

## I. Masculine Character and *Nothing to Declare*

This project is an exploration on Rabi Thapa's story collection *Nothing to Declare*. The main theme of the story collection revolves around the story of middle class youth in Kathmandu. As Nepali society is of patriarchal nature, contemporary middle class youth is the main concern of the story. Middle class youth's are the main character in the story which helps to understand the contemporary modern generation. It has been hypothesized that a homogeneous idea concerning the Nepali middle class might itself be a fiction. Generational difference in the Nepalese society and class identity are leading Nepalese society towards the way of extending Nepalese society. Much more space is given to the male character and the starting of the story rounds the capital city in middle class family. The presentation of the writer and the character's behavior show the enforcement of masculinity in Rabi Thapa's *Nothing to Declare*.

There are sixteen stories in *Nothing to Declare* which are passionate, pensive and at time disenchanted. They mirror the experience of the middle class youth of Kathmandu as they build lives, trying to make sense and pushing the limits of a rapidly changing but ever conservative society vividly imagined and deeply felt.

*Nothing to Declare* centers on the experience of Nepali middle class youth's in and around the capital. They follow a loose chronological progression, starting with initiation, ceremony, moving through to boarding school experience in Angles, to college, moving abroad and returning, to exploring on arranged marriage. It's a series of characters in transition against the backdrop of the city and country in transition. It's about their aspirations, their disappointments, and their revelations.

There is also a recurring theme of displacement, tinged with failure and disappointment in many of the stories. In "Trial", located in the tourist area of

Thamel, we see the protagonist reveling his feeling of rootlessness when living abroad while attempting to seduce an Israeli girl. Injustice and inequality in Nepal is still high which is very much alive in the story collection. In 'Home for 'Dashain,' a police is brutally murdered by Maoist and in 'Desire' we see a frustrating exploration of Nepal's rigid social structures as wealthy son is attracted to a domestic servant.

Another moving story is "A Nepali Maid" that delves into the world of urban feudalism and its changing contours in the light of economic prosperity. The story about a maid and her complex relation with her master has a universal appeal. The protagonist who is also the narrator, has left Nepal long ago and has been exposed to liberate ideas in the west. He, however desperately tries to balance it out with the conflicting notion of feudalism. "when I am done, I take my plate to the kitchen rather than simply leaving it on the table, a token gesture I've adopted since I left Nepal and started coming back home for holidays. It makes feel as though I'm not too much of a feudal layout" (59).

In the title story, Bikram achieves his most urgent middle class dream to migrate to London. Nepalese youth hang to wondering in Thamel is also another major concern in the story. "Night out in Kathmandu" describes the incident that took place in Thamel. In the characters narration we can know that actually middle class youth and their activities are the main focal point in the stories. Another moving story "Julus" concerns with the political instability. Thapa is successful to capture the event as it is in the story. These lines from the story can clarify the more "We are holding a Julus. Here's 10,000 rupees you guys go and wreck the family shop and burn some types, ok?" (19). In this way Nepali politician and their cadres use the youth who are unemployed to destroy others property. Due to the lack of employment opportunities youth are utilized by the politicians for their personal benefit.

Some stories however feel predetermined, as though almost journalistic, and contradictory to a living fiction. Writers who break into the traditional way of writing and have given new glimpse in the story that have varieties of taste. In these stories the more irritating is the phrase that appears in many of the story in the collection. In the story entitled “Arranged Marriage”, grandmother is made the central character who tells her grandson “oranges are only good when they’re ripe; alluding to the importance of young marriage” (23). The narrator replies ‘Do I look like an orange’? the joke words, like so much of Monty Python, on the disregard of the metaphorical for the literal, making what was said appear absurd (25). Thapa draws on dislocation to represent the cultural ground currently changing in Nepali society. In many ways the protagonist is Kathmandu. A central story, from the Road, is a series of snapshots of Nepali life. The narrator, a Nepali traveling aboard, recollects “the ceremonial run up to Daishain and having described the events, ponders ‘what does it mean that I have willingly joined in these rituals when I do believe they are any more than just that?’” (91). The question resounds throughout the stories, seeking to gain perspective to form an answer.

Almost all the stories use native language and vulgar language which has given the real life experience of Nepalese middle class youth in Kathmandu. It is also able to make the stories interesting to read. Rabi Thapa, in his stories, is trying to show male chauvinism and male supremacy in Nepalese society. Most of the characters in the stories are male and they represent male ideology, hence the research aims to analyze his stories from the lense of masculinity theory.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary* masculinity means having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men. Masculinity has to do with particular traits rather than biology. Collins Thesaurus has the following definition or

equivalents with the word masculine, male, manful, manlike, manly, mannish, bold, brave, gallant, hardy, macho, muscular, powerful, and red blooded, etc. This is the picture created for real men in our society. Nature makes us male or female, it gives us our biological definition, but it is society which makes us masculine or feminine. It defines how boys, men should behave dress, appear, what attitude and qualities they should have, how they should be treated etc. thus masculinity as a characters is socio-cultural.

Masculinity theory demonstrates that this theory is positioned in a large spectrum of sociological research that has been undertaken on the subjects of gender and sex. Reviewing some of the pertinent highlights of how research in this area developed, Gill Allwood asserts that “sex role theory and the social construction of gender were pivoted points for developing research on masculinity and feminity” (77). To clear the concept of masculinity Allwood further defines in the following way:

Sex role theory was used by early feminist, who in their search for an explanation for the difference between men and women developed various ideas about how gender was constructed and why masculinity and feminity were different. They tried how individual learned to behavior in gender appropriate way, mainly through the agency of the family and school. (77-8)

Based on the information provided by Allwood, it becomes clear that the manner in which masculinity has been developed and conceptualized is predicated upon social roles. Further, masculinity is made more complicated because it also encompasses the power difference that exist between men and women. Thus, it is not the specific behaviors and actions of the individuals that define masculinity; masculinity is a

consideration of power structure and men's relationship to women in social and cultural discourse.

With a basic overview of the historical development of masculinity theory elucidated, it is now possible to examine the role and conception of masculinity in modern society. Researcher wants to examine the development of masculinity in modern society contends that as understanding of this theory expands, the reality of masculinity as a political reality has shaped evolution (Leach 36).

In the modern society as well it is justified that the society is the constructing factor of masculine role. It is also a political reality that in every society of the world society enforces man to follow certain traits. If one tries to break the role that society enforce then he is looked as other gender. On the other hand subversion of gender role is also not acceptable in the society.

According to Leach, "like femininity, masculinity operates politically at different levels. At one level, it is a form of identity, a means of self- understanding that structures personal attitudes and behaviors another, distinct but related level"(36). Thus, masculinity is an evolving process that requires the individual to be intimidated, linked to social and cultural discourse. The male is expected to identify with the social institution that constructed masculinity and react in a manner that is commendable with what these institution views as acceptable behavior.

Scholars have argued that examining the development of masculinity theory in modern society has also commented on the process of defining and accepting specific behaviors' as inherently masculine. Post modern position posit that babies are born into a culture that began creating or defining them as male or female from "in Utero" or from birth. " they come to know themselves and others come to know them

as 'male' or 'female' through the gender norms that proliferate in every aspect of cultural, including the visual and auditory 'air we breathe" (Phillips 404). Phillips further goes on to note that in post modern culture discourse the individual is socially constructed. As such the only reality that is known is the one that is created. "In this context masculinity and femininity are created for the individual as a set of roles define the individual" (414).

According to another theorist Namok Choi "Masculinity is predicated on the individuals willingness to accept rules of behaviors-i.e to exhibit male qualities – researchers argue that the decision to embrace masculinity has clear psychological ramification for the individual" (49). Specifically Choi investigated SCA role group's difference between four groups of undergraduate's students; androgynous, masculinity, feminine and undifferentiated. Individual that embraces masculine ideology and identified them as masculine exhibited greater degree of self efficacy. "This cognitive aspect of masculine seems to resemble self – efficiency in that self efficiency is a cognitive assessment of one's prospective performance (51).

Research on the masculinity in modern society indicates that this process can have a negative impact on the individual as well. A recent survey on men's perception of masculinity in modern society demonstrates that as the role of men being to change many males are experiencing ambiguity about their role and behaviors (Saunders 37). In particular, Saunders reports that "Nearly four out of ten men believe their role in society is becoming less dominant. For many the world is moving through an era of transition in that definition of masculinity- what it means to be men. New role model have not replaced new ones...."(37). Saunders goes on to note that as a direct result of this transition and the manner in which masculinity is considered many are now unsure about their masculinity is now to be a man" (38).

Further expanding this understanding of masculinity, Connell also examines the individual construction of what it means to be masculine. As noted this author, developing the masculinity identity is a process that requires the individual to assimilate the external with the internal in an effort to create a gender role that is comfortable. “Masculinities are neither simple no static” (Connell 11). The fact that this process is not simple or static is reflected in the fact that individual males ultimately develop their own definition of masculinity that is predicated upon the social construction of maleness and personal qualities and attributes of the individual.

*Nothing to Declare* is a book that consists sixteen stories and each one is set in Kathmandu or part of the capital city. It makes the reader wonder about the place and can get a little confusing. However, over a period of time while reading it, the reader get used to the style and involved in the book. Rabi Thapa’s stories are descriptive, bold and try to break the mould of what Nepal stands for- conservative, conscious and ever- judgmental society. Mostly the story rounds the middle class youth around the capital city.

Some critics have questioned whether the content will appeal to an international audience. “Any one of us could have written it”, believe Paavan Mathema writing in Wave magazine. While it’s certainly true that anyone who have ever spent time in Kathmandu feel a stab of nostalgia for the characters portrayed and the places described. Rabi’s attention to detail and vivid depictions of the more mundane aspects of Kathmandu life make for fascinations reading. There’s a feeling as though many of the experience are deeply personal, such as those of boarding school life in Angles.

The stories that are presented in the book give the glimpse of one's life story. One can remember their life's event in any of the story. One can memorize the events after reading the stories which are written chronologically.

*Nothing to Declare* is an anthology that attempts to capture life's in the capital city today. Its stories do that, but they go beyond simple middle class life. For not of Thapas stories contain the idea of a mystical or mythical Nepal that foreigner seems to look for once, they land in Kathmandu, nor do they bother much with the politics that is forever running (or ruining) our lives. So we don't have stories on Maoist ideology, stinking rivers, bad traffic, cows or yeti. Instead, we have stories that dwell on the individual who lives with this massive khalto.

(4)

There are sixteen stories in the collection and each of them is able to capture the life of Kathmandu. Mostly the stories are successful to capture the life of the middle class youth. It can be taken as the stories of commoners. Collection do not go on the politics of the country to describe the events nor is it able to capture mythical incident in the story collection. We have many more things which can be the subject of stories like that of Maoist insurgency, bad traffic system, Yeti's stinking rivers and many more and which is also the main concern of the foreigner's when they visit Nepal.

Shreya Thapa in her article "Not much declared" writes that the collection is not too far from other story collections which are already in the market by Samrat Uphadya and Manjushree Thapa. What the author wants to portray in the story collection about middle class youth in Kathmandu is already captured in the story collection of those authors. In this issue she writes:



Perhaps if Thapa had been the first Nepali to write and publish a collection of short stories, *Nothing to Declare* has been more groundbreaking. But if one has already experienced the like of Manjushree Thapa, Samrat Upahadya and Sushma Joshi, this collection is not too far from the other books that aim to portray the modern day, middle class, “average” Nepal of today. (2)

This book aims to portray the modern life of the modern generation but as the subject has already captured by other writers this book has not been successful to capture the new events which can make the readers curious about the subject.

This book also can be taken as the satire on the contemporary politics of Nepal, where frustration in youth can be seen in the stories. The unemployed youth and the desire to go in the foreign land have made the story towards the way of the contemporary problem of Nepal. In this issue the staff reporter of *The Rising Nepal* writes in these words:

The collection does not pretend to be representative of the totality of Nepalese society, or even Kathmandu society. But these young men, despite the changed circumstances of modern-day Nepal, still represent to the large degree the future of the country. *Nothing to declare* is their story, one that is inextricable bound up with the valley around which the so-called ‘Naya Nepal’ continues to perform a dance of exaltation and frustration. (3)

It is real that the story collection does not represent the totality of the Nepalese society. Even it is not the totality of Kathmandu valley but it portrays the change circumstances of the contemporary youth of the Nepal. Youth, which are taken as the future of Nepal but due to political instability they are frustrated and just wonder here

and there with no any work. It also symbolizes the so called 'Naya Nepal' It has made the irony in the present story collection.

The tales in this volume are arranged in an age related progression, starting with stories of childhood and moving into adolescents to the youth. This type of age chronological has success to give the new taste to the reader of the present society. In this regard Vidyadhar Gadgil writes about the story collection:

This sparkling debut, with self-assured prose and convincing narratives, contains a number of gems – notably “The Trial” and the final story of the volume, ‘Valley of Tears’. There are some weak one like “Home for Dashain”-about Maoist violence an almost mandatory strand in any book on Nepal. Thapa sticks firmly to the world he knows, which is at one and the same time the strength and weakness of this collection. Nonetheless, the volume leaves one looking forward to Thapa’s next work, when his ambition will hopefully expand to give full scope to his ample talent. (7)

The analysis shows the weakness and strength of the story collection. The main aim of the collection focuses on the middle class youth in and around the valley though it has also captured the lives of the rural area and the related Maoist stories. Though all of the stories are convincing and it also proves authors success in narration. In the collection “The Trial” and “Valley of Tears” are praised on the other hand “Home for Dashain” is condemned. However the volume leaves the way of the author’s further step to work. It will help him to improve in his upcoming work.

Though some of the plots are interesting, the style falters sometimes. Some stories have presented tough sentences in some places like “Valley of Tears” writes “the endless stream of humanity sobbing through their towns and village were

testimony to the utter and complete dissolution of the old order” (163). Similarly in the story “Desire”. It is further stated, “her black, black hair swept clear of her face, smooth-complexioned and perfectly proportioned, her startling eyes reflect his” (31). The stories span the spectrum of experiences of the middle class educated young men of Kathmandu, alternately, disenchanted, passionate and pensive, as they move from high school to marriage. The stories are also the symbol of the moving society from the conservative one.

Some critics have questioned whether the content will appeal to an international audience or anyone else it is not clear. But it’s true that anyone who has spent his/her life in Kathmandu will certainly feel nostalgia for the character portrayed and the place described in the collection. Rabi’s attention to detail and vivid depiction of the more mundane aspects of Kathmandu life make for fascinating reading.

Sanjeev Uprety has commented on the collection of the story collection in a realistic vein of the contemporary Nepalese society. He has praised the issue of the Maoist and the issue of the youth in the story collection. He further writes:

Thapa’s stories are written in a realistic vein, it is interesting to see that “Valley of Tears” the last story of the collection, ventures into the realm of fantasy. In this apocalyptic tale, the entire valley is drowned after a prolonged rainfall and turns into a lake again. the description of the actual city structures and place- Bridge of Bagmati, gorge of Chobhar , Swayambhunath, Thankot etc gives the realistic flavor of the story. (3)

It also proves that the setting of most of the stories is Kathmandu and its surrounding city. It is able to provide the realistic flavor in the story. Some stories are able to

provide fantasy to its reader through various means in the story like the heavy rainfall has again made the valley drowned.

Drawing from the Masculinity studies, this research focuses on how Masculine character is deployed in regulative and tactical forms within Nepalese society that Rabi Thapa has carved in his collection *Nothing to Declare*. It examines how masculinity is institutionalized in Thapa's *Nothing to Declare*. The story collection demonstrates how, on the basis of the normalization of masculinity, male characters are able to regulate female character through the sexualizing of situation. Most of the characters in the story show their masculinist behavior by speaking the vulgar language as well. It is also being said that the story is written from the masculinist point of view because male character are given priority in the role of story. Female characters are very less, which is itself the symbol of masculinist behavior of the author.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis and includes different reviews of critics. The second chapter consists of the thorough analysis of the text from the perspective of masculinity theory. The last chapter is the conclusion of the thesis.

## II. Enforcement of Masculinity in Rabi Thapa' s *Nothing to Declare*

*Nothing to Declare* is a collection of sixteen stories which move rounds the middle class youth in and around the Kathmandu valley. Most of the characters in the stories are male and they are young. In this sense the collection can be read from the view point of masculinity. The masculinity of the contemporary middle class youth seems to be constructed at a middle space between tradition and modernity, by the new mode of construction. When we go through the collection, at the very beginning of the story "Initiation", Masculinity is enforced in the story. The character Ashok, when he was ten is enforced for the Initiation ceremony. It's just only because it is believed that after the ceremony boy is supposed to become men. It means that masculinity is enforced from the initial phase of story to the end of the story.

The research indicates the fact that the development of the masculinity has largely shaped by post modern culture. Overall masculinity is constructed to look at socially accepted gender roles and apply these roles in a meaningful manner. It enables the individual to develop a unique belief that their role and identity have been challenged under this new paradigm for the construction of masculinity.

*Nothing to Declare*, the collection of stories, contains the characteristics of masculinity in all the stories. Stories and the characters which are presented in the collection enforce the masculine role. Though, the stories round the middle class youth in and around the Kathmandu. It also portrays the mirror of modern middle class of Nepalese society. Nepalese society which is feudalistic, Hindu patriarchal, is cultured to have masculine role. In the story "Initiation" Ashok who is ten year old is enforced to have Initiation ceremony. In Hindu culture it is believed that after the initiation ceremony boy is supposed to become a men. A man is taken as bold, strong, courageous, strong sensitive and well cultured. These are the basic characteristic of

masculinity. Enforcement to have Initiation ceremony is the outcome of the culture that we follow. These lines of Thapa's in the first story of the collection reflect the culture to enforce masculine role in Ashoka. "I have so many things to worry about and all you can do is whine. It's a big day for you- you're going to be a man once your bratabhanda is done. Why should a real man be ashamed of wearing a loincloth like his father and his father before him?" (1). These lines indicate the social construction of masculinity.

In Hindu culture it is believed that to become a real man one should go from the way of Brathabanda. During this period one should wear special cloths. This ceremony is also taken as a stage to stand the stage of manhood. One becomes a real man when he had initiation ceremony. Society accepts people as men when one is bounded with Janai, (Initiation thread) one is bounded with the duty of masculine role afterwards. In the same story Thapa writes;

As he followed the priest's instructions, he began to feel less self-conscious. Many of his relatives had drifted off into the house, where they were probably playing cards. His cousin had disappeared too. Ashok hoped they weren't messing around with the logo collection his father had brought back from England. The thought irritated him, but soon he started feeling drowsy. The priest, ever busy, suddenly broke off his incantations and blessed Ashoka. (3)

In this ceremony, masculinity is enforced in the very character Ashoka. As it is clearly known that, masculinity is construction of society. Socially constructed masculinity is different from society to society. Here the priest is instructing to follow something that is guided by the religion. If we carefully observe the behavior of the characters, he looks innocent about all these instruction of the priest. He is irritated

with all these activities. His relatives in his initiation ceremony reflect the social norms and values to look a boy as masculine. Blessing of priest in his ceremony reflect the blessing of maturity and to become successful man. This ceremony is taken as to make a boy strong, bold, courageous and matured.

To prove the fact we can take reference from Tim Corrigan, Bob Connell and John Lee in their article “Toward a new sociology of masculinity”.

We hope for a realistic sociology of masculinity built on actual social practices rather than discussion of rhetoric and attitudes. And we hope for a realistic politics of masculinity, neither fatuously optimistic nor defeatist. We see such an enterprise as a part of a radical approach to the theory of gender relation in general, made possible by convergence among aliases, and the history and sociology of practice. The theme of masculinity makes sense only in terms of that larger project. At the same time it is , we think , an important part of it. (100)

Realistic sociological masculinity is built from the society. Gender studies observes such an issue as a part of the gender studies, which includes convergence among feminism, gay and the idea regarding masculinity comes only when we study the project in a large spectrum.

The story entitled “Angles” and its main character Dhiraj carry the characters of masculinity. In this story Dhiraj is presented small hostel student to big one . Boys hostel itself is taken as the symbol of masculine society. Among Boys they show the natural as well as social behavior regarding masculinity. Playing cards, going to cinema, looking girls can be taken as the natural as well as social behavior of masculinity. These line of the story help us to understand the enforcement of masculinity among the character of this story entitled “Angles”.

They were showing *Lassiter*, a convoluted British thriller a ten years old could hardly be expected to follow. But in between the rapid-fire English and night scene in which a mustachioed, black-clad jewel- thief broke into the building, Dhiraj find himself watching with rather more interest. There on a big screen at the back of the hall, *Lassiter* was having a drink with a beautiful, curly- haired brunette. They talked a while with mysterious smile, then they moved closed and kissed. This was exciting enough. He started open mouthed as the women stripped *Lassiter* of his shirt and pushed him to the floor. She then dragged his trouser off roughly. The man seemed drugged; he did nothing to resist. But what happened next was most extraordinary of all. (14)

These lines indicate the fact that the very boy Dhiraj, who was ten years old is in the cinema house. He is looking English film with his senior mates but the interesting fact is that he is looking the film more interestingly than other. Having drink with the girls, kissing with each other is the extraordinary scene in the movie, which really touch Dhiraj. In this line the heroine seems more emotional then hero. This scene is more interesting to the character Dhiraj. In such age and his interest on such movies can be taken as the character of masculinity. Society always enforce the boys to show their masculine behaviours, which is reflected in this story through hostel society.

Robert .A.Nye in his book *Locating Masculinity* talks about the type of rituals which are considered to be masculine, he name them to be 'masculine rituals. He further says:

Between the male body and cultural ideas of gender lies a zone in which men enact masculinity in rituals speech and gesture. This is the crucially important and under researched part of gender studies. It



encompasses the historically male segregated setting of the work place the gym, the school, the military training, the monastery, the club and drinking venues where masculinity has been transmitted from older to younger men by the force of personal example and the appropriation of technique. (195)

Certain culture rituals in which only males are invited and taken masculine also make men to be different than women in their behavior and tradition. Their very ritual also contributes to the construction of their masculinity.

If we go on the story, other characters of the same age involve themselves in ridiculous activities rather than their studies. They are more interested in observing the sexual activities. To show such activity Rabi Thapa in the same story “Angles” writes:

And of course the boys had loved gossiping about Khadka miss and the sport teacher, Gurung. Khadka miss was unmarried-it was no surprise, she was so ugly, she had no breast at all. But then someone had seen her with Gurung in the staff room, late one evening last year. The eyewitness- peering through thebroke slate of a window- had seen Khadka pressed against Gurung, whose hands were scrabbling at her front. Probably looking for her breast , the boy had laughed. She had broken away suddenly looking around confusedly most thought it was a made up story, but very soon after, khadka miss left school. (16)

As it is taken relative newness and the debate over the purpose or mission of men’s studies, the boundaries and subject of men’s studies are always under debate and constantly changing. This is also due to the fact that male and female scholar of men’s studies have varied and often disagreeing politics, including feminist, pro-

feminist, the men's movement, men's right and advocacy, the myth poetic men's movement and masculine. Some men's study scholars also figure the loss of male privilege as a form of male oppression, pointing to women's superiority in reproductive freedom and choice, as well as archaic attitude towards child custody and domestic violence laws that criminalized men without a jury trial. Despite this, the majority still identify as feminist or pro feminist and hold that whatever gain have been made by women are still dwarfed by the inequalities they face in the home under law and the job market. As well, some feminist contend that men's studies is unnecessary as related discipline such studies, history, psychology, political and literature are already dominated by the theorist and text of men. Masculinity cannot be understood separately from its relation to femininity. One dynamic in the post war growth of feminism was women's perceived need to escape from definition by masculinity and patriarchy.

The curiosity to observe such things is a symbol of masculinity in our society. By the growing age of the boys, they have to show their natural male activities; here in the story those boys had seen the love story of Gurung sir and Khadka Miss. As this is the nature of boys to observe or gossip other's activity. They get attracted on such type of activities.

The story talks about Dhiraj, a boy held in equal disdain by his senior and peer in a boarding school, and his coming of age. In many ways, this remain the most story of this book. By exploring the theme of boys –having sex with boys and the bonds that generates it or is generated from it. Thapa successfully manage to outline a creed, the creed of boarders, which transcend boundaries between the nations in this region.

Dr. Stephen Whitehead, has rightly said that “(social) masculinity is not something men are born with” (37). It means that maleness is born with the birth of

boy. It is natural. It is not social construction. But under pressure from the society, we suppress those qualities in us that are not considered appropriate. At the same time, we pretend to have qualities in us that don't really have, but considered necessary for the gender that we being to male gender roles are not ordained by nature, but are artificially determined by society. This does not mean that men and women are the same. They have biological and social differences. But these differences are exaggerated and misrepresented by the gender and sexual roles. Gender roles by restricting human nature, harm men in a number of ways. As Neale Donald Walsch has rightly said that "life (for Boys) is not about learning how to be, it is about learning how to be, it is about learning how not to be , what we are" (66).

Third story in the collection "No Smoke Without Fire" contains the story of Archana and Sachin, brother and sister, very close like friends. Especially in this story Thapa has tried to shape the story through the especial character of masculine in both male as well as female characters. The social construction of male allows men to drink, to smoke but women are not allowed. If female pretend to take smoke female masculinity can be seen on them. Here, the writer has tried to show the male behavior in Archana, who takes cigarette with her brother . Sachin takes cigarette, that is his natural gender role that he has to follow up but taking cigarette is the enforcement of masculinity in the story. These line in the story 'no smoke without fire" illustrates the fact that both character having maleness.

Sachin eyes her craftily. 'Are you sure you want to smoke? You might go crazy again, like last time with my friends. 'Uff, Sachin-da, you know that was because of that jhoor rum you brought me before. And those stupid gyes weren't even your friend, were they, so what difference does it make to you? 'Friends ta they are not. Otherwise, I

wouldn't have any problems getting this, would i? la, let's smoke it.

This waiting, waiting has tired me out already'. (25)

Having drink and smoke with brother, Archana's behavior seems masculine in the line. Here, she is having smoke with her own brother Sachin. It has also been reflected through their story that she had already been engaged in drinking and smoking with her brother's friend which, a common girls can not dare to do so. Masculinity is seen in her activities. Therefore the writer has tried to shape his character through the male gender role in the society, which the work itself is the symbol of masculinity in the story.

Regarding, this issue of the construction of masculinity and femininity Kamala Bhasin in her book *Exploring Masculinity* says.

Masculinity does not exist in isolation of femininity. In a way, femininity is negative masculine; a woman is what a man is not. In most of the societies masculinity and femininity are mirror images of each other. If man are expected to dominate and control women must be submissive. If man is supposed to order, women have to take orders. If men are allowed to be not tempered, women have to be patient, and so on. Even there are masculinities; masculinity normally means having qualities like strength, assertiveness, fearlessness, independent, authority ,ambition, power, control over others, and leadership are considered, important marker of masculinity almost universally. (33)

Here, Bhasin talks about the interdependence of the construction of masculinity. If one carry to give interdependence of the construction of masculinity. If one carries to give order certainly other is to follow the order. It also focuses the qualities that men should have or the men should have those qualities that society have constructed

regarding masculinity and it is expected all over the world. Masculine definition is same whether it is east or whether it is west.

Further, when Archana and Sachin's parents know that both of them smoke, their father scold them. Sachin realizes and says that he himself has smoked, Archana has not. It means to indicate that women are not allowed to have drink and smoke in the society. Female having male characters are not allowed in the society. Let's see, how society saves men to have masculine role in the story.

Archana shakes her head quickly and Sachin cuts in. "She didn't smoke.' His father glowers at him; Hm; who said you could smoke? How old are you? Seventeen? You idiot' But suddenly their mother protest.' Raja come on, leave it now. He did something stupid and was punished for that, can't you see? And back her husband. 'You should get some sleep? And back her husband. You should get some sleep. You have a early meeting tomorrow. Maybe if you didn't smoke, your son would not want to try either, 'she gives him a hard look. (26)

Regarding the issue of masculinity in female, Chapman and Rutherford acknowledge that masculinity remains the great unsaid. The cause but still not the site of struggle (11). Ruther talked of men's silence and the way in which:

Feminism has pushed mess into a defensive huddle men have used their silence as the best form of retaining the status quo, in the hope that the ideological formation that once sustainable the myth of masculine infallibility will resurrect themselves from the fragments and produce a new mythology to hide us in. (25)

Just as the castle of the self is defended against incursion, so the footers of masculinity has been defended, until recently, against the fierce gaze of analysis and deconstruction.

R.W Connell has argued in his article that masculinity cannot be understood outside of its relation to feminity, and is simultaneously ‘a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture, incomprehensive apart from the totality of gender relations. Recent figure such as new men, new lad and soft lad, cannot be fully understood apart from their location in a pattern of gender and sexual relations.

Thapas fourth story in the collection “Desire” starts with rough starting, which gives the glimpse of enforcement of manliness in male character Subodh. His behavior seems rough but it is natural that boys attract towards girls. So is the case in the story. Actually it is the narration of the very character Shreya and Subodh, who were college friends. The opening of the story shows the behavior of the protagonist of the story in the whole story.

He wondered what it would be like to run his hands through her hair, to reach in and touch her skin. He could easily do it; when shreya leaned back the ends of her long black tresses brushed against the edge of his desk, and sometimes when he was sure one was looking, he casualty stroked stranded with his finger tips. A small satisfaction. So also the visual tracing of the lines of her bra through the light cotton of her kurta. Look, don’t touch. But on the rare occasions she said anything to him-“Chhaya always reading books, this Subodh, with

practice roll of the eyes- he never knew what to say and just- smiled.

(31)

It is natural fact that the boys always attract towards girls and vice versa. In this story Shreya and Subodh are flirting each other which is common in the teenagers. Subodh is touching Shreya and trying to take sexual satisfaction. It is biological traits of every people that they attract to opposite sex. As Subodh is reading books when he is with Shreya but she wants more flirting from her boy friend. But in that moments as well Subodh is intentionally trying to her favor. It is natural fact that the boys always attract towards girls and vice versa.

Kamala Bahasin talking about the transistorizes of masculinity says it can change according to the situation and society it belong to. She further says;

Men are commonly described as aggressive assertive, independent, and competitive and so on. Their attributes are based on the idea that there is something about men which transcends their local situation. Men are seen as having natures which determines their behavior in all situations. Notion of masculinity may change, men may dress differently, the breadwinner ethics may collapse but it does not change male power as such; only the form, presentation or packing of masculinity may change. Masculinity is local and subject to change. What does not change is the justification and naturalization of male power or masculine ideology. (9)

It is nature which determines the behavior of male. Naturally they are aggressive and competent. Nature determines their behavior all the situation. The role they play in the society may change the dress the wear may change but the masculine power cannot change. It means that it remain constant naturally.

Here in these lines Subodh feels satisfaction touching Shreyas's hair, sometimes he touch her skin and more comfort. Observing this inner part of the girl and taking fun is another main characteristic of Subodh, which in most of the boys is also seen. So it can be said that it is natural but the writer has intentionally starts the story with these lines to enforce the masculine in it's characters. And the writer is success to give the shape of masculine role to its characters.

After the entire story "Desire" is concerned with the desire of modern young generation to go aboard. It also indicates the attraction of young generation towards the foreign culture, which is reflected in the following lines:

He imagined an America in which all the Kuiries danced to Hindi songs. 'Even their college system is so liberal, you understand' Chitra had observed the other day. Leeberal arts; he said this with relish; they only have five hours a week. Machickne, we have five hours a day'.  
(34)

These lines illustrate the fact that Nepalese young generation wants to be liberal in everything. The vulgar words in the mouth of the characters can be taken as the Enforcement of masculine role in the character. These words also indicate the fact that the writer has included these sorts of words to reflect the masculine role in his characters. In the same issue one of the critics Sanjeev Upreti writes; the masculinity of contemporary middle class youth seems to be constructed at a middle space between modern and tradition, by the new mode of consumption. And by the desire to go to US, UK and others foreign location" (6). Tradition and modernity is reflected through masculine role in this story, which is reflected in the following lines.

It was close to nine when Subodh drifted through the bus park following day. He'd been eating momo's and drinking beer with



Sudhir and Chitra at the Dharara Café. The girl's hadn't turned up, but Sudhir thought he had a chance with Sriya; she had given him her number that afternoon. (36)

Although we are born with natural masculinity, it is originally in an undeveloped form; like a seal. It need to be developed during the course of our life, especially during our adolescence/ youth for that, it needs to come out. Owing to social pressure, men are forced to imprison this natural masculinity deep with them. It either remains underdeveloped, or develops into a negative unhealthy form, which is distractive for self and others.

Masculinity is predicated on the individuals willingness to accept rule of behaviors-i.e to exhibit male qualities “researchers argue that the decision to embrace masculinity has clear psychological ramification for the individual” (Choi, 49). Specifically choi investigated SCA role group's difference between four groups of undergraduate's students; androgynous, masculinity, feminine and undifferentiated. Individual that embraces masculine ideology and identified them as masculine exhibited greater degree of self efficacy. “This cognitive aspect of masculine seems to resemble self – efficiency in that self efficiency is a cognitive assessment of one's prospective performance” (51).

Research on the masculinity in modern society indicates that this process can have a negative impact on the individual as well. A recent survey on men's perception of masculinity in modern society demonstrates that as the role of men being to change many males are experiencing ambiguity about their role and behaviors (Saunders 37). In particular, Saunders reports that “Nearly four out of ten men believe their role in society is becoming less dominant. For many the world is moving through an era of transition in that definition of masculinity- what it means to be men. New role model

have not replaced new ones....”(37). Saunders goes on to note that as a direct result of this transition and the manner in which masculinity is considered many are now unsure about their masculinity is now to be a man” (38).

If we go further in this story, we find a frustrating exploration of Nepal’s rigid social structure how a wealthy employer’s son is attracted to a domestic servant.

These lines depreciate the fact in the story:

His desire rose to meet her and he clutches at her warm body,  
 discovering the unimaginable soft yield of her breasts with nipple as  
 hard as he was. He stood up, the chair grunting, across the floor, and  
 pulled her to the table knowing what he was doing- how could he? He  
 kissed her on the mouth, and aping the movies he had seen,  
 impulsively thrust his tongue into her mouth. (40)

The very character Subodh’s inner masculinity rises when he sees Kamala alone in his home. He was heavily drunk and desire to touch Kamala made him to attract towards her. He is unaware what he is doing but he discovered the unimaginable activities within himself, which ultimately is the nature of manners. Authors have successfully enforced the very masculine characters in this story too. The young Subodh’s natural masculinity rose up in this situation, when he saw soft yield breast of Kamala.

Bob Connell has argued that masculinity cannot be understood outside of its relation to femininity, and is simultaneously “a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender and the effect of these practices in bodily experiences, personality and culture” (qtd. In Ruper and Tosh 71). It is a relation construct, incomprehensible apart from the totality of gender relations. Recent figure such as new men, new lad and soft lad, cannot be fully understood apart from their locations in a pattern of gender and sexual relation.

The title story “Nothing to Declare” contains the subject matter related with the experience of the young boy, Bikram who has just left the home land and shifted in new land that is England. Here, Raghav, who is already in England is the best friend of Bikram, they talk about kurie and Hapsie, the frequent activity of these youngster. Thapa has successfully shown the masculine behavior in this story also. The felling of Diaspora is reflected in the following lines of the title story called ‘Nothing to Declare’:

Nepal suddenly felt far away and perhaps not at all. Sure his parents were thousands of kilometers away, and so was the dust of Nepal, but his won Nepal, smoking and drinking with friends, was right here. When Raghav hollered from the kitchen, ‘Hey boys! Come to eat rice! He couldn’t have asked for anything more. (49)

These lines reflect the Diaspora in Bikram, which remained his homeland and his families. It also helps us to understand that the male are also hunted by the attraction of their birth place. It can also be interpreted love towards nation, which is seen in male; in this sense masculinity is enforced. To observe the male behavior of those characters these lines are sufficient.

I just steered the other girl away, getting a little closer and then it was easy, I just got her in a corner and kissed her And then? ‘Then she took me in her room ni- she was a student at a university in Windsor- all night dey danadan, bro! He snapped the finger of his right hand and slammed the palm down onto his clenched left hand several times by way of explanation. (52)

Adolescence in western society is traditionally seen as a difficult and challenging of life, a “disturbing ‘phase’ that young people have somehow to get through” (19).

Now, according to some theorist, recent social change has made adolescence even more fraught. Contemporary life is characterized by increment anxiety about personal and environmental risk, precarious employment rampant consumerism, greater, individualism, and increased instability. According to most observers this has had a pronounced effect on young people, either because they are most affected by such change-particularly increased family breakdown or precarious employment-or because they have not yet acquired the skills necessary to cope.

This type of men show masculinity in suppressing women. But this type of definition is same everywhere. Arthur in this issue says:

Every gesture, every posture, every stance, every way of acting in the world is immediately seen as “masculine” or “feminine,” depending on whether it connotes activity or passivity. Every action is governed by a relational system- a code – that produces its meanings out of the subject matter of the body, its form, its engagement with other bodies.

As a gestural system, machismo has a steep temporal dimension. (42)

Masculine definition is same whether it is east or whether it is west. Kamala Bahasin talking about the transistorizes of masculinity says it can change according to the situation and society it belonged to, she further says “Men are commonly described as aggressive assertive, independent, and competitive and so on. Their attributes are based on the idea that there is something about men which transcends their local situation. Men are seen as having natures which determines their behavior in all situations” (9). Notion of masculinity may change, men may dress differently, the breadwinner ethics may collapse but it does not change male power as such; only the form, presentation or packing of masculinity may change.

If we talk about the history of masculinity, R.W Connell in the book

*Masculinities Studies Reader* says :

Masculinity came into existence at particular time and place and is always subject to change. Masculinity are, in a word historical .....But so far the argument has lacked historical depth and appropriate scale. To understand the current pattern of masculinities we need to look back over the period in which it come into being. Since masculinity exist only in the context of a whole structure of gender relations, we need to locate it in the formation of the modern gender order as a whole... a process that has taken about four centuries. (245)

If we analyze the Connell for development of the masculinity theory it takes almost four centuries. With the rapid development of cultural change its existence also seen in different manner. What we understand about masculinity is the outcome of the past, which takes long time to develop.

Masculinity studies is also known as Men's studies, is an interdisciplinary academic field devoted to Topics concerning men, masculinity, gender and politics. As a relatively new field of study, men studies was formed largely in response to, and as a critique of an emerging men's right movement itself a response to both the real and perceived advantage brought to women by feminist political action and as such, has been taught in academic setting only since the 1970s. In many universities, men's studies is a correlated to or part of a longer women's studies or gender studies, programme and as such its faculty trend to be sympathetic to or engaged in feminist politics.

Further in the same title story, these lines reflect the male activity of these characters.

They made their way up to the girls, and Gaurav nodded to them and mouthed a hello. But they didn't even smile back unfazed, Gaurav started dancing next to the blonde with the big tits, so Bikram did the same with the Brunette, grinning awkwardly. The girls continued dancing as if the boy weren't there. Bikram tried to catch the brunette's eye, but she was looking at nothing at particular, and seemed bored, her body jerking mechanically to the beat. (56)

Man has lost the capacity to take sex as natural. Sex has become the most crucial tool for him to get that coveted social masculinity/power. How and with whome he can or cannot form sexual bonds with, has been rigidly lay down. The pressure to exaggerated sexual desire for women than is natural for men has several ramification- for men, for women and for a society as a whole. With the pressure, society ensures that most men participate in reproduction.

A number of social evils arise owing this manipulation of men's natural sexual desire. For example, when manhood and social evils arise owing to the manipulation of men's natural sexual drives. For example when manhood and social power comes from encounters with women, and chasing female is glorified as the natural essence of being a man, some men may abuse a power by raping and molesting women. Even common men derive social power from acts like eve- teasing, which most women don't enjoy. On the other hand, women gain invisible control over men by being the source of their social masculinity.

The fourteenth story of Thapa, "Arranged Marriage" concerns with the Nepali context of marriage. Arrange marriage is one of the traditions and culture of Nepalese society. Society accepts such marriage whereas love marriage is not expected in our society. In this story, the narrator is directing the plot with his own

experience. Society expects with its member that they should marry on time. Otherwise various questions raised. One can question on the power of masculinity. People call them Budho or Budho jawi, these lines from the same stories reflect the same issue,

Because they got married! That's why I've not married and look at how youthful I look, isn't that so? "sure you are youthful. You will be just like your cousin, that Sanjeev, if you get married when you are old. Budho jawi, they will laugh, you will be as old as your father-in-law" (147).

Where masculinity is exercised should probably attempt to provide positive image of alternative masculinities on which man can draw to construct their own masculinities. Once these cultural images are in place, they might provide a bridge to defining masculinities in connection to women and feminism. By understanding the power of male dominated culture, we can conclude the whole in the following lines of Sheila Ruth:

We have not adequately examined or explained which configurations of practice construct which meaning and imperatives for doing hegemonic masculinity or the extent to which these differ across work context. While Connell does point out that the form hegemonic masculinity takes is dependent on historical context, there needs to be a more serious and systematic focus on the ways that definitions of hegemonic masculinity vary from place to place in the same broad historical movement. Perhaps his definition of hegemonic masculinity cause confusion. (555)

Masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy., which guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. The notice that there is gender practice or a currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy is challenged by the finding of the article. There are multiple answers to the problem of the legitimacy of the patriarchy. On the same story Mc Carthy, a critic writes in this way;

At the beginning of arranged marriage, a story from Rabi Thapa's first collection *Nothing to Declare*, a grand mother tells her narrator grand son 'orange are only good when they are ripe' alluding to the importance of young marriage. The narrator replies ' Do I look like an orange? The joke words like so much Manly Python, on the disregard of the metaphorical for the literal, making what was said appear absurd. Thapa draws on dislocation to represent the cultural grounds currently changing in Nepali society. (6)

These lines from the criticism, reflect the image of masculinity that the society expected from us. Society expect us to marry on time and prove we have masculine behavior. They enforce one to stand on the patriarchal culture. Even woman's encourages us to do so. Here, in this story the grand ma is enforcing her grandson to have marriage. From this critic line it is not difficult to understand that Nepalese society is changing. Having marriage is not only the way to prove to be a man, it can also be done in any part of the life.

Another story by Thapa "After Party" depicts the surrounding of Thamel area. Thamel, one of the main tourist destinations, is famous spot to show maleness. Many foreigners as well as local people keep their eye on the spot. The narrator in this story



present the issue of third gender. A boy who knows that he is gye in his thirteen reflect the issue of crises of masculinity in these lines;

So why don't they like it? Because you are a gye or because of the money?

Because of the money'.

So, what are you, are you gye?

When did you know you are a gye?

'When I was thirteen...

'How did you find out?

'Something like that happened to me and I knew;

'Oh really, what happened to you?

'Something like that...' (137-38)

However, in the last ten years academic research has turned its attention to analysis of masculinity, and, increasingly such analysis are examining the tension within and between masculinity. The concept of crises in masculinity has become an element of public discourse. The macho-ization of male culture in 1980s, and the emergence of new laddism in the 1990s could be seen as aspects of this supposed 'crisis'. Current masculinity is relatively secure in its dominance- it is not really a crisis in male power, but rather a crisis in the cultural mode through which masculinity presents itself.

Roper and Tosh have argued that:

Masculinity is always bounded with negotiation about power and is therefore often experienced as tenuous. It is clear that there are periods when changed social conditions, frustrated on a large scale the individual achievement of masculinity and at such times the social and political fallout may be considerable. (18)

Masculinity crises involve the collapse of the basic pattern by which men have traditionally fulfilled the code of masculine role behavior, namely, the good provider role and the result intensification of gender role strain. The major manifestation of masculinity crises, which have taken center stage in the public eye in the last five years or so, include, in addition to the loss of the good provider role, the failure of the good family man role to replace the good provider role, the tendency for marriage to repeat the stereotype roles, the dynamic of divorce the treatment of men in the media, the “angry white male” and the growth of large scale men’s rallies.

Further expanding this understanding of masculinity, Connell also examines the individual construction of what it means to be masculine. As noted by this author, developing the masculinity identity is a process that requires the individual to assimilate the external with the internal in an effort to create a gender role that is comfortable. “Masculinities are neither simple nor static” (Connell 11). The fact that this process is not simple or static is reflected in the fact that individual males ultimately develop their own definition of masculinity that is predicated upon the social construction of maleness and personal qualities and attributes of the individual.

### III. Masculine Attitude in Thapa's *Nothing to Declare*

*Nothing to Declare* centers on the experience of Nepali's middle class youth in and around the capital. They follow a loose chronological progression, starting with initiation where a young boy is deeply embarrassed by the rituals of an initiation ceremony, moving through to boarding school experience in Angles, to college, moving aboard and running, to exploring an arranged marriage. It's a series of characters in transition against the backdrop of the city and country in transition. It's about the aspiration, there revelation the writer explains.

This also proves that there is masculinity attitude in Thapa's *Nothing to Declare*. If we go on all the stories of the text we find most of the characters are male. Another important thing in the story is that the characters behavior is masculine and they involve in the same attitude of action almost in all the stories. The chronological development of the story also shows that the tales are much more similar with the middle class youth in and around the capital city.

From the stories of every day, Rabi has focused the more serious issue in the story as well. In Home for Dashain where a policeman returns home, is slaughtered by the rebels. Similarly the transaction period of Nepal is also shown in the stories but they are looked from the lenses of masculinity and is presented from the same manner.

The masculinity of contemporary middle-class seems to be constructed at a middle space between tradition and modernity, by the new modes of consumption, and by a desire to go to US, UK and other foreign locations. Thapa's collection begins with "Initiation", a story describing the brathabanda ceremony of a middle class boy Asoka. Tradionally the ceremony of a middle class boy Asoka. Traditionally the ceremony signifies rite of passage for hindu males; after the ceremony the boy

supposed to become a man. Within the social imaginary of contemporary middle classes, however, what transforms a boy into a man is a passage to “America” or other centres of western modernity.

At the same time other stories that are included in the story also tries to enforce the masculine role for the male character. It is society that is creating the gap between male and female. Rabi Thapa is also trying to give shape all the character in the story though there are some female characters who are trying to subvert the masculine character by smoking cigarette. But they are being questioned by other male character.

To say the least, *Nothing to Declare* is a worthy debut of a Nepali writer in English. Thapa has kind of laid back style that keeps the reader turning the pages of the text. When one keeps on eye in the tales one can easily find the way of his presentation of the stories. And that is just the point of view of masculinity. It means that the stories are presented with masculine attitude.

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