the perspective of Emmanuel Levinas's theory of self and the other and the notion of self's ethical responsibility to the other. Agamben's theory of the ethics of testimony is also a strong framework from which the erosion of ethics is probed in this text. In *Anil's Ghost*, the government is found involved in the clandestine activity of killing innocent civilians without any fault of their own. The involvement of country Sri Lanka in crime against humanity and the blatant violation of Geneva Convention keep at bay even the minimum possibility of exercising ethical and humanitarian concern. In Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the butchering and slaughtering of Nigerian tribes is indicative of how alien and odd the ethical and empathetic concern is. Olanna feels drawn towards the cause of politics. But when she gets bogged down on the conflict and chaos, she becomes aware of how insecure and fragile her position is. Olanna witnesses the disastrous end of her sister. There is nobody to exercise a grain of sympathy. Her murder mocks any exercise of ethics and humanity. Lina's condition in *The Curse of Caste* is almost similar. She died in an atmosphere of the extreme poverty of ethics and humanity. Except Juno there is almost nobody to look at her affectionately. The dearth of ethics and humanity underpins the narrative of Collins.

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