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The Individual Voice Against Authoritative Discourse: The Polyphony in Henrik Ibsen's Play *An Enemy of the People*

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This thesis entitled "The Individual Voice Against Authoritative Discourse: The Polyphony" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Punya Prasad Adhikari has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Henrik Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People*, though written in nineteenth century, appears to advocate the ideas which are, in fact, supposed to be the outcome of the latest postmodern theories of the twentieth century. In this regard, Ibsen's portrayal of countering perspective between the major characters Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor is analyzed as the expression of multiple voices. The play's portrayal of existing conflict between Dr. Thomas Stockmann, the protagonist, and his brother Peter Stockmann (the Mayor) representing domineering authorial voice seem irreconcilable as Dr. Thomas Stockmann is determined to expose the truth about the bad water systems of which common people are unaware while Peter Stockmann, liberal press and manipulated majority are not in favour of the exposure of the truth. Such a challenge and disruption of domineering ideology by one individual and also the exposure of the perspectives for seeing the truth really characterizes the text as a polyphonic work.

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<h1 style="text-align:center">I. Introduction</h1>

The present research is designed to expose how Ibsen has the idea about multiplicity as seen in his play *An Enemy of the People* (1882) where Ibsen celebrates the individuality by making the countering perspectives between individual and society. Though Ibsen and his work belong to nineteenth century, his idea as it is expressed in his play marks a link to relate it with the postmodernist ethos, especially with the Bakhtinian concept of polyphonic work with its portrayal of differentiation and unmerged voices. As Bakhtin is considerably concerned with the discourse of characters in the novel which may challenge and disrupt the overriding ideology as expressed in a single voice of a narrator, such disruption and subversion of domineering authorial voice by individuality can be found in Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People*. It is therefore, this study is grounded on Bakhtinian concept of polyphony and dialogic theory so as to prove as a polyphonic text with its examination of existing conflict between individual and domineering authorial voice.

As the play portrays the unresolved and irreconcilable conflict between individual and authority, it seems to be an expression of multiplicity with the disregardation of subordinating individuality to authority. By revealing the existence of unmerged voices existing in a text and also exploring the potentiality and possibility by giving an open ending of the play, he is perhaps advocating the freeing play of ideologies in a text. It is in this respect, Ibsen seems to be in favour of multiple voices and perspectives as the actual representation of reality rather than one single truth as the only idea. To Bakhtin, "Reality as we have it in the novel is only one of many possible realities; it is not inevitable not arbitrary, it bears within itself other possibilities" (Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the study of the Novel; 1854). If Ibsen and his play *An Enemy of the People* seem to stand and advocate in the

existence of multiple truths and multiple perspectives, his text can be approached from Bakhtin dialogic theory as it is applied to explore how different ideologies and perspectives are not only in opposing relationship rather this conflict of ideologies between the character seem irreconcilable.

Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* marks a departure from the traditional advocacy for unified and coherent perspectives and also from reconciled close ending towards the exploration of multiple potentiality and possibility. It is with this indication, the play seems to embody the features of polyphonic novel. As the Bakhtin is in favour of the disruption of the authority of the authorial single voice, Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* also speaks for the disruption of unified and dominant ideology by making the countering individual perspectives reluctant to submit his individuality so as to expose the vices and hypocrisies of manipulating majority.

The major thrust of the play lies in the conflict of perspectival difference between Dr. Thomas Stockman and the Mayor, his brother Peter Stockmann. The conflict which we observe while going through the text, appears to be the conflict of identity when there is struggle between individual character and authorial power. Thomas Stockmann as an individual and independent character assumes that he has to be recognized as an individual power within the society to acclaim his unique identity. It is, therefore, he revolts against those authorities who are not ready to accept his individual identity. He believes that he deserves the right as an individual to propose some suggestions concerning for the betterment of the Bath and its people. Moreover, he thinks that the old truths and assumptions must be questioned in order to acknowledge individual freedom. In the course of the play, his questioning of the established truth, that is, "Bath is healthy place for people" while exposing its defect based on factual observations really justifies the Bakhtinian or postmadernists advocacy for plurality. Bakhtin's advocacy for individual freedom and individual

discovery is what proves Bakhtin's disregardation of social experiences as the unification of ideologies or domination of one single ideology. As like Bakhtin, Dr. Thomas Stockmann recognizes that individual discovery has to be prioritized instead of its denial. He, therefore, while realizing his individual freedom makes an effort to disrupt the long-established imbalance between authority and individual. His exposure of the new truth of water system and its harmful effect on people based on factual observations is, infact, the struggle of individual for the identity and freedom. His advocacy for the individual freedom and individual identity is clearly assumed when we realize his saying, though he is unlistened, "The strongest man in the world is the man who stands alone" (251).

But on the other hand, the authorial power or authoritative discourse makes its assumption clear when the Mayor while arguing with Dr. Thomas Stockmann says: [...] in a well-ordered community ... individual must subordinate himself to society as a whole, or more precisely, to those authorities responsible for the well-being of that society" (164). What we understand from the Mayor's above assertions is, that the truth should not be questioned or the individual should not be allowed if it contradicts the established social experiences. It is because of this differing ideologies hold by both important character of the play, the conflict which Ibsen initiates, does not get its solution till the end of the play. The play's portrayal of unresolved conflict with its open ending really celebrates what Bakhtin favours polyphony in a text. Quite opposite to the view of Dr. Thomas Stockmann, the Mayor, insists that the individual voice and freedom should be checked if it contradicts the long-established social belief. He assumes that the authorities elected for the welfare of the society and its people have only right to serve the society. It means that whatever the majority of the people does it should be followed by every individual and it is always right. This type

of incompromisable view hold by both Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor really elevates the play towards multiple orientations.

When we observe the play from the nineteenth century perspective; the tussle between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor seem simple with its limited perspective. From one perspective it can be analyzed as the play with the theme of tradition versus modernity. The Mayor turns out to be traditionalist when he insists for the inherited truth to be followed and assumed. But in opposition to him, Thomas Stockmann stands himself as modernist when he shows his utmost confidence in individuality not the tradition which advocates for the majority. But, our analysis from Bakhtin's polyphonic convention, sees the text replet with multiple orientations. This multiple orientations which we seek in the play is, infact, a search for polyphony in the play.

The existing conflict of ideologies between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor, assumes that Ibsen is a sharp critic of the automacy practiced under democratic by the majority in a liberal society. Democracy supposes that whatever the majority of the people think and vote is right. But Ibsen believes that the majority is not always right or it should be questioned to determine, its believability. Though the Dr. Stockmann, the protagonists is right in the discovery that the water in the newly constructed Bath is contaminated with sewage, contains microbes and is spoiling the health of the people, is lowered down at a public meeting and voted as a public enemy. At the meeting, public representatives, liberal press and the manipulated public compactly stand against the innocent and intelligent doctor who has the truth with factual proof. Reaviling such a controversy in democracy, Ibsen has sharply mocked at the political hypocrisy, opportunism of the liberal press and conservatism of the public.

The play's portrayal of existing conflict between Doctor Thomas Stockmann, the protagonist of the play and his brother Peter Stockmann, the Mayor, representing domineering authorial voice seems irreconcilable as the Doctor Thomas Stockmann is determined to expose the truth about the bad water systems at Baths of which common people are unaware though the Peter Stockmann, liberal press and manipulated majority are not in favor of exposure of truth. Such a challenge and disruption of domineering ideology by one individual and also the exposure of two perspectives for seeing the truth really characterizes the text *An Enemy of the People* as a polyphonic work. For Bakhtin, society is not a one out of the multiple differentiation of voices or ideologies rather it is a complex set of realities where differentiation does not merge but such unmerged voice creates multiple social experience not a one.

The Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, is best remembered for his treatment of individual character struggling against the narrow social demands. The postmodern sense of multiplicity, individuality, reality, freedom, blurring of boundaries equality seems to be Ibsen's favorite issues as seen in his most plays. In the mid-1820s, he created a new tradition of realistic prose drama that dealt boldly with contemporary social problems and individual psychology, offering an alternative to the melodrama that had dominated early nineteenth century theatre. In the first twenty five years of his career, Ibsen wrote romantic and historical dramas designed to glorify Norway and Norwegian audiences from popular Danish plays. With his later major works increasing complex by beginning with the *The Pillars of Society* (1877) and ending with *When We Dead Awaken* (1899): Ibsen's nineteenth century audiences were often shocked by the new and realistic subject matter of his plays. *Ghost* (1881) openly referred to inherited venereal disease, and *A Dolls House* (1879) displayed an astonishingly liberal attitude toward the emencipation of women. Both plays were

attacked as immoral and banned from several cities in Europe. Ibsen wrote about social problems, behaviours and political issues that were so sensitive in his own time, which people hardly even dared to talk openly about them in their own human.

Ibsen's five act play *An Enemy of the People* (1882) shows a physician fighting against autocracy practiced under democracy by a handful of self-centered people and claiming to be "the strongest man in the whole world" for standing alone (Ibsen, 250). The play has received many critical responses since its publication and some of them can be of great importance in commenting or doubting the majority, especially to evoke the emphasis on individual freedom by showing the inherent contradiction within the reality as dominated by majority.

In "Introduction" Ivor Brown has remarked, this play is Ibsen's reaction to mobverdicts, when the mob has played upon by frightened, foolish, "leader of opinion" who are infact only followers of convention, their creed, a mummy, stuffed and dead" (VII).

Revealing the conflict in *An Enemy of the People*, James Walter Mcfoarlane says, "Against his hero (Dr. Stockmann), Ibsen marshals an alliance of vested interest political hypocrisy and editorial opportunism [...]" (5). He sees the tension between these three forces and the heroes, opposing voice as the determining factor of the drama.

According to Bjorn Hemmer, *An Enemy of the People* "so powerfully challenged the values of the existing middle class society [that it] formulated the basic rights and liberties of the individual" (69). He praises Ibsen for contributing to the rise of individualism.

Bernard Shaw sees *An Enemy of the People* as Ibsen's critique of the opportunistic character of middle class people. He writes:

The play deals with a local majority of middle class people who are

peculiarly interested in counseling the fact that famous Baths, which

attract visitors to town and customers to their shops and hotels, are

contaminated by seawage. (73)

Similarly, another critic Joches Chung questions on the majority rules and also

finds satires on the popular cliche of democracy. He is of the opinion that what is the

importance of expertise in a democratic society, who can never be the majority. He

views:

Except for the simple-minded discourse of 'majority rules' and the

cliche that public is entitled to decide what they want it appeared to me

that certain aspects had been too much neglected during the promotion

of our democracy. How do we trust the expertise in a democratic

society, who can never be the majority? The doubt on 'majority rules'

expressed in *An Enemy of the People* can be of some consideration to

us. (199)

In the same way, Shahid Nadeem, director of "Dusman" Pakistani version of

An Enemy of the People comments about the play in his note after directing the play.

For him, also it is doubtful that the majority is right or wrong. The century-old Ibsen's

questions still unanswered: is the majority right?" collective will and wisdom is a

great virtue but should not we question the established and certified truths every once

in a while" (52).

From another perspective, Gautam Roychoudhary regards *An Enemy of the*

People as the theme of 'Truth' and 'Organization'. For him, truth cannot be declared

only by majority but can also be represented by a single one. He further writes:

The world criminals today represents organized force-sometimes in the

name of patriotism, religion. Terrorism, reigns revolution as a distant

star reason cries alone. The lone voice of reason gives a crying can for truth it summons the conscience of the people, not to its number and majority. (23)

Unlike, above mention assumptions, Rolf Fjeld sees the hero of the play, Dr. Thomas Stockmann as a Kiernegaardin hero who considers one single individual as the representative of the highest power Dr. Stockmann's last utterance that "the strongest man in the world is the one who stands alone" (251) echoes him as existential hero the further writes:

Under the democratic rather than autocratic, system that increasingly prevails in the nineteenth century, it is now for Stockmann, the majority that tends to be wrong and the minority that appears right since only a tiny knowledgeable minority holding their position like outposts, can comprehend in perspective the accelerating changes of a historical process that shows itself to be more and more genuinely innovative, rather than cyclical and repetitive. (xxii)

Though most of the critics sees the play with Ibsen's doubts on majority, emphasis an individual freedom and exposure of middle class hypocrisy but they have not, infact, comment on the concept of reality as reflected in his plays. If we consider Ibsen's concept of reality from Bakhtinian perspective of reality Ibsen's seems to be infavour of multiplicity rather than one single dominant ideology as a actual representation of reality.

II. BAKHTINIAN CRITICAL PROCEDURE

Mikhail Bakhtin's recognition as one of the influential literary critic of the twentieth century has been acclaimed with this theory of dialogic criticism and, most importantly, from his distinction between the monologic novels or Leo Tolstoy and the dialogic works of Fyodor Dostoevsky. Dialogic criticism is a theory and critical procedure which takes literary text not as a text whose meanings are produced by the play of impersonal linguistic force but a site for the dialogic interaction of multiple voices or a mode of discourse having a medley of voices or attitudes that are not only opposed but irreconcilable.

What we can infer from the above abstract is that literary text should not be viewed as unified whole as claimed by the structuralists, mostly Saussure, but a field where nothing conclusive can bind its inherent contradiction. Everything in a literary text has its meaning not because of the subordination to the authoritative discourse but with its independency and freedom that makes its own subjectivity.

Bakhtin is also well-known for 'prosaics,' the term which he coined to make it counter with 'poetics'. By 'poetics' we mean a theory of literature identified with its emphasis on monologism, the tradition developed from Aristotle to the Russian formalists. 'Prosaics,' according to him, seeks to establish a polyphonic discourse with its equal response to the inherent contradiction rather than biaseness as shown by monologic discourse with the subordination of many voices to the domineering authorial voice. By revealing this inadequacy of long standing 'poetics' to weigh the depth of prose works; especially of the novels, Bakhtin, thus, offers us the term 'prosaics'.

For illustrating and application of dialogic criticism which is modeled on the theory and critical procedure of the soviet critic Mikhail Bakhtin, it is necessary to understand his widespread concepts. Basically, his concept on language novel and truth marks him as a distinct critic while standing him in opposition to Aristotle's theory of 'poetics', which proposed that the primary component in narrative form is a plot that evolves coherently from its beginning, to an end in which all complications are resolved. Instead, Bakhtin elevates discourse into the primary component of a narrative work; and he describes discourse as a medley of voices, social attitudes and values that are not only opposed, but irreconcilables with the result that the works remains unresolved and open-ended. While working on Bakhtinian critical procedure, the terms like polyphony, heteroglossia, carnival, dialogue theories of the novel, genre etc. have to be taken into consideration for the better analysis of text.

Polyphony

The concept of polyphony is a key concept which Bakhtin develops after analyzing Dostoevsky's novels. Meaning literally 'many voices' means the liberation of multiple, independent voices which Bakhtin favours as it carries within it the subversion and disruption of domineering authorial voice. Bakhtin discusses polyphony in terms of dialogue and state that it is not an attribute of all novels. For him, Dostoevsky was the first and foremost polyphonic writer with his emphasis on the interplay between the author's own language and the fully realized languages of his protagonists. Dostoevsky's novel, Bakhtin writes:

> [...] is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness,
> absorbing other consciousness as object into itself, but as a whole
> formed by the interaction of several consciousness, none of which

entirely becomes an object for the other (problems of Dostoevsky's poetics). (18)

This shows that Bakhtin is not in favour of the integration or unification of consciousness to form unified whole as in monologic text rather he advocates for the freeing play of character's ideologies which is what makes a polyphonic text.

While considering on the position of authors in a polyphonic text, Bakhtin vindicates that the polyphonic author neither lacks nor fails to empress his ideas and values. He explicitly maintains that a work without "an authorial position ... is in general impossible ... The issue here is not an absence of, but a radical change in the author's position" (62). Besides, in a polyphonic work, authorial point of view differs in kind and method of expression from its monologic counterpart. Polyphonic work does have unity but it is what Bakhtin calls "a unity of a higher order" (Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky's Book," 298).

As we now understand his rejection of monologism in favour of dialogism that in a sense justifies his intention of restructuring western model of critical procedure that only seeks for harmony while dominating or subordinating other consciousness. With the term "theoretism" he associates all those critical procedure based on monologism. In the concluding part of the 1963 Dostoevsky's Book, he appeals the critics to think in fundamentally new ways:

> We must resource our monologic habits so that we might come to feel at home in the new artistic sphere which Dostoevsky discovered, so that we might orient in that incomparably more complex artistic model of the world which he created. (272)

With this extract he seems to stand in opposition to the tradition that only ascribes and simplifies the matter while ignoring the inherent contradiction. Moreover, he appeals

the critic to accept Dostoevsky as their precursor while following his new artistic model.

As we come close to Bakhtinian perspective, two closely related criteria are inevitable for polyphony: a dialogic sense of trust and a special position of the author necessary for visualizing and conveying that sense of truth. Since Bakhtin regards the polyphonic work as a "form-shaping ideology," these two constituents are the essential to such work. In the Dostoevsky's book, Bakhtin elaborates the discrepancy between the monologic and dialogic conception of truth. Modern thought, he argues has been overwhelmed by a monologic conception of truth and it has been reflected not only in philosophy but literature too. It is to be found not only in Kant, Hegel and other great thinkers, but also on the entire tradition of monologic novels before Dostoevsky. As he says, "These basic [monologic] principles go far beyond the boundaries of artistic creativity alone; they are the principle behind the entire ideological culture of recent times" (80). So, Bakhtin urges that in order to understand the nature of Dostoevsky's polyphonic works, one must first challenge the world's 'entire intellectual culture' that advocates the idea of truth as the only one possible.

In fact, Bakhtin's comprehensive study on Dostoevsky directly threatens the reigning concepts of 'theoretism' and "semiotic totalitarinism" by proposing a non-monological conception of truth. For him, different conceptions are possible and Dostoevsky's novels tremendously display this phenomena. In other words, the novels of Dostoevsky's tremendously exhibit the dialogic sense of truth.

Discussing more on monologic sense of truth, Bakhtin strives that it has been built out of the distinct elements, "separate through" and the "system of thought" (93). In monologic ideology, we encounter "separate thoughts, assertions, propositions ... depending on their relationship to the subject and independent of the carrier to whom

they belong" (93). In principle, it does not matter who carries these thoughts. The content of these thoughts remains unaffected by their source. Someone may have discovered the particular idea, but it belongs to all and does not regain the voice or particular content of the discoverer. In this sense, "separate thoughts" are what Bakhtin calls "no man's thoughts" (ibid). Then, such separate thoughts gravitate toward a system, the second aspect of monologic sense of truth. While dealing over much monologic truth, Bakhtin appears to have Hegel and Marx in mind as champions of monologic thought. Thus, the great intellectual heroes of monologic thoughts are the great synthesizers who attempted to give a shape apparently different propositions into a Coherent, all-encompassing system. That's why a system is also "no man's" or to put the point plainly, a system can be comprehended and fully contained by a single consciousness. Bakhtin inside that this model of truth has been mistaken for the only one. In problems of Dostoevsky's poetics, he observes:

> It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of consciousness, one that in principle cannot be fitted within the bounds of single consciousness, one that is ... by its very nature full of event potential and is born at a point of contact among various consciousness. The monologic way of perceiving cognition and truth is only one of the possible ways. It arises only where consciousness is placed above existence. (81)

In the passage what Bakhtin has in mind is that a conception of truth allows every moment of existence to be rich in potential. This prosaic conception of truth would not be placed above existence rather it would arise from the experience of the open-present in each moment.

Bakhtin further extends that the dialogic sense of truth manifests unfinalizability by dwelling on the threshold of unmerged voices. He argues that these voices cannot be constrained within a single consciousness as in monologism. Instead, their separateness is essential to the dialogue. Bakhtin often speaks to the participants of a dialogic conception of truth as "voice-ideas." By this phrase, he means a unity of idea and personality or the unity of view and viewer. Moreover, the person who holds the idea becomes a full personality by virtue of that idea; the idea is not just something he happens to believe, but is an essential shaping force throughout his life. When such voiced idea come to interact, they may produce a dialogue changing both of them and giving rise to new insights and new dialogues. The unity of truth becomes the unified feel of a conversation, not the unity of a single proposition. Bakhtin comes to blame that when monologic thinkers encounter such conversations, they usually tend to extract just such a finalizing prepositions. What he wants to assert is that "the ultimate individual unit is not the assertion, but rather the integral point of view, the integral position of a personality" (93).

According to Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky - to speak paradoxically - thought not in thoughts but in points of view, consciousness, voices" (ibid). The combination of individual units of this sort does not gravitate toward system. It yields "not a system" but a concrete event made up of organized human orientations and voices" (ibid).

Time and again, Bakhtin is always concerned to drive the point home that the dialogic sense of truth requires a plurality of consciousness. Unfortunately, before Dostoevsky, the 'form-shapping ideology' of most literary genres, especially of the novel, embodied monologic truth in one or another way. In those genres, only the author, as the ultimate semantic authority, retains the power to express a truth directly. The truth that the work carries becomes the truth of his or her, and all other truths are

mere appendage. By this, Bakhtin means that in a monologic work each character's truth is to be measured against the author's own ideology because authorial ideology dominates the work and builds its unity. Such works may convey the author's position in various ways. Sometimes a given character may carry it, at other time the author's truth may be dispersed through a variety of characters.

Moreover, other non-authorial truths, in monologic works are either refuted or more commonly in novels they are represented as mere "characterological traits." By these terms, Bakhtin tends to suggest that the author represents "other truths" as partial and subsidiary. Such truths do not have the right to demand an answer from the reader; that right is only ascribed to the author's truth. In fact, the author is monologic works, retains full control over the work and never surrenders the right to mediate between characters and readers.

By contrast, in polyphonic works the author ceases to exercise monologic control. Polyphony demands a work in which several consciousness meet as equal and engage in dialogue that is in principle unfinalizable. Characters must be "not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse" (Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics 7). The direct power which in monologic work belongs to the author alone, belongs to several voices in a polyphonic work. By renouncing his monologic hegemony, Bakhtin claims, Dostoevsky created a way to embody a dialogic conception of truth. A polyphonic work embodies dialogic truth by allowing the consciousness of a character to be truly "someone else's consciousness" (ibid).

Stipulating his notion of polyphony further Bakhtin proposes that to create a truly polyphonic work, the author must be able to confront his or her characters as equals. No doubt, his own ideology may receive expression in the work. But what is

new in such works is that others may and do content the author's ideology on equal ground. And it is author himself who sets the stage for these contests. The polyphonic author necessarily plays two roles in the work: he creates a world in which divergent points of view enter into dialogue and he himself does participate in that dialogue. He is one of the interlocutors in the great dialogue that he himself has created. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's novels do display this phenomenon profoundly. His novel, Bakhtin outlines,

> [...] is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousness as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousness, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other. (18)

Bakhtin explores this position of author through the theological analogies. In his book on Dostoevsky, he compares the polyphonic author to Goeth's prometheus, who "creates not voiceless slaves (as does zeus) but free people, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebellion against him" (6). In "Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky's book," he advocates the judeo-christian idea that God created morally free people. God may argue with people, as he argues with Job, but job retains the power to agree or disagree. Similarly, Dostoevsky may answer his characters, but he does not manipulate them as passive objects.

Though the characters in polyphonic work have been created by the author, but once they come into existence, they will escape his control and prevent him. The polyphonic novel is therefore characterized by a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" (Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics).

Using another favourite analogy, Bakhtin characterizes the monologic world as 'ptolemaic,' the earth representing the author's consciousness, is the centre around which all other consciousness revolve. The polyphonic world, on the other side is 'Copernican': as the earth is but one of many planets, the author's consciousness is but one of many consciousness. Further, what Bakhtin argues is to resemble the polyphonic world to be universe of Einstein in which one finds a "multiplicity of systems of measurement" that in principle cannot be reduced to a single system (272).

Besides, Bakhtin explains polyphony's new authorial position in terms of the 'surplus.' He tells us that each of use exerts a 'surplus of vision' with respect to other's we encounter. One person can see the back of another's head and know what the other looks like. In monologic works, the author enjoys an immense surplus of vision with respect to his or her characters but characters do not have the same surplus. Bakhtin unfolds that the surplus enjoyed by monologic author is much greater than the surplus we normally find in daily life. Consequently, such surplus makes it impossible for the author and characters to exist in the same ground and hence to enter into dialogue as equals. Such surplus of the author finalizes a character and evidently establishes his or her identity. Real dialogue, instead, demands partners to meet on the same level. Each must be unfinalizable with respect to the other. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's great invention was to find a way to encounter his characters as unifinalizable others and engage them in a genuine open-ended dialogue.

In order to create a good polyphonic work, Bakhtin's persistent demand is to denounce the author's "essential surplus of meaning" (problems of Dostoevsky's poetics, 73). Only such renunication can enable characters to be relatively free and independent. However, Bakhtin argues that the freedom and independence of character is 'relative'. On order to crate the work at all the author ought to possess a

second kind of surplus, which Bakhtin calls that indispensable minimum of pragmatic, purely information-bearing 'surplus' necessary to carry forward the story" (ibid). The author creates the world where the unfinalizable character live and what the author cannot do is to retain for himself or herself a superior position. It is as if the author may pick the hour and room for a dialogic encounter with the characters but once he himself or she gets entered that room, he should address the characters as peers.

Heteroglossia

One of the ways in which Bakhtin's theory itself militates against an over-benign understanding of the dialogic principle is through the attendant concept of heteroglossia. Meaning literally 'a minture of tongues,' Bakhtin invoked the term to account for the social diversity of speech types that he discovered in the novel. Indeed, in his writings from *The Dialogic Imagination* onwards, heteroglossia, like polyphony, becomes a prerequisite of the genre which Bakhtin saw as committed to the representation of the widest possible range of social classes. For Bakhtin, this aesthetic and ideological commitment was exemplified by the writings of Charles Dickens, and his own reading of *Little Dorrit* in *The Dialogic Imagination* is an effective in the analysis of heteroglossia.

In theoretical/political terms what is crucial about Bakhtin's invocation of heteroglossia, then, is the nation that the multiplication of voices alone cannot be seen as the mark of a dialogic text. For a text to be truly worthy of the description, multiplicity has to be accompanied by diversity and difference. In particular, the voices of ruling, educated middle class must not be the only voices heard. Thus he writes:

> The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even a diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized [...] The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships.
>
> (*The Dialogic Imagination* 263)

The representation of multiple voices is an elemental necessity of authentic prose, claims Mikhail Bakhtin. A text that honours the basic conditions of heteroglossia has the ability to depict a range of social dialects, and thereby create a fictional world laden with realistic and socially diverse language communities, conflicting world views, and the sort of inflectional meaning that is a natural result of human dialogue. This theoretical term might be seen to carry a striking resemblance to Barthes and plurality, that at every instant, heteroglossia is a moment of interactive play between spoken language, idea, and meaning-prose, according to Bakhtin, takes on a "Living" and organic presence when used in this context. Unlike in Barthes, heteroglossia subordinates traditional paradigms and celebrates linguistic diversity and the potential of the author to creatively represent social life. Though Bakhtin more or less acknowledges the presence of pre-existing "codes," stittched in throughout the text, such norms can be destabilized and parodied by means of special treatment in a dialogic environment.

Bakhtin viewed the modernist novel as a literary form best suited for the exploitation of heteroglossia, in direct contrast to epic poetry. The linguistic energy of the novel was seen in its expression of the conflict between voices through their adscription to different elements in the novels of discourse. Bakhtin's view of heteroglossia has been often employed in the content of the postmodern critique of the perceived teleological and authoritarian character of modernist art and culture. In particular, the Rater's strong disdain for popular forms of art and literature archetypically expressed in Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry has been criticized as a proponent of monoglossia; practitioner's of cultural studies have used Bakhtin's conceptual framework to theorise the critical reappropriation of mass-produced entertainments forms by the public.

Dialogue

Dialogue, for Bakhtin, is a special sort of interaction which gets its 'full like' under the certain conditions. Dialogue requires the pre-existence of differences, which are then connected by an act of communication to generate new ideas and positions. The emphasis here on the 'conditions' which make dialogue possible, including, most importantly, that of 'difference,' has already been touched upon in relation to the necessary independence of the characters and voices in the polyphonic text. For Bakhtin, dialogue (in the novel or in life) does not feature only in exchange between 'relatively entire utterances' (i.e. between characters/individual speech acts) but, more profoundly, at the level of the individual word. Thus he writes:

> Dialogic relationships are possible not only among whole (relatively
> whole) utterances; a dialogic approach is possible toward any
> signifying part of an utterance, even toward an individual word, if that

word is perceived not as the impersonal word of language but as a sign

of someone's else's semantic position. (ibid)

This quotation justifies the fact that dialogue is possible not only from the wholeness

or signifying part of an utterance, but also from the interaction of individual word

only when it is used to signify someone's ideological position.

Indeed Bakhtinian dialogue is modelled on the conditions of everyday speech

and language, in significant contrast, for example, to Derrida's concept of "difference"

which is rooted in the slipperiness of the written word. One of the most striking, and

memorable, of Bakhtin's own metaphors for the operation of dialogism is that of a

'bridge'; this bridge may be seen to connect not only the speaker and his or her

iterloculer, but also individual words of speech which pass between them and become

a 'shared territory'. Once we have accepted the basic principle that dialogue exists at

the level of the individual word as well as between 'relatively entire utterances,' all

communication, written or spoken becomes a fantastically volatile affair far beyond

the conscious control of individuals' or authors. At its most profound, Bakhtin's

dialogic principle thus teaches us that all words, all sentences, are oriented toward

someone else's speech, regardless of whether that 'other' is present in the text or not.

As he observes in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1984), all words, both in 'living

conversation' and in written texts, are oriented toward a response of some kind.

For Bakhtin, a real dialogue is a live process that transcends received models

and displays the mark of unfinalizability. All social and psychological entities are

processual in nature. So, their unfinalizable activity is essential to their identity. And

for people, the most important activity is dialogue. Thus, for any individual or social

entity, we cannot properly separate existences from the ongoing process of

communication - "To be means to communicate" ("Toward a REworking of the Dostoevsky's Book," 287).

Now, it suggests that dialogue involves the constant redefinition of its participants and creates numerous potentials in each of them. Further, no single interaction could exhaust the potential value of future exchanges. Both dialogue and potentials of dialogue are endless. No word can be taken back but the final word has not yet been spoken and never will be spoken.

Carnival

Originating in Bakhtin's literary historical research of medieval festivals for his book on Rabelais, 'carnival' is a term that has been extensively plundered by contemporary literary and cultural theorists to help explain texts and events in which the world in "temporarily turned upside down." As Bakhtin himself writs in *The Introduction* to Rabelais and His world, 'carvinal time' is special precisely because it gives Ricence to the prevailing social hierarchies to be reversed:

> The suspension of hierarchical procedure during carnival time was of
>
> particular significance. Rank was especially evident in official feasts ...
>
> it was a conservation of inequality. On the contrary, all were
>
> considered equal during carnival. (46)

Bakhtin regards the spirit of carnival as a shapping effect of the polyphonic novels because novels for him are inspired by a laughing truth, indebted to parodic genres. In carnival laughter Bakhtin sees an enternally 'unofficial' truth about the world, a truth that rejects the existence of all truth.

Theories of Novel

Bakhtin's reputation considerably rests on his theories of genres and of the novel. Among literary critics, he is recognized with the essays from 1930's translation

The Dialogic Imagination, all of which are devoted to the history of narrative genres. Bakhtin's endeavour seems to be directed to establish a theory of 'prosaies', the counterpart of 'poetics'. It is because Bakhtin believes that 'poetics' fails to appreciate all those genres that belong to the dialogic line. Moreover, poetics, Bakhtin argues, is prone to systematicity, structure and wholeness. It is applicable only to those works which strive to reduce language to dead forms of devices, and tend to create a lifeless system. As a result, the traditional theory of literature, that is, 'poetics', cannot weight the rich depth of the genres like novel which emerge from society and treat language as prosaic, unfinalizable and potential, Bakhtin, therefore, proposes the ways of appreciating the genres that spring from the society which is essentially messy and full of centrifugal forces.

Theory of Genres

Bakhtin holds the view that genres are forms of thinking, and the novel is the most accurate genre that conceptualizes human experience utmost. Again, for Bakhtin, genres convey a vision of the world and it does so not by explaining a set of propositions but by developing concrete examples. Unlike the philosophical theories' act of specifying the characteristics of a worldview they allow the reader to view the world in a specific way. Thus, a genre can best be understood neither as a "form" nor as an ideology" but as a "form-shaping ideology" - specific kind of creative activity embodying a specific sense of experience.

For Bakhtin Dostoevsky created a revolution in prose genres. And because genres are forms of thought, it follows that Dostoevsky also created a revolution in ways of thinking about the world. Bakhtin insists that Dostoevsky created, in our opinion, a completely new type of artistic thinking, which we have provisionally

called polyphonic . . . It could even be said that Dostoevsky created something like a new artistic model of the world. (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 3)

Genre, for Bakhtin and his ally, is neither a collection of devices nor a particular way of combining linguistic elements. Rather it is a specific way of visualizing a given part of reality. Genres reflect changes in real social life. And those changes lead to new views of experiences and to different genres of speech, social behaviour, and literature. Unlike Formalists, Medvedev argues that genres respond to social experience. He further adds that literary forms change not because devices wear out, but because real people create new ways to understand their changing lives. For Medvedev, a real theory of literary history would discuss the interaction of historically shaped human experiences with ways of conceptualizing reality in genres. Genres would be described as taking shape over centuries. Bakhtin shares this view of Medvedev and insists that literary history is the profound story of genres.

To be clear with the Bakhtinian critical procedure and theoretical modality, his widely discussed terms like heteroglossia, polyphony, dialogue, carnival etc. have led to the better understanding of his approach and its application.

III. Individual Voice Against Authoritative Discourse: the Polyphony

Henrik Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* draws Bakhtinian perspective in order to raise the issues of incompromisable conflicts as the expression of multiplicity. While analyzing the play from Bakhtinian principle, it needs to consider the concept of multiplicity, countering perspectives, flexibility of truth or opinion etc. for sound accomplishments. When we come to the close analysis of the play, it itself reveals the inherent contradiction while showing the seeds of polyphonic convention what Bakhtin argues. The inherent contradiction which the play portrays through the explicit differentiation of ideologies between the major characters, Dr Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor, his brother Peter Stockmann seem irreducible or irreconcilable. Though the conflict generates between two brothers, it does not merely seem to be the conflict of perspectival differences but of which human potentiality are destined to be. As Bakhtin is in favour of human potentiality and creativity, the best exploration of these creative forces constitute the real humanity and reality. It is with this conviction, Bakhtin does not seem to favor stability and perfection as the actual representation of reality. So, the existing instability and incompleteness becomes the major tool to be explored while analyzing the text with polyphonic convention.

Bakhtin is considerably concerned with the discourse of characters in the novel which may challenge and disrupt the overriding ideology as expressed in a single voice of a narrator. Bakhtin makes his assumption about polyphonic text while showing a contrast between the monologic novels of Leotostory and the dialogic works of Fyodor Dostoevsky in his well-known book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Instead of subordinating the voices of characters to a domineering authorial voice, Bakhtin argues, a writer like Dostoevsky has created a polyphonic discourse in which the authors voice is only one among many. It means that polyphonic discourse

has to be understood with the exposure of multiple consciousness and differentiation. Indeed, polyphony demands a work in which several consciousness meet as equals and engage in dialogue that is in principle unfinalizable. Characters are presented not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse. The direct power, which in monologic work belongs to the author alone, belongs to several voices in a polyphonic work. It is illustrated from the following extracts:

> The polyphony is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousness as object into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousness, none of which entirely because an object for the other. (18)

Though the polyphonic convention is the outcome of twentieth century literary criticism with the introduction of Bakhtin's dialogic principle Ibsen also seems a precursor before Bakhtin, Foucault, Derrida, Paul deman etc with his portrays of multiplicity and the perspectival inheritance of truth in his text, *An Enemy of the People*. From this perspective the play *An Enemy of the People* turns out to be polyphonic text with the advocacy for countering multiple voices and the dialogicality of the truth. While examining how the play advocates for the multiple consciousness and the subjectivity of truth, the following subtopics are considerable for the better analysis of the play, *An Enemy of the People*.

Multiplicity

The concept of multiplicity which we derive from the postmodern theories of the twentieth century rejects the logo-centric tradition inherited from Aristotle to Saussure. This tradition was neglected by Bakhtin's polyphonic convention with the

emphasis on perspectival differences or plurality of consciousness. This plurality or consciousness gets its shape in Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People*. Through the portrayal of differing perspective in regarding the truth, the conflict that occurs between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and The Mayor is infact, the outcome of differing ideologies. Thomas Stockmann thinks himself as a freeman while not being ready to submit his individuality to the narrow social demands. He is of the opinion that in democracy he should be able to utilize his potentiality to serve the country and people as best as possible. This aspect of his thinking is clearly realized from the following remarks:

> The Mayor: As a family man you have no right to take this stand, Thomas. You simply have no right.
>
> Dr. Stockmann: [...] There's only one thing in this world a freeman has no right to do; you don't know what that is. do you? (243)

But Ibsen also holds another dominant perspective carried by his brother Peter Stockmann to an equal footing, Peter Stockmann, the Mayor of the city, is of the opinion that everybody should subordinate to society or system. He may not be wrong because in Kantian sense, if every individual starts using his own reasoning, there will be anarchy. Though he favours the use of individual reasoning, he is not totally negative toward the system because it is within system the individual can explore his potentiality to its end. It is in this respect, Ibsen also seems to be in confusion about whether to let them free or to subordinate them. This aspect of Ibsen's thinking is explicitly exposed through the characters as one follows, the system or society while another rejects the system. Ibsen's portrayal of this dominant countering perspective to an equal footing rather than the domination of one makes us believe that he, like

Bakhtin, advocates reality as the representation of multiplicity instead of domination of one single perspective.

The Mayor, who advocates for the system or society believes that everyone has to subordinate toward the system. This aspect of his thinking is clearly demonstrated through the following statements of the Mayor:

> You have an incorrigible tendency to take things into your own hands; in a well-ordered community that is equally reprehensible. The individual must subordinate himself to society as a whole; or more precisely, to those authorities responsible for the well-being of that society. (164)

What he means is that if there are representative of people elected for the well-being of that community, the individual freedom, to some extent, must be reduced. He thinks that the order and system which the society keeps may be lost if society lets its individual to be free.

While Ibsen, at one side, advocates the system or certain governing principle through the Mayor, but on the other side, he is of the opinion that individual must not be restricted to explore his potentiality through the protagonist, Dr. Thomas Stockmann. By showing his utmost confidence in individual freedom, he moves his protagonist Thomas Stockmann revolt against society or those governing authorities to the end of the play. This aspect is realized from an open problematized ending of the play and also from the final following remarks of the Dr. Thomas Stockmann: "the strongest man in the world is the man who stands alone" (29). This quotation justifies the fact that Ibsen's belief on individual freedom as the source to realize human potentiality. This irreduciable and problematize ending of the play marks it to link

with the recent postmodern phenomena with its advocacy for indeterminacy and unpredictability.

In opposition to Aristotelian notion of plot construction which emphasizes on the resolution of the conflict at the end, Ibsen, however, leaves the conflict unresolved at the end of his play, *An Enemy of the People.* In the play, characters are not predestined as in the traditional play rather they are left to explore their potentiality and creativity according to the context. The conflict which harbours between Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor clarifies the fact that the existing differing ideologies cannot be resolved due to their unique identity. This uniqueness what Bakhtin claims is the source of polyphonic text. As we are examining Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People* from the Bakhtinian principle, this uniqueness is what we search for polyphonic dimension of the play. While realizing this uniquness Ibsen makes the Mayor to demand any information related to both because of his being as a representative of the city. To get any information from Dr. Thomas Stockmann, the Mayor speaks, "You sound very mysterious. Are you keeping something from me? Is anything the matters As chairman of the Bakh committee-I demand the right to" (164).

When we acknowledge his demand, he may be right because he is oblized from the rulling ideology to do everything in systematic ways. But Dr. Thomas Stockmann is of the opinion that every individual has the right to serve the society in his own way if he is committed to the public welfare. Due to this belief, he makes it clear with his brother, Peter Stockmann that he has something related to the Baths but he does not want to expose it before he is sure in his own convictions. But Peter Stockmann's regular insistence makes him to say: "And I demand the right to - ! oh, don't lets fly of the handle, Peter?" (164) It shows that he is also right because as an

individual he must be let to exercise his own thinking for the benevolent of the society. This is the clear example of how contrasting ideas does not merge due to the differing ideologies.

Similarly, different ideology also gets its manifestation while treating Baths Thomas Stockmann is of the opinion that the water of Baths is harmful to the humanity for drinking and bathing due to the presence of small bacteria. But the Mayor thinks that the truth about Baths should not be exposed before public because it will costs more wealth and also be the cause of failure in business. Thomas Stockmann insists that it should be repaired urgently but Mayor thinks that it should be repaired in future in the favourable situations. These differing perspectives in concerning for the betterment of the Baths and its people also hints towards dominant countering perspectives between humanity and materiality in human life. Ibsen, while portraying the existing conflict between humanity and materiality in human life advocates for the unfinalizability thereby making it with the side of the play of the polyphonic convention.

As we evaluate the play grounded on this dominant conflict it appears that Thomas Stockmann is the spokesman for humanity while the Mayor is, for the materiality. This aspect of their countering perspectives while concerning peoples betterment manifests itself through their following remarks:

> The Mayor: Have you taken the trouble to find out the cost of these proposed alterations? It would amount to several hundred thousands crowns. The work would take at least the years. You don't imagine people would go on. Coming here if it were rumored that waters were injurious to the health ? The loan would be completelly ruined.

> Dr. Stockmann: You don't imagine I could ever be party to such a swindle? It would be the worst kind of trickery - an out and out crime against society? (187)

This shows that how Thomas Stockmann is determined to do for the people's health though it offers him enough material opportunities. But quite different from him, the Mayor believes that it should not be exposed because it will cost more wealth and it will be failure in business. Their different priority seems clear when they interpret the things in their own way.

While analyzing the concept of multiplicity from Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People*, other minor characters including Mrs. Stockmann, Petra, Aslakseen, Houstad and Billing also play an important role to realize this phenomena. The traditional perspectives inherited in the play forces or makes her oblize to submit before her busband and narrow social demands. But on the other hand, the play leaves her adequate room to play an important role to realize her uniquness while interacting with other different characters. She not only serves foods and drinks to her husband and guests but also act to give an appropriative suggestions. When, at the mid of the play, she seems to be acting as a traditional woman in her constant request to her husband to submit to the authority for the welfare of family. But, at the end, she acts as a revolutionary woman while accompanying her husband when he is charged by the majority as "the *Enemy of the People*." This unique and different role given to Mrs. Stockmann thus seem to challenge the traditional and single identity of woman. Petra, the daughter of Stockmann, who teaches at the school acts to counter the traditional limitation of woman to household. She keeps her identity when realizing the hypocrisy of society when she says.

All this hypocrisy ! At home we are taught to hold our tongues, and at

school we have to teach them. The children lies. [...] We have to teach

are kinds of things we don't believe a word of! If I had enough money,

I'd start a school myself then I would run things quite differently. (178)

It shows that how she thinks differently while not believing the existing code of social

things.

Similarly, other characters in the play, Houstad, Billing and Aslaksen do not

seem to bind with single ideology or assumption. Their constant change of behaviour

and opinion regarding the facts about Baths, makes us realize that how they are easily

convinced by both Thomas Stockmann and Peter Stockmann. Before they were of the

opinion that the truth about Baths should be exposed in any case because of its fatal

attack on people's health. But when they are approached by Mayor with the different

interpretation concerning the major economic loss, they are easily convinced by him.

Such flexibility in their opinion and idea makes us assure that the text *An Enemy of

the People* really asserts the individual within the context, that is actually the

celebration of the multiplicity.

Dialogied Truth

The dialogic sense of truth, which appears Bakhtin's key concepts disregards

the autonomy of single consciousness or unity in voices to realize the plurality of the

truth. This quest for plurality is what proves bakhtinian search for postmodernists

truth. This plurality of truth which Bakhtin favours most, is explicitly realized in

Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People*. The play explicitly portrays two truths: on one

hand, it justifies the power of dominant group in the society, on the other hand, it also

advocates for the individual freedom. The inherited truth, based on social convention

is represented by the Mayor, Peter Stockmann, while the individual truth or contextual truth is advocated by Dr. Thomas Stockmann. Because of this conflict between multiple perspectives for claiming the domination of one over other, the play celebrates the dialogic sense of truth, interactive of multiple consciousness instead of the domination of one finalized consciousness. This aspect of multiple perspectives regarding the truth is illustrated through the following dialogues:

> The Mayor: you sound very mysterious. Are you keeping something from me? Is anything the matter? As chairman of the Bakh committee and demand the right to -!
>
> Dr. Stockmann: And I demand the right to -! oh, don't let's fly off the handle, Peter.
>
> The Mayor: I am not in the habit of "flying of the handle", as you express it. But I must emphatically insist that all matters concerning the Baths be handled in a business like manner, and through the proper channels. I shall not tolerate devious or underhanded methods.
>
> Dr. Stockmann: When have I ever used devious or underhanded methods?
>
> The Mayor: You have an incorrigible tendency to take things into your own hands, in a well-ordered community that is equally reprehensible. The individual must subordinate himself to society as a whole; or more precisely, to those authorities responsible for the well-being of that society. (164)

The above dialogues between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor clearly illustrates the facts that both are firm in their own demands. It shows that they are guided by their own ideologies. Because of this, they don't seem to compromise with their own demands. As a result, the play advocates the multiplicity as the actual representation of the reality instead of following the monological tradition with the conclusiveness.

Bakhtin offers radically different conception of truth: "Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Ibid). He further enunciates that real dialogism embodies a world whose unity is essentially one of multiple voices, whose conversations never reach finality and cannot be turned into monologic form. In this respect, Bakhtin's dialogic truth departs from the convention of monological truth followed till Russian formalists; to celebrate the truth realized by multiple consciousness. In monological tradition, the binary created between subjectivity and objectivity does not allow us for the actual representation of truth whereas dialogic truth asserts its influence by dissolving the imbalance binary. Bakhtin's dialogic truth supports Foucauldian idea of subjectivity of truth because both of them challenge the concept of one single or universal truth. However, Foucauldian idea of truth differs from Bakhtinian conception of truth because Foucault's constant claim lies on the domination of power to realize the truth whereas Bakhtin prefer equality within multiple consciousness to realize the truth. This aspect of postmodernist's conception of truth or Bakhtinian truth is clearly realized through the following assertions.

Dr. Stockmann: It's the general opinion that this town of ours is an exceedingly healthy place isn't that true? A quite exceptionally healthy

place, as a matter of facts; a place to be highly recommended, not only

to ordinary inhabitants, but to invalids as well. And these minerals

Baths that have been called 'the pulse of the town,' They are nothing

but a pest hole. The whole instition is a whited-sepulcher, spreading

poison, it's a menance to the public health. All that filth from the

tanneries up at milldale and you know what a stentch there is around

there! seeps into the feed-pipes of the pump-room: and not only that

but this same poisonous offal seeps out onto the beach as well. (254)

The above assertions made by Dr. Thomas Stockmann is just the fact that anything

should be questioned or the established truth should be questioned in order to find

what actually the truth is. He dissolves the old assumption that is, Baths is highly

recommended for the health of the people, not only to ordinary people but to invalids

as well, really finding the truth of which the common people are unaware. The truth is

that the water of Baths is really harmful for people whether they drink or bath because

of the presence of small bacteria. When he replace the old truth by his new invention,

it becomes sure that there will not be the existence of any universal truth for all time.

What Bakhtin argues most is that the truth must be dialogically presented, interactive

of multiple consciousness instead of the subordination to one.

Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* is grounded on dialogic truth as

elaborated by Bakhtin with the celebration of the countering truths and countering

perspectives. To realize this phenomena, the open-ended and unresolved conflict

between Dr. Thomas Stockmann, and the Mayor seems reasonable and identifiable.

Their different priority directed for the betterment of the people seems reasonable

when they claim the appropriateness of their own evaluation of the situation. When

the Mayor believes that the situation is not as critical as Dr. Thomas Stockmann has

pointed out, and with this view, request him not to open the matter to the public. But quite opposite of Mayor's thinking, Dr. Stockmann believes that the truth must be brought out because it is related to the people's health. The Mayor thinks that the tourists will not come when they know the truth and because of this, the achieved prosperity of the town and it's people will be lost. In a sense, he may not be wrong because he speaks for the benefits of the people. As such, we cannot undervalue Dr. Thomas Stockmann's remark because he is devoted to expose the truths about Baths to caution the public for their health.

This uncompromising view, which the play initiates between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor does not get its solution at the end of the play. It does not give any clear perspective to hold while dominating other. Rather, it celebrates the multiple voices, like the polyphonic work, in order to represent the reality as such. Though the Dr. Thomas Stockmann's truth is undermined by majority of people charging him as "the enemy of the people," he is reluctant to submit his individuality while countering the established truth with his individual discovery. He confidently challenges the majority for the truth to be exposed instead of its concealment. His final remark: "the strongest man in the world is the man who stands alone" justifies the fact that he is ready to counteract the established truth, though he is unlistened. For this, he wants to teach those who strives for change and love freedom. This view is clearly expressed with his remarks: "The only thing I'll teach you, is to become decent freedom loving men."

Unfinalizability

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, the term, "unfinalizability" requires the possibility for multiple expression. What he means by multiple expression is the lack of determinacy or universal truth in order to seek creative potentiality in each moment. It shows that Bakhtin is in favour of creative potentiality and unfinalizability to mark the beginning of the postmodernism as it grants the indeterminacy and unfinalizability as the ultimate reality of the present age. With the considerations of this postmodern reality, we can even explore this phenomena in Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People*. Though Ibsen and his play belongs to nineteenth century, it even more explicitly exposes the seeds of postmodernists ethos with the celebration of indeterminacy and unfinalizability in the text. It is, in this sense, our search for polyphony in Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* sounds reasonable as the play marks the seeds of unfinalizability with the portrayal of multiple expression and multiple perspectives.

When we come to the closer analysis of the play, the existing conflict between dominant voice and individual voice, disrupts the traditional monologic tradition when the play ends without the resolution of the conflicts. It is because of this, expressed conflicts between two characters: the Mayor and Dr. Thomas Stockmann redraws the traditional boundary thereby leaving the play in an open-ended nature. The mark of unfinalizability is clearly expressed when we realize the following dialogues:

> The Mayor: May I ask what there is that requires "stirring up" - as you call it?

Dr. Stockmann: You'll have to ask the young people about that - when the time comes. Of course we shan't live to see it. A couple of old fogies like you and me.

The Mayor: A fine way to talk, I must say?

Dr. Stockmann: You mustn't mind my nonsense, Peter, what a wonderful age we live in! A whole new world is springing up around us!

The Mayor: Do you really think so?

Dr. Stockmann: Of course, you can't appreciate it as well as I do you've spent your whole life surrounded by all this - you take it all for granted. (162)

The above dialogues between the Mayor and Dr. Thomas Stockmann helps us to understand their point of view towards the new generations. Thomas Stockmann is ready to accept the change when he says that he will wait for the future generation to see the world quite differently. It is because of his nature to adopt change and believe in creative potentiality charges Mayor of taking things for granted. Though Dr. Thomas Stockmann strives for potential and possibility, the Mayor, on the other hand, makes fun of his quest while being not ready to accept changing scenario.

The play's portrayal of an existing conflict and open-ended dialogue between the major characters drive the play toward polyphony. The major thrust of the play lies in the question: is majority is always right? On one hand, the Mayor, representing majority claims that whatever the majority of people decides, it should be followed by every individual. The Mayor is of the opinion that if the decision is acceptable to

public, the individual discovery should not be brought into light. What he argues with Dr. Thomas Stockmann that public is needed what they are used to, not the individual discovery if it contradicts with the earlier truth. But Dr. Stockmann insists that the truth about water-system must be brought into light with the public. Here, Dr. Thomas Stockmann's priority lies on the people's health whereas the Mayor's priority lies on the people's prosperity. Though both of them claim themselves as the social-servant, their incompromisable priority makes the conflict unresolved in the play. What we can draw from this instances is that anything can be looked upon or interpreted from multiple perspectives, and it is the actual essence of the play, *An Enemy of the People*. The conflict of priority can be observed from the following assertions:

> Dr. Stockmann: Surely if one has new ideas, it's one's duty to share with the public.
>
> The Mayor: Believe me, the public has no need of new ideas; it's better off without them. The best way to serve the public is to give it what it's used to [...] you say among other things, that what we offer our visitors is nothing short of poison.
>
> Dr. Stockmann: But, Peter, what else can you call it? I tell you - whatever you drink it or bathe in it - the water is poison! We can't do this to poor sick people who come here in good faith expecting to be cured!
>
> The Mayor: [...] Have you taken the trouble to find out the cost of these proposed alterations? I gathered from the engineer it would amount to several hundred thousands crowns. [...] But that's not the worse of it. The work would take at least two years. (184)

The Mayor argues with Dr. Thomas Stockmann that the proposed alterations would take too much cost and also it would take at least two years. So, he tries to persuade Dr. Stockmann not to open the matter to the public by saying that he would consider the matter in future. But, Dr. Thomas Stockmann claims that the truth about the present water system of Baths should be brought into light as it is harmful for the people's health.

The play's portrayal of perspectival differences and also the freeing play of ideologies to seek its own unique identity makes it what Bakhtin calls the polyphonic play. According to Bakhtin, a polyphonic work is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousness as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousness, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other. When we analyze the existing conflicts and the countering perspectives of the play, it carries what Bakhtin calls the feature of polyphonic convention. As in monological text, we find the resolvable conflicts, Finalized plot and characters but quite different from it, polyphonic text bears the tenets of unfinalizability and indeterminacy as the core point. The conflict between two characters Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor which the play initiates at the beginning does not come to be resolved at the end of the play. The unfinalized conflict and unmerged voices are the key concepts towards which our research is guided to prove it as the polyphonic play.

The flexibility what we find in the characters of Hovstad, Billing and Aslaksen assists us to prove them as unfinalizable characters. They perform their activities and also change their perspectives according to the context. At the beginning they are convinced by Dr. Thomas Stockmann towards the imminent danger of water system. This aspect of their thinking is realized from the following remarks:

Hovstad: It's important that the public should know of this without delay. [...] a journalist of my liberal term of mind cannot be expected to let an opportunity like this go by. This myth of official infallibility must be exploded. That kind of superstition must be rooted out.

Billin: Strike me dead if you're not hailed as the leading citizen of our community, Dr. Stockmann.

Aslaksen: Is it true, what Mr. Billing tells me, that you are planning to improve our water-system? Doctor, that I shall support this plan with all my might. (166)

This aspect of their supporting opinions towards Doctor's proposal get's it's challenge when they are easily convinced by the Mayor. Now, they are on Mayor side and are openly in opposite side of Doctor's proposal. This aspect of their changing attitudes is observed through the following remarks:

Hovstad: You've presented this whole matter in a false light, Doctor, that is why I ca not possibly give you my support.

Aslaksen: Unquestionably, if your article were printed, it would mean the ruin of the town.

Billing: After what the Mayor so kindly explained to me just now. (188)

Though the majority is on the side of the Mayor, Dr. Thomas Stockmann is reluctant to submit his individually to the dominant authorial power. Rather, though he is charged as the "Enemy of the People", he even acts confidently to convince the public what the truth really is. His confidency can be assumed when he says: "the

strongest man in the world is the man who stands alone" (259). The existing

countering truth and perspectives which the play highlights through the characters, the

Mayor and Dr. Thomas Stockmann is what makes the text polyphony as accord with

Bakhtinian polyphonic convention.

IV. Conclusion

Henrik Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* when analyzed from Bakhtinian principle turns out to be polyphonic, viewing the existing conflict between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor as the expression of plural consciousness. The plurality of the idea which the play brings into light drives it towards the status of postmodern or what Bakhtin calls polyphonic convention with its multiple orientations.

The play revolves around two major characters Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the myor who holds different perspectives in treating the water system and the people of Baths. While, on one hand, Thomas Stockmann believes that the present water system is harmful for people whether they drive or bath. He brings the truth based on facts but his factual truth is even ignored by the majority of the people. But the Mayor, on the other hand, believes that the fact about it should not be brought into light because of its heavy cost. When both of them try to convince one another by their different priority, these different ideologies thus brought makes the conflict irreconciliable. The conflict which we observe while going through the text it appears to be the conflict of identity when we observe the struggle between individual and authority. Thomas Stockmann as an individual assumes that he has to be recognized as an individual power within the society to acclaim his unique identity. It is therefore, he revolts against those authorities who are not ready to accept his individual identity. He believes that he deserves the right as an individual to propose some suggestions concerning the water system and its effect on people. Moreover, he thinks that the old truths and assumptions must be questioned in order to acknowledge individual freedom. In the course of play, his questioning of the established truth, that

is, Bath is really healthy place for people with the new truth of its polutedness, justifies Bakhtinian or postmodern advocacy for plurality.

When we observe the existing conflict between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor from the perspective of polyphony, the individuality against the authority in the text really celebrates countering perspectives. Though Dr. Thomas Stockmann is reluctant to submit his individuality, the Mayor, however, speaks for the authorial domination. He is of the opinion that if individual truth contradicts the existing social ethos, it should be hidden from the exposure. The Mayor's different priority and perspective is clearly realized when he says: "in a well-ordered community... individual must subordinate to society, or more precisely, to those authorities responsible for the well-being of that society" (164). It is with this ideology, he employ's means to suppress truth. However, Dr. Stockmann makes his effort more strong to realize the individual freedom when he says, "the strongest man in the world is the one who stand alone" (254).

It is, therefore, the exposure of multi-voices or multi-ideologies realized by the assumed conflict between Dr. Thomas Stockmann and the Mayor really drives Henrik Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* towards the expression of polyphony.

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