

I. *Facing My Phantoms* and the Politics of Postmodern

This project takes Sheeba Shah's *Facing My Phantoms* as a postmodern novel where two stories (narratives) have overlapped. The narrator Sanjeevani, tells both the stories: her story as well as her grandmother's (Sanat) story. Narrating the story, she tries to rewrite the Nepalese history from 1930s to the present. While doing so *Facing My Phantoms* borrows references from history as well as Nepalese culture and society. As such the text presents a parody of mainstream history which means rupturing the past ironically. Concepts such as intertextuality, metafiction, irony, parody, pastiche structure in the text, *Facing My Phantoms*.

In the novel, *Facing My Phantoms*, Sheeba Shah presents Sanjeevani and Sanat, the two major characters who narrate the stories of the present and past respectively.

Sanat, the aged grandmother recounts her past to relate how she left her home at the early age to marry middle aged Raja Shaheb. She also relates how, after having two sons, she became a widow at the age of 20. In the narrative of Sanat, we can find not only the suffering of her own but also the political transformation of Nepal from 1930s till the present. That means she is telling the Nepalese history from 1930s. On the other side, Shah has employed another character Sanjeevani who represents the contemporary historical, social, political period of her own experience. She experiences the events of the Maoist insurgency period. By introducing the narrator as well as the character Sanjeevani, the novelist is parodying the history that Sanat carried out that means when we turn back to Sanat narration, we can view the parodic history that invokes historical as well as political perspective that reflects the world view of specific changing social or political scenario. In Sanat's narration, the history of Nepal, related to the anti-Rana movement, finds an adequate expression:

King Tribhuvan has returned from New Delhi with the aid of the

Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, he had fled from here and received political asylum in New Delhi. He left behind the Nepali National Congress, which has launched an armed struggle in the country. The nation's simmering discontent with the Rana regime has burst out into a blatant revolution. In the past, the Kiratis breakout, Rudra Shamsher the Bada Hakim of Palpa has revolted with a troop of his own, along with a large number of C- class Ranas who have also started speaking up for the restoration of the King's sovereignty.(128)

This extract illustrates the political history of 2007 B.S Nepal, when there was the anti- Rana movement going on. People were against the tyranny of Rana rule. Sanat's granddaughter, Sanjeevani narrates her experience from the rebellious perspective. Her personal choice doesn't fit into the traditional gender role and she is shown to have an illicit affair with a married Marwadi Man Rajat and when she goes to find her root, she moves to her village in Ganeshpur, Kailali and another affair with a Maoist Commander, Chandra. Basically, the story is replete with real life events of the last decade of Maoist insurgency. In the very period, the brother of Sanjeevani Sanjay has been murdered by the Maoists and their land has been seized that causes her family to shift into a very small apartment in Kathmandu.

Sanjeevani Shah's main character looks very much critical in the case of Maoist ideology as well as the feudal society. The novel ends with the confusion of protagonist, Sanjeevani as well as the uncertain future of the Nepalese politics after 2062/63 Jana Andolan. Shah presents the Nepalese history from 1930s to the present through the fictional characters like Sanat, Sanjeevani, Chandra etc. The amalgamation of fact and fiction, rapid use of flashback, open-endedness of the story ironized history present this text as a postmodern experimental novel.

This research is an inquiry into Sheeba Shah's *Facing My Phantoms*. The present research will prove how the writer uses the postmodern techniques in novel to prove this novel as an outcome of postmodernist writing. While going through the novel, it is found that the story of Sanat ruptures the historical facts. Similarly, in the narration of Sanjeevani, a historical fact of modern Nepal has been evaluated critically. As the concept of postmodernism focuses it takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement. Intertextuality, another popular techniques (term) of postmodernist novel which has close affinity to a parody. A parody in contemporary use in artistic work created to mock, comment on the history, style of traditional writing and author by means of satiric or ironic imitation. Here, Shah has also presented the past, i.e. Nepalese history parodically with the help of irony.

Sheeba Shah's *Facing My Phantoms* seems to be arguing about the female's suffering and revolt. But this text moves ahead that this research offers a technical side of the novel that proves the novel as an experimentation having postmodern qualities. Criticizing as well as subverting the ideology like patriarchy, feudalism as well as Marxism. Shah presents the character Sanjeevani who criticizes the ideology carried by the Maoist Cadred Chandra and she says " How can the People's War call itself People's War if it results in the random and indiscriminate killing of the innocent people?" (129). Here, at this point the attitude towards the People's War leading by Maoist has been criticized by Sanjeevani. It questions the appropriateness of the war.

In *Facing My Phantoms*, Shah presents the story of Sanat as a historical character who represents the cultural, patriarchal society of 1930s. Sanat represents the past where historical facts are overlapped in it.

The author Sheeba Shah, a scion of Nepal's erstwhile royal family who is

married to the nephew of the slain king Birendra and his wife Aishwarya. Her knowledge about history, politics plays remarkable role in this novel. Along with this, her family background further helps her to excavate those historical things. Besides this novel, she is also the author of *Beyond the Illusion* and *Loyal of the Crown* that help to enrich the Nepali literature.

The novel *Facing My Phantoms* by Sheeba Shah was published in 2010. It has been discussed in manifold ways by multiple critics. In other words, many scholars, writers analyze this book differently. Biswas Baral in *The Kathmandu Post National Daily* taking about the feminist discourse in *Facing My Phantoms* in his article entitled, "*Facing My Phantoms*" dated July 23, 2011 writes:

Facing My Phantoms can be read the story of a village girl in Kailai making an uncomfortable transition to the bustling metropolis. It also serves as a fascinating exploration of the psyche of the people in a fast changing country, especially the feminine half of it. In fact, she is constantly inventing new challenges into her life, always battling social and sexual taboos, breaking downs the cultural barriers and determined to chart her own course in life unlike her grandmother who seems easily resigned to her fate. Although Snjeevani's childhood abuses might have played part in her difficult relationship with men, first with Razat and then Chandra, a Maoist commander she meets in Kailali, the relationships are also an affirmation of the coming of age of Nepali women. (10)

Here Baral focuses on the rebellious character of Sanjeevani where she goes against the patriarchal barrier and ready to make premarital relationship with Razat and Chandra which is taken as the sexual taboo in the patriarchal feudal society.

Sanjeevani does not only remain the character in the novel but also she wants to raise her voice against patriarchal society.

Speaking about Shah's book *Facing My Phantoms* Amish Raj Mulmi, another critic in Ekantipur.com July 3, 2010 writes:

Shah's work can be read as an expression of the tumultuous times Nepal has been in the last decade. She is the member of the every class that the 2006 revolution brought to over through, but she understands the revolution as a historical process. She has been wronged as well; her ancestral lands were taken away, while brother was murdered. Yet, she takes these events as being a conclusion to the larger nature of Nepali feudal history. Still, her writing reflects the personal anguish felt by the class during the days of the insurgency and the subsequent Jana Andolan. Her perspective is unique: a verbal with in an autocratic and rigid feudal class. (8)

Mulmi directly examines the novel as a critique of feudalism. In the novel Sanjeevani the narrator herself from the feudal as well as aristocratic class but she is seeking progress in it. She understands that change is inevitable.

Furthermore, ArchanaThapa, in her article entitled "Redemption and Beyond" published in *The Kathmandu Post* July 10, 2010 argues that Shah's fiction successfully synthesizes the national and personal traumas of an affluent family that experiences a socio-economic fall because of the conflict. It also recounts how their suffering deepens as the country moves forward towards an uncertain future" (7). Thapa views this novel as the traumatic situation of the people during and after the war. The nation also carried the traumas with the fall of economic growth and development by the war. So, the country moves forward without any destination.

Similarly, Krishna Prasad Acharya gives his opinion on this book "*Facing My Phantoms*" about Sanjeevan's feminist quest from freedom through semiotic aspects of language, in the article entitled "Enactments of feminist liberation" published in Republica National Daily dated 29 October, 2010. Acharya comments:

Drawing her rebellious female character Sanjeevani from the quagmire of patriarchal violence upon women, Shah has called upon Nepali women to liberate their own selves from patriarchy, and achieve is not through conflict with men but through the negation of Nepali's patriarchal system. To what extent Shah has been able to do so in her novel by employing the semiotic aspects of language, as Kristeva suggested is for readers to conclude. (10)

Here, Acharya talks about the rebellious nature of the female character, Sanjeevani. He analyses this novel differently. Acharya says that the novelist here urges the Nepalese women to protect against the patriarchy not through conflict, but through writing or using language as done by the character Sanjeevani in the novel.

Clarifying the novel *Facing My Phantoms*, editorial review on the 'Blurb' of the book says "Representing the bewildered minds of the Nepalese youths during the Maoist insurgency period in Nepal, this sensational and intriguing novel voices the sentiments of a nation in transition- chaotic, fearful but ever hopeful." The main focus of the review is the ten years People's War and its impact on the people as well as in the society. It also gives the notion of the transition period of Nepal, and the comparative study of the past and the present.

Although this novel has been analyzed from different perspectives, but none of the critics have yet thrown light upon the *Facing My Phantoms* from the perspective of postmodern techniques where parody, irony, intertextuality, metafiction etc. are going

to be focused. As the issue of hypothesis demand it will be better by dealing with analysis from postmodern techniques drawing upon the concept of postmodern theorists, critics such as Linda Hutcheon, Roland Barthes, Patricia Waugh, Lyotard and so on. The term parody is an imitative work created to mark comment on or trivialize an original work, its subject, author, style or some other target by means of humorous, satiric or ironic imitation. The oxford English Dictionary defines parody as imitation" turned as to produce a ridiculous effect". In the 20th century, parody has been heightened as the central and most representative artistic device. This most happened in the second half of the century with postmodernism. Traditional definition of parody usually only discusses parody in a strict sense of something intended to ridicule the text it parodies. There is also broader, extended sense of parody that may not include ridicule and may be based on many other uses and intentions.

Postmodern artists whether their medium is words or stone or sound find in parody a useful tools precisely because the convention denies priority to any single narrative. In the hands of accomplished artists, parody becomes a means for revisiting the world. In this context, Ermarth says " Parody has 'play' or slope in postmodernism because it undercuts singular narrative and parody itself in playful in the sense that it is a form which pluralizes the possibilities the play, of systems" (227). Thus, postmodern parody exercises old tools in the service of new form. So, postmodern artists transfigure classical parody that is to say parody means postmodern parody.

What we tend to call postmodernism in literature today is usually characterized by intense self-reflexivity and overtly parodic intertextuality. In fiction, this means that it is usually metafiction that is equated with the postmodern. The recent attack by literary and philosophical theory on modernist formalist closure, postmodern fiction, has sought to open itself up to history to what Edward Said call

the 'world'. But it seems to have found that it can no longer do so in any innocent way the certainty of direct reference of the historical novel or even the nonfictional novel is gone. Here, Linda Hucheeon opines:

Today there is a return to the idea of a common discursive property in the embedding of both made problematic by overtly metafictional assertions of both history and literature are as human constructs. The intertextual parody of historiographic metafiction in a way the views of certain contemporary historiographers: it offers a sense of the presence of the past, but a past that can be known only from its texts, it traces be the literary or historical. (124-125)

Here, Hucheeon gives her opinion about postmodern writing which is different from the traditional ways; means the very separation of the literature and history that is now challenged in postmodern theory and art. She further says " recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ (Hucheeon 105).

Postmodernism is wide ranging cultural movement which adopts a skeptical attitude to many of the principles and assumptions. It is a board term that has emerged as an area of academic structure since the 1960s. It appears in wide variety of disciplines or area of the study including art architecture, fashion and technology. Postmodernism rejects the boundaries between high and low forms of art, defying rigid genre dislocation, emphasizing pastiche, parody bricolage, irony, and playfulness. Postmodern art favors self-consciousness, discontinuity, fragmentation and emphasis on the decenter and dehumanizes subject. Intertextuality is one of the techniques of postmodern literature which was introduced by Julia Kristeva theoretically; assumes that meaning and intelligibility in discourse and texts are based

on a network of prior and concurrent discourse and texts. Every text is a mixture of references to the other texts, genres and discourses. As Jonathan Culler says "texts don't mean in isolation; there is continuous interplay between the consciously or unconsciously, writers add to the range and depth of their work by allusion, references and quotation"(42). The principle of intertextuality is a ground for meaning not from the text alone but references from another texts. So, intertextuality has problematized the status of 'author' and 'authorship'.

Traditionally author was treated as a historical invention means they were experience being, knowledgeable persons and their literary works were regarded as their own that means author is an originator of the text: the prominent critics, Barthes Riffaterre view intertextuality as: It replaces to challenged author – text relationship with one between reader and text, one that situated the locus of textual meaning within the history of discourse itself." (qtd. Huchon, politics 126). Here, intertextuality evokes the deconstructive notion of postmodern reference through the critique authenticity. Postmodernism always challenges both closure and single centralized meaning. In the sense, the notion of intertextuality lies in the discourse of postmodernism.

As such, it is clear that a text has close relationship with other previous texts which can be from any disciplines or genres. There previous texts from different disciplines can be regarded as interdisciplinary nature of the texts. Interdisciplinary is a methodology justifies the awareness of history, theory, methodology and subject matters of a particular disciplines. In this regard, the anthropologist Clifford Greetz has written "we are living in an age of blurred genres, a jumping of varieties of discourses; within which disciplinary distinction are increasing hard to call" (20). In it, he is trying to say that modern literary works are not distinctly original means all

texts are combination (mixture) of different disciplines.

Postmodernist literature carries the element parody. Hucheson defines "Parody is imitation not always at the expense of parodied text. It is a form of ironic rapture with the past" (31). The techniques of Parody are used in art, culture, history as well as in literature. The elements of previous texts that can be from literary or non-literary are reused to critique the period. Relating this context, Hucheson says: "Parody often called ironic quotation, pastiche, appropriation is usually considered central to postmodernism, both by its detractors and its defenders. It signals how present representation comes from past and what is politics behind such representation" (*Politics* 89). Parody as she says, questions the artistic originality and uniqueness. In this way, again she adds "the notion of original as rare, single and valuable is called into question" (*Politics* 90). That means parody does have something to say or using parody is to foreground the politics of representation. In postmodernism "Parody may indeed be complicitious with the values it inscribes as well as subverts, but the subversion is still there" (106). So, it is used by low class, marginalized people to attack the center while analyzing the postmodernist text. We can find parodic strategies are basically used by postmodernist feminist to point history and historical power of the cultural representation in order to question the stereotypes as well as deconstruct it.

Basically, postmodern literature is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to write the past in a new context. It is not modernist desire to order the present through the past. It does not mean to avoid the history but it directly confronts with the past. It uses and abuses the intertextual echoes inscribing their powerful allusions and then subverting that power through irony. Here, Hucheson opines "Postmodernism is a contradictory cultural enterprise, one that is heavily implicated in that which seeks to contest. It uses

and abuses the very structures and values it takes to ask. Historiographic metafiction, for example, keep distinct its formal auto representation and its historical context and in so doing, it problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge" (poetics 108). So, the history of discussion of the relation of art to historiography is therefore, relevant to any art of postmodernism but the separation of history from the art is the traditional one.

Fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames, which historiographic metafiction first establishes and then crosses positing both the generic contracts of fiction and of history. Patricia Waugh notes that metafiction "suggests not only that writing history is a fictional act, ranging conceptually through language to form a world model, but that history is invested, like fiction, with relating plots which appear to interact independently of human design: (48-79), historiographic metafiction and literary intertexts. The past did really did exist but we can know it from the texts and there lies connection to the literature.

Lukacs felt that the historical novel could enact historical process by presenting a microcosm which generalizes and concentrates (39). The protagonist therefore should be a type, a synthesis of the general and particular of "all the humanly and socially essential determinants" (qtd in Huchon 113). From this definition, it is clear that the protagonists of historiographic metafiction are anything but proper types: they are ex-centric, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of the fiction history. Similarly, historiographic metafiction supports the postmodern ideology of plurality. So, there is no sense of universality. Postmodern fiction contests two defining characteristics: first historiographic metafiction plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record where certain historical details are deliberately falsified in order to foreground the possible failure of recorded history. The second a different lie

in the way in which postmodern fiction actually uses detail or historical data," historical fiction usually incorporates and assimilates those data in order to lend a feeling of verifiability to the fictional world. Historiographic metafiction incorporates but rarely assimilates such data" (Huchon, 114). Here, we see both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order.

Postmodernist literature has generally used and parodied the narrative conventions of popular literature, including history, fairy tales etc through the use of parody, irony, metafiction and other narrative strategies, its aim is to critique the traditional objectives vision of reality adopted in the traditional narrative technique. Similarly, Kusnir adds" the aim of postmodernist literature is to give a critique of popular culture as product of consumerism and last, but not least, through the use of intertextual and metafictional strategies" (35). Those lines clarifies that the growth of technology has changed the sensibility of contemporary culture. So, postmodernist literature aims to make the parody of the older forms of representation to show the instability of the referent, inability to express clear, understandable and unified vision of reality. Anyway postmodernist literature tries to subvert and critique the traditional genres (that can be from history, literature, painting) by parodying them ironically, Parody, irony, metafiction, intertextuality etc are the tropes of the postmodernist writers.

In this connection, this thesis explores the postmodernist reading *Facing My Phantoms*. It only talks about the technical side of the novel to prove this novel as postmodern novel. This research aims to explore how the writer manages the historical facts with the help of fiction. By doing so, the writer also aims to critique the society which is feudal as well as patriarchal. This research offers the critical study of Nepalese history in a fictional way that explores the postmodern elements of

the novel like intertextuality, parody, irony, metafiction. It means it uses the significant concept of postmodernist techniques. It wouldn't deal with the cultural perspective of the novel.

This project uses postmodernism as a theory to explore the postmodernist techniques in the novel. The theorization of postmodernism by Jonathan Culler, Linda Huchon, Patricia Waugh, Kusnir and so on is used to dig out those aspects within the fiction. To support this claim *Facing My Phantoms* as a postmodernist novel, an intensive textual analysis follows the introductory chapter of my thesis. This thesis has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with the basic information of the novel along with the theoretical insights from postmodernist techniques. In the same way, the second chapter deals with the textual analysis of the novel. Moreover, the final chapter is conclusion which ultimately concludes the main points of the thesis. This chapter can be called a brief critical summary of the textual analysis concerning on the postmodern techniques of the fiction.

II. Postmodern Elements in *Facing My Phantoms*

Facing My Phantoms, Sheeba Shah's novel is replete with elements of postmodernist literature. In the novel, Shah presents two narratives (stories) in which the Sanat's narration goes to the past where as the narration of Sanjeevani shows the present i.e. the last two decades. This novel carries postmodern elements like parody, irony, intertextuality, metafiction, pastiche and so on. By presenting these elements the novel is structured in the new form which is departed from the traditional fiction writing conventions.

This novel is set in the far- western Nepal in particular and the whole country in general. In the story Sanat recounts her past to relate how she left her home at the early age to marry a middle aged Raja Saheb to become "Rani Saheb" herself. She relates how she becomes widow at the age of 20. She further presents the situation of the then feudal society. When she become the widow after having two sons, she shifted to Ganeshpur, Kailali and then to Kathmandu when the Maoist insurgency began. Sanat's narration presents a historical scenario after 1930s. Here, Shah rewrites the Nepalese history by evoking the character Sanat.

In the other story, Sanjeevani narrates her experiences from the rebellious perspective. Her narration basically focuses on the period of Maoist insurgency. By employing the narrator Sanjeevani, the novelist is parodying the historical period that Sanat carried in her early age. Sanat is presented as an innocent character where as Sanjeevani is presented a rebellious, erotic and enjoying the pleasures of commercial popular culture: the pleasure of sexual experience (having sexual relations with two

men, Razat and Chandra- A Maoist Commander) and the consumerist life style. Here Sanjevani narrates:

I was then too drunk to comprehend[...] I had disentangled my hands from his grip and taken hold of his head and forced it down; placing my lips, that are always craving for his, on his forehead. I had hissed him all over his facing, tasting his skin, his warm flesh feeling along the breath of life that emanated out of each pore of him. (60)

These lines show the postmodern consumer culture through the character Sanjeevani who goes beyond the traditional social rules and structure by indulging in the different activities like drinking and passing the whole night with a man named Razat.

This novel tells the story of the past and present by evoking the postmodern techniques. In the novel, Shah draws the history of Nepal critically where the fictional characters Sanat and Sanjeevani tell the whole story. Many literary movements have occurred in the world history of literature basically in the west. Among them postmodernism is the latest developed movement and also came to the theory and practice. Postmodernism is wide ranging cultural movement which is a broad term that has emerged as an area of academic since the 1960s that carries variety of disciplines, art, architecture, fashion, technology etc. Postmodernism involves in the literary text that tries to subvert the already established modes of thought.

Postmodernism according to Hutcheon,

... is one which juxtaposes and gives equal value to the self reflexive and the historically grounded: to that which is inward-directed and belong to the world of art (such as parody) and that which is outward directed and belongs to "real life" (such as history). The tension

between these apparent opposites finally defines the paradoxically worldly text of Postmodernism. (2)

Here, Hucheon clarifies both the subjective and objective way of getting knowledge. There is the combination between parody and history and fiction. Hucheon further says "they are bed fellows" (2).

This novel constructs the postmodern elements such as irony, parody, intertextuality, collage, metafiction, self-reflexivity, plural narratives, fragmented composition and juxtaposition. By employing these techniques Shah subverts the ideologies.

Facing My Phantoms is a postmodern novel that makes the parody of the history of Nepal. Parody is a very important term in the postmodernist writing because it resists singularity. All Parodic narrative is double narrative: there is a story besides there is antidote. Sanjeevani, the narrator tells the story where there is another story of Sanat; a historical Sanat who represents the past. Representing the political history of the Rana regime in Nepal, the narrator tells that the husband of Sanat, Raja Saheb, who was involved to end the Rana rule and to help the King Tribhuvan, was exiled. Chanda the worker of Durbar says to Sanat "your husband is in exile; Rani Saheb... the Teen Sarkar in the capital doesn't want him to needle with the politics there" (50).

Postmodern fiction often extends the novel beyond the traditional pattern to the blurring of generic boundaries which is found in fragmented style. Sheeba Shah presents the story in flashback. Here, in the novel the narrator, Sanjeevani recalls the past. This can be seen in the following lines:

Jijumua concluded her stories, lulling my fatigue body to sleep and awakening there in my innate self... my wild self. My grandmother's

stories released me, her stories kept the truth of my being alive, submerged yet alive, somewhere inside of me. Now when I look back, I am convinced that Jijumua's stories actually saved me from decaying, from disappearing into the oblivion of forced and falseful thinking. (1)

This extract shows imagination of the past that means use of flash back techniques which is frequently used by the postmodernist writer that helps to challenge the coherence.

Postmodern writers believe in plurality and multiplicity of the self of the character that means self is divided. We find the fragmented self of the narrator, Sanjeevani in the novel. Here in the example she questions herself in a fragmented way. She says:

Now there rages in me a war between two selves. Am I the wild woman that I am born to be or am I the harnessed woman that I am expected to be? I ask myself this question each day. I am trapped in this dilemma. I suffocate each day, wondering who I really am. [...] am I Sanju; the one who carries the stories, the dreams, the songs and the memories of the absolute, undeniable and irrevocable band with the wild? (2)

These lines explicitly show the conversation of Sanjeevani with herself having a fragmented self. She does not have fixed identity that means her 'self' is divided as well as fragmented.

Postmodern fiction often extends the novel beyond the traditional convention of generic boundaries. It means postmodern novel is found necessarily in fragmented style. The fragmentary nature of Shah's story is highlighted by topographical use in

the text especially a series of headings as well as the use of writing in the form of letter, can be viewed by the following extracts:

Congratulations, my dearest Sanjee, on your new prime. The letter stared with a hint of banter. I wish you all the best hoping that Mr. Lakendra Bahadur Chand will indeed take Nepal to a totally new level of development and progress. [...] I think I have gone too far. With my eagerness and am certain that you may not share any enthusiasm, for I know well, my Sanjevani has her own rigid mind, her own set of opinions and a dream that belongs only to her ... is it not?

I look forward to meeting you very soon, my dearest

Your and only yours...

Chandra. (213)

Analyzing this extract we find the structure of the story is different that breaks the traditional notion of generic boundary. Here, the second lover of Sanjeevani, Chandra is writing this letter which is presented as it is in the italics. Similarly, while breaking the generic boundary, Shah has used epigraph in the concluding chapter critically. At last of the book use of the following line is set as epigraph. Rumi says " we start to step up ... a step appears." (273). This line is examined by Rumi. As postmodernism demands, the novel is presented differently. Analysing the text from the postmodern perspective, irony is one of the best techniques. The study of irony is rooted in the common academic past that irony has proved highly worthy of study. As Booth has noted, "From the earliest discussion of irony it has been seen as something that, like metaphor, will not stay graciously in an assigned position, something that in fact can easily and quickly expand its own peculiar appeals, move toward dominance and become some kind of end in

itself." (P. 138). As we understand, irony is a powerful rhetorical tool whose role in creating meaning shouldn't be underestimated.

Historically, irony has been characterized by incongruity between literal and intended meanings means between what is stated and what is meant or between what is expected and what occurs. This incongruity prompts the two identify the relationship between the two elements that warrants the irony in order to determine the underlying congruence that unites the two apparently disparate elements. Postmodern irony is a bit far from the traditional irony. Postmodern irony, like postmodernism, furthermore is characterized by multiplicity, instability, inconsistency and paradox which raises the question with respect to the meaning of said irony. The meaning generated by postmodern irony are multiple and inconsistency. Linda Hutcheon states "Postmodernist irony is one that rejects the resolving urge of Modernism toward closure at least, distance complicity always attends, its critique" (95). Here she means that the strength of postmodern irony inheres in its ability to have subversive function.

Facing my Phantoms by Sheeba Shah uses numbers of ironies to make the criticism of the society. In the novel there are two stories. The first story is about the past life of Sanat where she represents the feudal history of Nepal from 1930s. The past was not only the feudal but patriarchal as well. Sanat is the historical character. She faces large numbers of problems after getting married in her childhood. Sanat's marriage is also the symbol of feudal system. Sanat was married forcefully to the aged man who is from the Durbar of Raja of Kanda. The narrator describes:

Change the Rani Shaheb's attire before she is taken down for her meal [...] remember to have her washed before that she goes

down to the Jiunarghar and see whether her meal is really'. Instruction floated out of her, easy, plain dull and prosaic. The others simply complied, never seeming to refute her commands. It is Tara's loud and commanding voice that has woken her up this morning, forcing Sanat out of a beautiful dream. Wake up you log'. Tara kicks Sanat's maid who was sleeping on a pile of hay in one corner of the room. Get the Rani Shaheb ready for the Dhara Puja. (28)

This extract explains the feudal (high class) person of the society where some common people are treated in a bad way. The setting proves that the feudal social structure.

In the novel, Shah presents another story where the central character Sanjeevani narrates. This story presents the modern society which is being transformed into egalitarian. Here Sanjeevani is represented as the parodied character of Sanat. Sanjeevani is a Modern character, a self-conscious as well as radical female character. She does not easily digest to the traditional gender role. Her personal choice does not fit into the patriarchal society. She never bows her head in front of the patriarchy rules and she says:

I am going to be thirty in a few years and I am still unmarried and shamelessly seeing a married man. I am well aware that the Chastisements that I receive from my family and others are not for my being a second woman and a mistress to a man, but more for loving a man out of my caste. For loving a Marwari. Razat is a Marwari... rich but a Marwari. A good man, but a Marwari. Razat is a Marwari. At home he speaks different language and

although he is a Hindu like myself, his traditions are different, his customs are different. (12)

This extract shows the critique of patriarchal norms of the society by the character Sanjeevani.

By presenting Sanat's story as fairy tale, Shah makes different between the traditional innocent world and the contemporary modern world, between the physical and the spiritual; between the past and present. The past world is symbolically criticized and rejected through Shah's depiction of Sanjeevani's unfit in a contemporary world, it means, Sanjeevani's rejection.

Taken as a whole, *Facing My Phantoms* is a clear example of postmodern novel that has full of postmodern ironies, having subversive function. The multiple and paradoxical messages are the characteristics of the subversive function of postmodern irony. *Facing My Phantoms* a postmodern novel carries two stories with ironic juxtaposition, i. e. narration of Sanat is juxtaposed with the narration of Sanjeevani. In the story of Sanat, we find the traditional narrative structure like coherence, order, unity and certainty. The story of Sanat begins from the wedding ceremony of herself in the following way:

Sanat crouches in fear and anxiety. Strange faces peep and peer, and even poke her tear-stained face; some with curiosity, some with animosity and some merely to feel the gleaming, impeccable skin that stretches down from Sanat's face down to the rest of her lanky body. They had brought her to kanda all the way from Achham last night. A grand wedding procession playing drums and sarangis, singing and dancing had led her

palanquin after a tedious journey of days, into the durbar of the Raja of Kanda. (26)

These lines are the beginning of Sanat's story in a simple and coherent way. But, Shah has not presented the story of Saneevani in a coherence way. It is presented in a complex way, story of Sanjeevani begins in the form of flashback that what her Jijumua used to tell her where she was child. Sanjeevani compares the story of her Jijumua with that of her own life that she is living. The story begins with the criticism of Sanjeevani regarding the story of her grandmother told in the past. She says:

"Her stories laid bare the primordial fact of the wild woman blended with wild nature. It was her fairy tales, myths and stories of the woman, the bad woman, the daring woman, the evil woman, the wicked woman reigning the world of the clouds...the self that is wild; the self that is a wanderer and the self that never stays constant." (2)

The above extract is the beginning of Sanjeevani's story which is a bit confusing. We cannot get the linear flow of the story.

In the narration of Sanjeevani, there is the challenge to patriarchy where Sanjeevani herself is presented as a central, powerful, multidimensional character. The fact that woman is portrayed as capable as men of power and even challenges essentialist assumptions regarding gender. Sanjeevani here in the novel says:

Very early, in my growing - up years, I began to sense the differences between the way they treated me and my brothers. He is a boy and you are a girl, that's why was the only answer for

all my 'whys'. Why can I not go out to the market? Dada is going.

Because he is a boy and you are a girl. (32).

She further says "I started rebelling for being a girl and most of my teenage years went up in forcing myself to believe as I would want others to think I was a boy I like my hair short, wore only pants and completely stayed away from female fancies. (32). This line proves that how Sanjeevani starts revolting the social patriarchal structure.

There is another story where Sanat, who represents the whole women of the past portrayed as connection to nature, uncivilized, gentle, submissive person. In the story the narrator tells how much Sanat was exploited sexually in her early ages in Danda Durbar by her husband Raja Shabeb who was an aged man. The following lines explain how she was exploited. Narrator says:

There is a stirring in Sanat, hot and consuming, and she is suddenly filled with a desire she has never known. A fire burns between her legs. She can feel his hands push her thighs apart. Before she can gasp for air, he is on the top of her and pushing into her- a piercing pain. It begins to hurt Sanat more each time he bangs into her, careless and reckless and with a freezy that drives out all the feelings of passion that she had started out with. Now there is only pain, searing, pain. She tightens herself with each banging. (53)

This extract clarifies the submissive nature of Sanat. She never goes against her husband though she is a seriously exploited. In this way Shah's novel *Facing My Phantoms*, carries numbers of postmodern irony that subversive function too as mentioned above. The postmodern nature of subversive irony may

mandate this further subvert, a clear and coherent premise is necessary for the multiple and paradoxical messages.

In addition, Shah emphasizes Sanjeevani, a narrator whose dissatisfaction through her use of fragmentary composition, self-reflection, metafiction and openendedness of the story. Similarly, unfinished several acts of the character, Sanjeevani failure of the protagonist's ambition which undermine the completion of any meaningful action. Shah depicts Sanjeevani story is connected with both the past and the traditional story of Sanat. Sanat is traditional figure of innocence beauty, goodness, and a moral person, which symbolize the victory of good over evil. But Sanjeevani's identity is immediately undermined. It is because she is depicted as morally corrupted who has to struggle with the contemporary, consumerist cultural society. Sanjeevani's married lover Razat with whom she spends time and she also spends days with Razat in drinking. The following extracts says; "Words drifted out from my mouth, that was already steaming out vapours of the vodka and tequila that I had vigorously consumed[...]words undersigned and impromptu (41). It shows that Sanjeevani's rejection of tradition and innocence by drinking alcohol and spending the days with a married man.

Shah depicts Sanat as a traditional character who represents the past and the past that represents the history of Nepal of 1930s and after. Raja Shaheb, who represents the feudal lord. Similarly, Tara, another character, is presented as commanding figure who mobilises the other workers of this Durbar. There is Sanat's maid who is exploited and regards as a slave. We see Sanat a mythic figure having the qualities of innocence, beauty, goodness and a moral person. However, Shah doesn't satisfy with the character Sanat and

she employs the modern story of Sanjeevani, a leading character. Sanjeevani's identity is undermined since she is presented a morally corrupted intellectual. She is presented a morally corrupted because of her obligation to challenge the status quo(tradition). Sanjeevani's function in the contemporary world manifests itself in Shah's use of self-reflectivity and metafictional strategies.

Self-reflexivity is seen in the narrator's questioning of her statements. As self-reflexivity demands to subvert the assumption that art can be a transparent. Medium of communication, anti illusionist, critique of realism and it also destroys the pleasure of illusion, Shah has made this novel an anti-illusionist. While telling the story Shah's narrator Sanjeevani discloses the reality that she is writing a novel instead of telling a story. The narrator says:

My Novel should soon be out in the market. Depending on how it is received, I will begin to get some royalty that will help me get by to a certain extent. All this I think to my brooding self, remembering at the sometime the pressure of going to meet one publisher after another in Kathmandu and receiving the same reply - Not enough market for fiction in Nepal at the moment.

(268)

Here, in this condition readers are not kept in the confusion that the novelist is writing a novel not telling the true story. The novelist is going to publish her book and she talks about Professor Upreti about her story in Mandala Book House. Shah's narrator further clarifies how to publish her book. It is easy when she meets her teacher and he gives her suggestion on it. She narrates:

Then I had met professor Upreti at Mandala Book House. Sitting on a low stool, his head covered with big black curls, he was

bent over a book shelf. [...] recognized me immediately as a student from his days of teaching English Literature, years back in The Tribhuvan University. Sanjeevani what a surprise he had said, smiling the same gentle smile that concealed an entire world in it. His eyes were the same - a lost but curious. (268)

In the novel such self - reflexivity is further developed by the narrator's frequent use of references from the historical events. Contemporary political scenario and other various works of art.

Metafictional strategies are the strategies that reveal the fictional nature of the work itself. Fictional writing which self - consciously and systematically draws the attention to its status to question about the relationship between fiction and reality. Regarding the concept of historiographic metafiction, Hutcheon says:

For the most part historiography metafiction, like much contemporary theory of history, does not fall into either 'presentation' or nostalgia in its relation to the past it represents. What it does is de - naturalize the temporal relationship. In both historiography theory and postmodern fiction, there is an intense self - consciousness (both theoretical and textual) about the act of narrating in the present the events of the past, about the conjunction of the present action and the past absent object of that agency. (68)

Hutcheon, means to say that there is the unsolved contradiction of representation in postmodern fiction is that of the relation between the past and the present. Historians are aware that they establish a relationship between

the past they write about and in which they write. The past may have appeared as confused, plural and unstructured as the present but historians' task is to order this fragmented experience into knowledge. It means whether history writing or fiction writing both are similar.

In the novel, *Facing My Phantoms* the narrator tells the story of the past Nepal Sanat is a historical character in the story. The narrator tells the historical story in the following way:

In 1903, Sapkota had started his weekly paper, calling it 'Gorkhali', the Raja Saheb is informing the two as their furtive glances shift to the big thick walls of mansion. It is said that the Raja Shaheb has stored bricks of gold and silver in between the bricks. If I am right; it was printed and distributed from Benaras. Remember how this paper made big news for nearly four years? And then what happens? Chandra Shamsher the then prim - minister shuts it down with the help of the British in India. The Raja Shaheb has a deep frown upon his forehead. In his state of distress, he begins to twirl, the tip of his moustache as he continues in his own lost tangent. (74 -75)

In the narration, Shah has presented the historical fact about the political movement to end the autocratic Rana - regime. In the above extract proves that fictitious character Raja Shaheb is involved there in the historical events in the narration.

Through the self - reflexive and metafictional. Strategies focusing the reader's attention on language, construction of multiple stories, Shah presents the contemporary society and the traditional society comparatively. That means,

Shah's emphasis is on the comparison between the innocent past carried by the character Sanat and the contemporary popular culture carried by the character Sanjeevani that makes the parodic effect in the novel. Parody is not a coherent parody of a particular genre, but it is scattered throughout the text and dissolved in the narrative techniques. The function of such parody is not to evoke a mocking effect and to ridicule the parodied text or its author as in traditional parodies, but to point out a difference between past and present forms of experience and the art representing it. It aims to give critique of traditional past artistic representations of reality which tried to convince the perceiver about their objectivity and truthfulness and to give a representation of reality which blurs the distinction between fact and fiction. The function of doing so in fiction is to give a critique of some aspects of contemporary society in which the neutral parody is used. Inside it we get irony. Irony is "More playful than ridiculous more critical than destructive" (Hutcheon 202).

In *Facing my Phantoms*, Shah presents the nature of parody through the reference to the history of Nepal from 1930 to the present. She playfully shows a difference between the past and the present narration. In the Novel, Shah presents the historical as well as political context of Nepal. By presenting them, she wants to criticize the political as well as cultural realities. In the novel, the transition of the traditional feudal society represented by Sanat into a modern egalitarian society represented by Sanjeevani symbolically or allegorically represents a transition between innocent and experience, between tradition and moderning, between past and present sensibilities. In this novel, self inclusive narrative strategies are used in which the narrator Sanjeevani asks questions rather than gives the answer. Shah's parody of the genre of the

a fairy tale which is in the form of history, does not mean the rejection of the past but rewrite the past in a modern way.

Facing my Phantoms by Sheeba Shah parodies the history of Nepal from 1930s to the present. She shows the traditional society to that of modern. Shah brings the historical references in the fiction to give intertextual effect in the novel. As postmodern writers believe that a literary work can actually no longer be original. If it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. So, intertextuality evokes the deconstructive notion of postmodern reference through the critique of authenticity and meaning inherent in a text. Regarding this Hucheson says "Postmodern meta - Intertextuality challenges both closure and single centralized meaning ... the typically contradictory postmodern art both provides and undermines context (27). Here in the text, *Facing My Phantoms*, Shah brings the political, history from the Rana regime. The following extract proves how the writer makes balance carefully the history and fiction. She narrates:

B. P. Koirala has sent out a press release from Patna Staling that an inevitable political change in Nepal is now evident following the independence of India. He has taken an initiative to form the Nepali National Congress and the party is determined to launch a movement in Nepal to replace the Rana regime with a constitutional monarchy. The party in its Calcutta session has even received complimentary messages from noted Indian leaders such as Acharya Kriplani, Vijay Laxmi Pundit, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar. Lohiya and Acharya Narendra Dev ... the Raja Shaheb has recently returned from Calcutta, attending as a member of the Prajatantrik Party led by

Subarna Shamsheer, a joint session that his party had with the National Congress led by B. P. Koirala in Calcutta's Tiger Hall.

(101)

This extract proves how the history is mixed in the fiction. The imaginary character Raja Shaheb, husband of Sanat is involved in the revolution against the Rana regime that performs the good example of intertextuality. The importance of this historicizing parody is made clear by contrast in the novel *Facing My Phantoms*, performs the sense of intertextuality that denies the historicity of the past.

Facing My Phantoms by Sheeba Shah a postmodern novel employs pastiche, another technique which is very common and close affinity to the term intertextuality. By using this technique Shah implies it in the text which is constructed in idiosyncratic style, using different linguistic variations and references from history, newspaper and politics. Here Fredric Jameson says:

Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask speech in dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal.(13)

Here, Jameson says that postmodern literary critiques has replaced conventional parody into pastiche. By pastiche, he refers to the merged condition of earlier division of popular or high and low culture. If we turn to the central question of the role of language in Shah's in this book "*Facing My Phantoms*", we find more than anything else. The book seems to be about the condition of

language which exist today for a writer to communicate something to his readers in a meaningful way. Throughout the book a variety of very topical subjects are merged: viz: The anti - Rana movement before 2007, People's movement - I, Maoist Peoples War, story of Jamjhutwa (a ghost like character), political corruption, FIFA World Cup - 2002. Shah brings these events which form the text with a neutral parody that Jameson calls "Pastiche." Shah's using this materials not for the satiric analysis but she is seeing the public consciousness which is gradually being changed in the course of time.

Shah, demonstrates the bankruptcy of language and literary tradition is seen pervasively in the novel which can be seen in the form of parody. *Facing My Phantoms* is created out of a variety of narrative styles, bringing different literary sources. Shah's novel is further created from hodge - podge of styles, repeating different literary parodies, frequent use of slang, academic cliché, Jargon. In the novel, Sanjeevani narrates the story of the Maoist People's war. She is not satisfied with the mass killing revolution. Her own brother Sanja was killed by the Maoist cadres. She makes critique of the war and she says "How can the people's war call itself people's war if it results in the random and indiscriminate killing of the innocent people?"(129).

Shah uses different slang words " The mother fucker (241), similarly, she used different regional varieties of language for example: "Moro kale Tharu... (216). "Maiya ree, hamar Maiya"(91). Eee ka hui gail (What has happened) (91). These lines are taken from the language of the Tharu community. By using these languages, the writer gives the sense of "minimalism" which has close affinity to the postmodernism. Regarding the use of languages from different community, the narrator tries to subvert the

social construction which was in the feudal based. In the matter of language use; the critic Mikhail Bakhtin in *Discourse in the Novel* says " Languages are not merely for scientific and descriptive activities, rather they are always polemical and or political one"(292). That means, in postmodern novel, linguistic heteroglossia is used as a subverting tool that destroys the univocality. Sanjeevani's search for the peace, she moves to Kailali, her birthplace, she describes the locality the most Maoist affected place in the insurgency period. She also describes the changes brought by the war.

Postmodern novel always carries the socio-political issues in a different ways. 'Dislocation' or ' displacements' are the terms frequently used by the postmodern novelist as a theory of post-colonial studies. Sheeba Shah in "*Facing My Phantoms*" describes the scene of the ten years long underground war conducted by Maoist where Sanju, Sanjeevani's brother was killed by Maoists in Kailali district suffered by murder, the parents of Sanjeevani and she herself came to Kathmandu to take refuge under the metropolitan Shade and Shelter in a small rented room. They became refuges in their own country. It means they become dislocated. It gives the post-colonial theory of dislocation. Regarding the theory, Deepika Vari argues that "Dislocatory troubles and the problem of displacement are the effect of a society trapped in the violent chaos of transition" (45). It means within a single location in the nation the problem of dislocation and displacement can arise because of the clash between ideologies.

Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha another critic argues " Even the relation between oppressor and oppressed, centre and periphery, negative image and positive image can undergo shift and invitees the problem of dislocation and displacement" (16). Because of the violence of Maoist's underground campaign, many people from rural

areas were forced to flee and come to the urban areas. The same things happen in the Sanjeevani's family. The narrator remarks:

That was the night that made my family a refugee in its own country. Seeking an asylum from these political bandits, they had all flocked into Kathmandu, seeking protection and even solace for their shattered egos, leaving behind all their material wealth to be devoured by the mutinous villagers who had just woken up to the down of party." (22)

This line proves that many people are displaced from their houses due to the conflict in the country including the Sanjeevani's family.

Postmodernism always makes critique of the grand narratives. The central point where the ideology of the Maoist is criticized is in believing the postmodern notion of the local narrative. The political agendas demanded by the Maoist are grand narratives. To counter the ideology of Maoism the researcher uses the Lyotard's notion of postmodernity. Regarding postmodernism Lyotard says:

We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience. Under the general demand for slackening and for appeasement, we can hear the muttering of the desire for a return of terror, for the realization of the fantasy to seize reality. The answer is: let us wage a war on totality. Let us be witness to the unrepresentable. Let us activate the difference and save the honour of the names. (314)

According to Lyotard, the problem of any solution is taken as a universalistic and essentialistic way appears to be a grand narrative. It means any ideology, any view

point or agenda, programme is taken as a final solution to the crisis goes to the category of grand narrative. Here, in this fiction "*Facing My Phantoms*" the character Sanjeevani, criticizes the notion of Maoist ideology. While discussing with the Maoist commander Chandra, about their policy and the activities, she says:

I am filled with venom that begins to spread through my body and sting my conscience. Yet, I fucked him... yet I allowed my hands to dig into his skin seeking for a reprieve. Why, Sanjeevani ! perhaps, it is the hatred that I feel for this kind, for everyone around me and even for myself. I want it out! I want to feel this hatred for real and perhaps even vanquish it, for good. (135)

Here, Sanjeevani says herself that she finds the Maoists extremism, violence that makes her extreme hatred to the Maoist ideology.

Facing My Phantoms, a postmodern novel carries the postmodern elements of anti-novel. Anti-novel refers to such a novel that is deliberately created is a negative trend of fiction writing violating traditional norms and the established novelistic conversions. According to M.H. Abrams anti-novel is" ... a work which is deliberately constructed in a negative fashion, relying for its effects on the deletion of standard elements, on violating traditional norms, and on playing against the exceptions established in the reader by the novelistic methods and conventions of the past (195)." Anti-novel always leads the readers consciousness in a fragmented way. The story never goes to linear way as that of traditional novelistic norms and forms. In Shah's novel *Facing My Phantoms*, there is not the linear story. The mind of the narrator goes from one place to another, present to past. The narrator tells most part of the story in flashback. That means the plot construction of this novel is not chronological means fragmented narrative techniques.

Shah ends in a mysterious way. Shah presents the character Sanjeevani who makes relation with Razat and Chandra. But finally she becomes pregnant and she gives birth to the baby without getting married, the following lines say "Sanjeevani lifted her body in the air. You, my baby, are my compact piece. From you, I see myself emerge from the shadows of my jeering phantoms. Cry my baby, cry, let it out. Let it all out. The baby cries, a soft muffled whimper and she instantly springs him up in the air (274)." She further says regarding the baby: I've paid the price, but look how much I've gained (274). Though she gives birth to the baby, but it is unknown to the reader about the father of that baby. The openendedness of the plot is structured that also helps to prove this novel as a postmodern novel.

In the concluding part of the novel, there is a parody of old national song which tries to rewrite the history of Nepal. The song goes this way:

" Hatni haina dati rahane Nepali ko baani huncha

Kahile no jhukne sir uthe ko swabhimani Nepali huncha

Bishwo ko kuna kapcha ma khoja

Nepali ko mutu ma khoja.... Taya singo Nepal huncha... (276)

The lines omitted something that proves the hope of new Nepal, change in Nepalese political scenario. The narrator is in fragmented situation but as a postmodernist, she is celebrating. In conclusion of the novel, Shah brings the important lines from Rumi. The novel ends: "*Birds make great sky circles of their freedom. How do they learn that? They fall, and falling they are given wings*" (270). This line proves the structure of novel which is new and experimented in Nepali fiction writing that challenges the traditional novel writing, especially in Nepali literature.

This brief analysis thus, shows that postmodern elements are used to present the Nepalese history, politics, social structure and rewrite them in a new context. This

means it is the postmodern way of revisiting the past rather than avoiding the past (history). While doing so, it uses those postmodern elements such as: intertextuality, irony, parody. Similarly, other concepts developed after the emergence of postmodernism like post-colonial theory of dislocation, displacement and also the concept of anti-novel and openendedness of the text. While using these elements,

Shah's story provides a critique of traditional generic distinctions and offers new trend which can help to express the contemporary issues with an experimental way.

III. *Facing My Phantoms* as a Postmodern Novel

To sum up, through analysis of the novel *Facing My Phantoms*, it is discovered that irony, parody, metafiction, intertextuality, pastiche and other elements of postmodern fiction used in the novel are capable of being departure from the traditional convention of fiction writing. Sheeba Shah subverts the traditional narrative convention and she also presents Sanat as a traditional character who represents the past history and Sanjeevani as a modern character who represents the present. By presenting these two characters and their narratives (stories), the novel shows the gap between the past and present, popular and high culture, spiritual and physical experience. Sanjeevani a narrator as well as a character finds the loopholes and rejects both the past and present.

Sanjeevani is a contemporary young woman as well as the parodied version of historical character Sanat who indulges in the physical life i.e sex, alcohol, popular culture etc and spiritual life i.e. art, literature, education, knowledge etc presents Sanjeevani a bold character who makes the critique of the political events of Maoist War as well as the patriarchy with the help of irony. In the novel, Shah makes the departure from the structure of the novel writing conversation in which we find it in the beginning and its ending as well. Self- reflexivity is developed by the narrator's frequency use of allusions, references from different sources like history, politics, mythical stories, sports, literature, etc. show the fictional nature of the work itself metafictional strategies are used. To provide a critique of their own methods of construction, such writing explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional texts as well as historical references.

In the novel, Shah emphasizes Sanjeevani's dissatisfaction through the use of fragmentary composition of the story, self- reflection, metafiction, irony, parody, intertextuality, openendedness of the narration. By interweaving the historical political story, Shah establishes a multi-leveled text that refers to the postmodern term intertextuality. Shah presents the story of Sanat and the story of Sanjeevani that in which Sanjeevani makes the critique the events of the period 1930s to the present including Maoist insurgency period of Nepal, with the help of parody. Shah uses parody and various innovative techniques to analyze the texture of contemporary life and the Nepalese political and socio-economic history after 1930s and after on the other. She tries to clarify the state of the society and the language used in the society. The reader of *Facing My Phantoms* does not get singular plot line. The narrator goes from present to the past and vice-versa while telling the story.

This novel is observed in a postmodern perspective where the ideologies like Maoist patriarchy have been criticized severely. It is because postmodernism is in the favour of local narrative not in the grand narrative. Furthermore, Shah is able to make this novel as a postmodern text by using the issues of the contemporary Nepalese scenario of the people's war waged by Maoist. Theory of post-colonial studies, a branch of postmodernist theory carries the issues of 'dislocation' or displacement which are shown in the text. The narrator Sanjeevani and her family are victimized by the war.

By establishing an open-ended story that rejects the traditional text writing. The novel consists of different elements like parody, irony, intertextuality, metafiction, collage and pastiche. By using these elements in the novel *Facing My Phantoms* by Sheeba Shah makes a departure from the traditional fiction writers, especially in Nepali fiction writing convention. Here, in this regard Shah provides us a good example of postmodern novel with experimentation.

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