

I. Introduction

Abhi Subedi's poetic play *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* (2001) is written in the backdrop of the culture existing in ancient Bhaktapur city of Kathmandu valley. The playwright assumes the city's ancient heritage of myths, folktales, architectures and performance arts as the spaces where different cultural and metacultural perceptions meet in the perennial process of globalization, modernization, capitalism and tourist observation; consequently, the play is an attempt of writing an alternative history which redraws a new inclusive boundary in an egalitarian way.

The play is set in the Bhaktapur Durbar Square. The personae of the play are the contemporary indigenous people of Bhaktapur community. They carry memories which are lively enough to take them back to their bygone days. *Maiju*, protagonist of the play laments that hitherto written history and hitherto practiced culture are the graves where women are engraved silently thinking that women have been the unacknowledged martyrs. She speaks:

A woman is such a martyr

Whose story is not written

Only her broken evenings sing her saga

. . .

Your history is a grave of women

Where you write the epitaph

“One inside this grave was always invisible.” (73)

This play can be taken as a critique of traditional history and an attempt to write women's history to correct the distortions and omissions. *Maiju* reveals the history which never did justice to women; it is never written from the perspective or

on the favor of women. They become the martyrs of their own existence. The play voices it vehemently and lets us know the gaps to be fulfilled in the cultural history.

Similarly, the playwright creates such a scene in which the ancient heritage of the city becomes a matter of bargain and the location which tourists and their guides perceive from their economic eyes. One of the tourist Guides says:

Nepal has a great tradition, you know

Come and enjoy this visit!

It is not expensive

Cheaper than Basilica. (78)

Culture has been bombarded by growing capitalism; it is, in the global market, an object of bargain. Such a valuable asset is sold at a cheaper price and the tourists enjoy it at a very low cost.

Remarkably, there are characters—the Poet, *Maiju* and the Guard—who look backwards into the history from the present and expose the distortions and omissions. They unfold the old history which the Kings wrote from their power positions. Through this peephole, they bring many unwritten stories which are hitherto encroached into silence: the story of the artists, the lovers and their tragedies, the women and their unwritten stories and the indignity—its arts, culture, sculptures, etc. Then, he reveals the present deterioration and commercialization of the art and architecture and its heritage. The Tourists and the Guards bring the effects of globalization and capitalism in the play. Among all, the playwright, enchanted by the soothing music of the heritage and heart rendered by the deterioration of its history calls us for preservation of the culture—a cosmos gliding through the epochs to eternity, so dear to his hearts.

Passing across the time, the Poet disguises himself as King to talk with *Maiju*. As he wears king's dress, he knows how the kings wrote their history—the history composed in a vertical manner in which except the power holders rest have no voices. One after another, now the unwritten stories unfurl. The lovers are separated and made never to meet one another. The girls are married to new lands where they know no one, no language; yet, compelled to live with the memories which make them more tragic. The stones and woods, where their loves are carved, remain in silence for eternity only to say that only the king made them. Women, who are flowing just like a river, lament with their agonies and pains. The rulers banished or martyred their men but the women wait in hithers throughout life expecting their return. As if they have no feeling, the girls are sent to distance without their consent. The historians tried to understand who the women are. As if they have no world and life, they are cast away from their dreams.

Tourist, as a character, in the play, appears as the symbol of intervention of modern global commercialism over the aesthetic indigenous heritage. The Tourist receives it as only the source of pleasure and entertainment. Likewise, the Guides have stories of their own for better living and upliftment of economic status by selling the arts and architectures in bargaining prices. The playwright suspects for the continuation of this tradition of co modification and all the dignity, glory and charm of such artistic assets undergo a perpetual attrition. Beyond the intervention of modern globalization, moreover, it revives the stories which remained unacknowledged and non-existent for centuries past to present.

Notably, *Maiju* and Women are the vibrant characters throughout the play and most of the story revolves around their sad and dear ailing. It is the *Maiju* culture which neither they can take nor leave easily. Though unwilling, she is, by force, sent

to strange land. The patriarchal culture and history victimizes her and imprison her with certain confinement. Everyone turns their deaf ear to the traumatic and plightful sagas of the *Maiju* and Women. She is either carved out on the woods and stones or flowing like a river. As such, the king's history is so partial that it can't include women and the marginal people. Instead, they wrote their histories by killing them with their blood; in the grave of history, they are invisible.

Next, the Guard frequently turns back to uncover women's broken history. He speaks on their behalf standing as the only person who knows the realities of the history. Going back, he exposes the weaknesses of it and comes to the present with the hope to halt it. He sees the similitude between the peach blossoms that he once saw and smelled and the *Maiju*'s story. He opines that all their dreams are carved out artistically and vibrantly to expose their painful stories which he has been watching and kept on weeping with love and sadness.

To prove that Subedi ventures to rewrite an egalitarian history, I discuss the ideas put forward by Michael Foucault. Foucault discusses how the power diffuses through a discourse which is false representation of truth. Subaltern studies, though differently in this dissertation, takes history in order to correct distortions and omissions in traditional history; ideas are taken from Dipesh Chakrabarty. Recently, tourism has massive influence in the study of culture and its globalization; ideas are taken from John Urry.

In order to harmonize the space and length of the present study, the dissertation is dived meticulously into four different chapters-Introduction, discussion on theoretical dimension (new historicism, subaltern studies, tourist gaze, globalization), textual analysis of the play and summing up of the research in the conclusion.

The first chapter is a general overview of the whole research; it begins with the thesis statement, binds the horizon of theoretical dimension, provides some textual evidences that help to prove the central question, and a brief summary of the text. Second chapter discusses new historicism, cultural studies, subaltern studies and tourist gaze, impacts of globalization on indigenous culture(s). New Historicism asserts that a text cannot be placed in isolation from its historical context; rather, the historical and cultural conditionings of a text are necessary to decode meanings of a text. It asserts what Louis Montrose says: “textuality of history and historicity of text” (qtd. in Abrams 183). To the New historicists, history is an open text for multiple political readings endowed by power and discourse. However, this research selects few areas into it- new historicism in reference to Michel Foucault and Edward Said. Subaltern Studies attempts to write history of minority voices in order to correct distortions and omissions in traditional history; in this reference ideas of Dipesh Chakrabarty will be discussed. Globalization is a process in which individual lives and local communities are affected by economic and cultural forces that operate worldwide. Tourist gaze is also an outcome of globalization. The third chapter is a textual analysis which investigates the text through the lenses of power positions of different characters- *Maiju*, the Guard, the King, the Poet. And, the concluding chapter records the further findings of the research.

II. Theoretical Tools

Discourse of New Historicism

The act of theorizing human experiences mirrored by various literary discourses has its lineage back to two thousand years that began in western terrains when mimetic perspective began. Significantly, in the aftermath of world wars there arose an avalanche of such theories and the new ideas grew on the base of previous ones but subverting the precursors. Recently, theories like New Historicism and Cultural Studies have won the day when the issue of studying the hitherto unacknowledged marginalized people comes.

Michael Foucault developed a theory of discourse in relation to the power structures operating in societies. Foucault, in his approach, is indebted to Friedrich Nietzsche. According to Nietzsche, the world runs with the individuals having a will to power. He had found that the will to power is at work in all sorts of human behaviors and valuations. He views power as the only important thing in the world. Everyone desires it. “The only thing that all men want,” for Nietzsche, “is power, and whatever is wanted is wanted for the sake of power. If something is wanted more than something else, it must represent power” (511).

For Foucault, every discourse is meant to obtain power. In other words, every discourse is involved in power. He views that discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political power operates through discourse. Discourse is the ordering force that governs every institution. Hence, the discourse is inseparable from power. Discourse is a means of achieving power. The social, moral and religious disciplines always control human behavior directly by means of discourse. So, people at times can not do whatever they feel like doing. The discursive formations have enabled institutions to wield power and domination by

defining and excluding 'the other'. Discourses, according to Foucault, are produced in which concepts of madness, criminality, sexual abnormality and so on are defined in relation to sanity, justice and sexual normality. Such discursive formations determine and constrain the forms of knowledge and types of normality of a particular period. These discursive practices have also the power to silence what they exclude. Foucault, thus, identifies truth with power. According to Foucault, truth is not outside power, of lacking in power. It is rather a thing of this world which is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints in a society. So each society has its own regime of truth. Furthermore, the power diffuses itself in the system of authority and the effects of truth are produced within discourses. But the discourses themselves are neither true nor false. Foucault argues, "truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it" (1145). Thus Foucault sees the truth as a product of relations of power and it changes as systems change. Both literature and history are narratives and they are in the form of discourse. They are entangled in the power relations of their time. Literary works are not secondary reflections of any coherent whole view but the active participants in the continual remaking of meanings. In short, all texts, including history and literature, are simply the discourses which speak the power of ruling class—the power to govern and control.

Foucault's notion of 'power' and 'discourse' were particularly formative to develop a critical approach to literature known as New Historicism in the 1970's and 1980's. New historicists are more interested in the relationship between history and literature. They tried to reconstruct the bridge between literature and history dismantled by new critics, structuralists and deconstructionists. Though the New Historicists argue that we cannot know the texts separate from their historical context,

they insist that all interpretation is subjectively filtered through one's own set of historically conditioned view points. Hence, there is no 'objective' history.

Old historians saw a pattern in history; they viewed history as a set of fixed, objective facts. Literature, for them, contends Selden in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, was "a part of larger cultural history." He further says that the old historicists studied literature "in the context of social, political, and cultural history" (104). Texts, therefore, become the production of certain historical operations. Historical forces shape literary texts that reflect the historical forces. This helps to show literary texts and history are interrelated. The formers were influenced by Hegelian idealism: they saw a nation's history "as an expression of its evolving 'spirit'" (Selden 104). For Hegel, history is progressive and purposeful. He claimed that the study of history shows that humanity is moving towards greater rationality and freedom. The history, according to Hegel, is "the story of the 'world spirit' gradually coming to consciousness of itself" (Gaarder 302). The world spirit is progressing through history. The art, including literature, is important to him because it is a mode, like religion and philosophy, through which the world spirit comes "to consciousness of itself" in highest form (Adams 533). This is to say that literature is important only because it reveals the history.

The New Historicists, like old historicists, are interested to establish the relationship between literature and history. Moreover, they focus on examining how literature is reflected, shaped and represented in history. Literature, according to New Historicists, does not "reflect history as a mirror". Literature, therefore, does not behave passively towards history. It rather "shapes and constitutes historical change. Literary text can have effects on history, on the social and political ideas and beliefs

of their time” (Brannigan, “History” 170). This is to say that literature and history are inseparable. Literature is a constitutive part of history in the making of history itself.

Louis Montrose, a prominent New Historicist critic, views literature and history as fully interdependent. He argues that the key concern of New Historicist critic is “the historicity of texts and the textuality of histories”. He explains that by “the historicity of texts”, he means that all texts are embedded in specific historical, social and material context. Literary texts too are the material products of specific historical conditions. Literary texts, therefore, must be treated along with its historical context. Likewise, by “the textuality of histories”, he means that, “access to a full and authentic past” is never possible (Montrose 410). This is to say that all of our knowledge and understanding of the past exists only in the realm of narratives. The past is mediated by the texts. Literary texts too have vital role in mediating history, Literature, in this sense works as vehicle for the representation of history. It reveals the processes and tensions by which historical change comes about.

Since the events and attitude of the past exist solely as writing, New Historicists pay equal attention to all the written documents. They make a parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period. Stephen Greenblatt, the guiding force to New Historicism, says that New Historicists are involved in “an intensified willingness to read all of the textual trace of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts” (qtd. in Hawthorene 197). This is to say that they see literary text and the historical documents as expressions of the same historical moments. In this sense, they give equal weight to literary and non-literary texts.

For the New Historicists, the production of literary texts is a cultural practice. We can not make an absolute distinction between literary texts and other cultural

practices. According to Greenblatt, history “does not simply exist in all cultures; it is made up along with other products, practices, discourses of a given culture” (504). Greenblatt, thus, states that all types of art, including literature, are embedded within the social and economic circumstances in which they are produced and consumed. But these circumstances are not stable in themselves. So, literary texts are considered as part of larger circulation of social energies. In the words of Greenblatt, there can be “no art without social energy” (503). Literary works, for them, are products of a particular culture and at the same time they influence that culture. Culture for the New Historicist is “A hermetic system of signs, complete in itself, and that any notion of reality or history was an effect of this sign system and determined by representations. Representations (whether called literary, cultural or textual) are the agencies of power. . .” (qtd. in Brannigan, “Power” 172).

Written texts, therefore, are the products of social, cultural and political forces, not solely the creation of an individual author. So, texts reflect and engage with the prevailing values and ideologies of their own time. The texts form discourse which regularly shapes and determines the views, values and actions of the society and culture in which it is fostered. In this sense, all forms of power and control, of New Historicist, operate through the medium of textual representations. Montrose sees the impossibility of subverting the dominant culture when he says that “a text creates the culture by which it is created, saves the fantasies by which it is shaped, begets that by which it is begotten”(qtd. in Brannigan “Power” 169). He emphasizes that literary texts act out the concerns of ruling class by reproducing and renewing the powerful discourses which sustain the system.

Furthermore, literary texts polish the dominant ideas of a particular time by representing alternatives or deviations as threatening. The new historicists tend to

examine widely different texts in order to show that those texts play a key role in mediating power relation within the state. Literature, along with other written sources, raises the possibility of subversion against the state only to contain subversion. Greenblatt too views that texts of all kinds offer us glimpses of subversion, but only in order to contain subversive elements effectively. So, all texts are discourses which are involved in power relations. These representations are, therefore, used “to produce subversion only in order to contain that subversion” (Brannigan “Power” 172). These representations, according to New Historicists, serve to ratify the existing social order. Literature, therefore, plays a part in constructing a society’s sense of itself. Literary texts circulate with other texts in a particular period to construct and shape the power relations of society. Literature participates in forming the dominant ideological assumptions of particular time. A literature, in this sense, has a deep relationship with the mission of colonialism, gender oppressions, slavery, criminality or insanity. This kind of view of literature challenges the “humanist idea that literature could teach human being valuable lesson in moral and civic behavior” (Brannigan “History”172). Literature was not a benevolent teacher. It was rather a loyal watchdog, patrolling the fences of a conservative social order.

New Historicists argue that any knowledge of the past is necessarily mediated by the texts. To put it differently, history is in many respects textual. This view of history means to suggest that there can be “no knowledge of the past without interpretation. Just as literary texts need to be read, so do the facts of history” (Bennett and Coyale 113). The New Historicists contend that history is only knowable in the sense that both literature and history must be viewed subjectively. The traditional historicists posited one or another master narrative. New historicism

is the apparent absence of such a narrative. The old historicists saw unity, homogeneity and totality in history. The New Historicists, on the contrary, found contradiction, heterogeneity and fragmentation in histories. New Historicists assert that the historians like the authors of literary texts, possess a subjective view. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. So they can no longer claim that their study of the past is detached and objective. According to New Historicists, we can not transcend our own historical situation. We are shaped by conditions and ideological formations of our own era. For Greenblatt, “the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society” (qtd. in Selden 107). Hence, human beings can never have an autonomous role. In this sense, any act of reading, whether of history or of literature, too are embedded within a particular social and cultural situation. We can not avoid the history. According to Montrose, we “live in history and that the form and pressure of history are made manifest in our subjective thoughts and actions, in our beliefs and desire” (qtd.in Greenblatt and Gunn 394). Our knowledge and understanding is part history. So our “own voice”, claims Stephen Greenblatt, is the “voice of the dead” (Greenblatt 396). Hence, we can never have a disinterested and objective interpretation, evaluation or creation of a text.

History, for the New Historicists is “less a determinate pattern of cause and effect than a random contingent field of forces, in which causes and effects were to be constructed by the observer rather than taken as given” (Eagleton 197). History, in this sense, is not a coherent body of objective knowledge. It does not follow the cause-and-effect pattern. The historian, through his imaginative mind, constructs the causes and effects of history. History, in this regard, is an interpretation of fact using our subjectivity. Any reading of history, for the New historicist, “depends upon the

translatability of the past into the present” (Salkeld 60). The past is interpreted and made intelligible. But different people interpret the past in different ways. The translation is never a straight forward process. It remains relative to the conditions in which interpretations are made. Hence, there can be many versions of the same event of the past. New historicists, contend Eagleton, treat the history as:

A form of narration conditioned by the narrator’s own prejudices and preoccupation, and so itself a kind of rhetoric or fiction. There was no single determinable truth to any particular narrative or event, just a conflict of interpretations whose outcome was finally determined by power rather than truth. (197)

History, therefore does not occupy a status of a set of fixed, objective facts. The history can never avoid human fabrication. It is, like literature, a product of subjective mind. The narrator can not be a trans-historical figure. So his own historicity affects his narrative. The prejudices and preoccupation of the narrator get involved in any writing of history. History, in this sense, is a kind of fiction. There can be many interpretations of the same event, or many versions of history. The existing power structure determines which version is true and which one is false. The history, thus, can never be written in pure form. It always gets molded with human fabrications. In this regard, there is no such a distinction as history and literature; or to put it in Eagleton’s words, there is no “hard-and-fast opposition between fact and fiction” (197). As New Historicism, Cultural Studies also tries to subvert the notion of singular and universal history.

Culture, Cultural Identity, and Subaltern Discourse

Cultural Studies doesn’t speak with one voice and it can’t be spoken with one voice. Cultural Studies manifests itself in a wide array of interpretive dimensions,

including such intersecting fields of inquiry as gender studies post colonialism, race and ethnic studies, the politics of nationalism, popular culture, postmodernism, and historical criticism, among a variety of other topics.

Those fields focus on social and cultural forces that either create community or cause division and alienation. Concerned with the exploration of a given culture's artistic achievements, institutional structures, beliefs and systems and linguistic practices, cultural studies highlights the interrelationships and tensions that exist between cultures and their effects upon both the literary works and the authentic texts of our lives. Cultural Studies not only explores the cultural codes of a given work but also investigates the institutional, linguistic, historical and sociological forces that inform the work's publication and critical reception.

Cultures, like texts, are seen as indeterminate site of conflict that cannot be pinned to a single totalized meaning. Cultural Studies is, and always has been, a multi or post disciplinary field of inquiry which blurs the boundaries between itself and other subjects. There must be something at stake in Cultural Studies which differentiates itself from other subject areas. According to Barker, "What is at stake is cultural studies' connections to matters of power and politics" (5). So, its connections to 'power' and 'politics' is crucial. "Cultural Studies", as argued by Chris Barker, "is a body of theory generated by thinkers who regard the production of theoretical knowledge as political practices" (5). Centrality of power is pervading every level of social relationship. The intellectual promise of cultural studies lies in its attempt to cut across diverse social and political interests and address many of the struggles within the current scene.

Cultural Studies in this sense transcends the confines of particular discipline such as literary criticism. It is rather politically engaged and a prominent endeavour

in the cultural studies is to subvert the hierarchical distinctions between 'high' and 'low' or 'elite' and 'popular' culture. In its extremity, it denies the autonomy of the individual whether an actual person or work of literature. It is committed to examining the entire range of a society's beliefs, institutions, and communicative practices including arts. It remains difficult to pin down the boundaries of cultural studies as a coherent, unified, academic discipline with clear-cut substantive topics, concepts and methods which differentiate it from other disciplines/approaches.

Cultural studies is a discursive formation, that is, a cluster of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society. Cultural Studies is constituted by a regulated way of speaking about objects and coheres around key concepts, ideas and concerns. Language is not a neutral medium for the formations of meanings and that very knowledge about an independent object world existing outside of language is constitutive of those very meanings and that very knowledge. In this sense, cultural studies, takes linguistic turn since language gives meaning to material objects and social practices which are brought into view by language and made intelligible to us in terms of which language delimits.

A good deal of cultural studies is centered on questions of 'representations' that is, how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us. The central strand of cultural studies can be understood as the signifying practices of representation. This not only requires us to explore the textual generation of meaning but also demands investigation of the modes by which meaning is produced in a variety of texts. Cultural representations and meanings have a certain materiality since they are produced, enacted, used and understood in specific social contexts.

The concept of text suggests not simply the written word, but all practices which signify. This includes the generation of meaning through images, sounds, activities and objects. Since images, sounds, practices and objects are sign systems that signify with the same mechanism as a language, we may refer to them as cultural texts. Texts, as forms of representation, contain the possibility of different meanings which have to be realized by actual readers who give life to words and images. Meaning is produced in the interplay between the text and the reader so that the moment of consumption is also the moment of meaningful production.

Centrality of the concept of power is regarded as pervading in every level of social relationship in the cultural studies. “Power”, according to Barker, “is not simply the glue that holds the social practices together, or coercive force which subordinates one set of people to another, though it certainly is this, but the processes that generate and enable any form of social action, relationship or order” (10). In this sense power, while certainly constraining, is also enabling. Such notion of power is similar to Antonio Gramsci’s concept of ‘hegemony’, closely related to Cultural Studies, which implies a situation where a ‘historical block’ of powerful groups exercise social authority and leadership over subordinate groups through the winning of consent. So, such a discipline called cultural studies has the centrality of the Foucauldian concept of power.

In this sense, the proposition from these observations can be drawn as that Cultural Studies refers to a multi-stranded and cross-disciplinary intellectual movement that places cultural analysis in the context of social formations seeing society and culture as historical processes unlike frozen artifacts, emphasizing the inextricable relations between culture and power and calling attention to social

inequalities, thus, always making a committed call for democratization. It is not a discrete approach, rather a set of practices.

The concept of culture is central to cultural studies, yet there is no 'correct' or definitive meaning attached to it. It indicates the contested character of culture and cultural studies. Barker writes:

Culture is not 'out there' waiting to be correctly described by theorists who keep getting it wrong. Rather, the concept of culture is a tool which is of more or less usefulness to us as a life form. Consequently, its usage and meanings continue to change as thinkers have hoped to 'do' different things with it. We should ask not what culture 'is' but how the language of culture is used and for what purposes. (35)

Because of multiplicity of its referents and the vagueness of study with which it has all too often been invoked, the term culture has by now acquired a certain aura of ill-repute in socio-anthropological circles. Despite its multiplicity of references, the culture, here, in this thesis will denote to historically transmitted pattern of meaning that is condified in symbols. This system of inherited conceptions is expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitude towards life. Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret experience and guide their actions. Such actions then take the forms of social structure and network of social relations that actually exist. Culture and social structure are then two different abstractions from the same phenomena. Culture has undergone a massive change by the mid twentieth century. To draw a single central culture rendering individual experience in coherent and meaningful way is almost impossible.

Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. So, culture has become the most contested space with the emergence of postcolonial criticism. Postcolonial perspectives emerge within the geopolitical divisions of east and west, north and south from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of minorities. They formulate their critical revisions around the issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the rationalizations of modernity. Postcolonial criticism forces us to engage with culture, as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and a value of composed of incommensurable demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival. Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality to give the alienating everyday an aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure. Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement – now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of “global” media technologies--make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. It becomes crucial to distinguish between the semblance and similitude of the symbols across diverse cultural experiences--literature, art, music, ritual, life, death--and the social specificity of each of these productions of meaning as they circulate as signs with specific contextual locations and social systems of value. The postcolonial critics represent the incommensurability of cultural values and priorities. Though differently, one of the siblings of postcolonial study, subaltern studies tries to foreground the space of the minorities.

Subaltern Studies has come in the foreground as a field of study which was begun in 1982 as a series of debates on the issue of Indian history, and now it has become a transhistorical phenomenon. Remarkably, the theorists, from multiple disciplinary background who devote themselves in postcolonial study have their inclination in subaltern studies. The critics of “history and nationalism, and of Orientalism and of Euro centrism” are the noted scholars active in the field (Chakrabarty 9) and are contributing the knowledge of social science. Now, the study is expanding from India to America to Japan. Subaltern Studies has been the sibling of post colonialism.

With its focus in the history Subaltern Studies could be seen as a postcolonial project of writing history. However, one shouldn't be confused that it is just the another version of Marxist or any other radical history for its “contact with Said's orientalism, Spivak's deconstructionism or Bhabha's analysis of colonial discourse” make it a wider and more inclusive field (10). Rather it discovered new ways of history writing making a revolutionary departure from English historiographical traditions.

The genesis of Subaltern Studies interestingly sprouted from the very phenomenon it had to fight immediately: colonialism. During 1960s and 1970s, to delineate the boundry of modern Indian history, there was a debate about nationalism and colonialism in the terrain of research. Two dialectical schools of history emerged: the Cambridge School and the School of Nationalist historians. The former scholars believed that nationalism became the work of tiny elite group reared in the educational institutions, the British setup in India and, Anil Seal says, they “competed and collaborated “with colonizers for the sake of power and privilege (qtd in Chakrabarty 11). Their nationalism could never be a disinterested interest; rather

remained teleological move which merged with the financial self-interest of the empire and ultimately stood in the vertical line of patronage. The latter school contended that Indian history of the colonial era was a war between nationalism and colonialism. For them, nationalism was a “regenerative force “and colonialism was “regressive force that distorted all development” (Chakrabarty 12). Yet, a third force emerged among the younger generations.

Subaltern Studies assumed a radical paradigm shift from 1982 onwards critiquing abovementioned schools. The historiographers wrote up the history of nationalism as the story of an achievement by the elite classes whether Indian or British. Chakrabarty further writes:

Subaltern Studies (is) part of an attempt to align historical reasoning with larger movements for democracy . . . it look(s) an anti elitist approach to history writing and in this it (has) in common with the history ‘from below’ approaches pioneered in English historiography by Christopher Hill, E. P. Thompson, E. J. Hobsbawn and others . . . both (owe) a certain intellectual debt to the Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci in trying to move away from deterministic, Stalinist readings of Marx. . . . Subaltern Studies (is) also concerned about “rescuing from the condensation of posterity; the pasts of the socially subordinate groups . . . (its aim is) to produce historical analysis in which the subaltern groups (are) viewed as the subjects of history. (Chakrabarty 13-14)

Adding to it Ranjit Guha writes: “we are indeed opposed to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography . . . for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny” (qtd. in Chakrabarty 14).

In the changing scenario, Subaltern Studies rose more prominent and relevant for it brought a relative separation of the history of power from any universalist histories of capital; for it became a critique of the nation—from and for it posed an interrogation of the relationship between power and knowledge. In the history from the above the parameters of politics are assumed to be enunciated from the rulers and it can do nothing other than equating politics with the interests and activities of those who are directly involved in operate state institutions. Retaliating such politics of elites, Subaltern Studies attempts to create an autonomous domain of politics of people. Central to the studies is a notion of “resistance to the elite domination” (Chakrabarty 16).

Culture is inextricably bound up with the notion of identity. Associating culture with identity and with nation, Said writes, “In time, culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state, differentiating ‘us’ from ‘them’, almost always with some degree of xenophobia” (Culture xiii). In this sense, culture is a source of identity, and rather a combative theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another. Far from being a placid realm, culture can even be a battleground for identity and survival.

Identity is a crucial issue in the contemporary study of culture. Cultural studies explores how we come to be the kinds of people we are and how we identify with descriptions of ourselves as male or female; black or white. Perceived within the domain of cultural studies, identities are not concrete things which exist there have not essential or universal qualities, rather, they are discursive constructions, the product of discourses or regulated ways of speaking about the world. In other words, identities are constituted, made rather than found, by representations notably language.

Identity to be defined as such is problematic, since the very term itself can be a rather elusive, amorphous and even vaporous one. Anyway identity with many ramifications for the study of ethnicity, class, gender, race, sexuality and subcultures has become the central areas of concern in cultural studies during the late 1990s and the post 90s scenario. When something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty, the identity becomes an issue. Fueled by political struggles as well philosophical and linguistic concerns, identity emerged as the central theme of cultural studies in the 1990s. The politics of feminism, of ethnicity and of sexual orientation, amongst others, have been high prolific concerns intimately connected to the politics of identity. Identity is an essence, which can be signified through signs of tastes, beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles. So, identity is concerned with sameness and difference. However, identity is best understood not as a fixed entity but as an emotionally charged description of ourselves. West conceives identity as the ‘matter of life and death’:

For me, identity is fundamentally about desire and death. How you construct your identity is predicated on how you construct desire and how you conceive of death: desire for recognition; quest for visibility; the sense of being acknowledged; a deep desire for association what Edward Said would call affiliation. It’s the longing to belong a deep visceral need that most linguistically conscious animals transact with an environment (that’s us) participate in. And then there is a profound desire for protection, for security, for safety, for surety. (15-6)

So, while talking about identity, we have to look out at the various ways in which human beings have constructed their desire for recognition, association and protection

over time and in space, and always under circumstances not of their own choosing.

We cannot talk about identity without talking about death.

Culture and Tourist Gaze

At present day world, there are enormously powerful interconnections of tourism and culture. As mobility is being a compulsion, not only tourist travel but also objects, cultures and images are moving giving rise to mobile culture. Travel and tourism have been unavoidable, indisputable and always necessary for family, lone and friendship as well as work. One is entitled to travel since it is an essential part of life for contemporary citizens have right to pass over and into other places and other cultures. “Travel to the culture’s sacred sites, the location of central written or visual text,” Urry writes, “To see particularly noteworthy individuals . . . and to view other cultures so as to reinforce one’s own cultural attachments” are necessary to develop the culture and sustaining tourism. Travel and culture are indissolubly linked together and how culture themselves travel can be seen through the nature of nationality – the nation’s narrative being central.

Tourism is about pleasure, holidays, travel and consuming goods and services, culture and heritages which are different from one’s encounters in everyday scenes and landscapes of life. Tourist view is organized and systematized in society but it is necessary how the tourist gaze is constructed and reinforced. There is no singular tourist gaze but it differs as the social group and historical group differs; in reality the gaze is constructed through difference. As there is no universal experience that will be true for all tourists at all times. John Urry in *The Tourist Gaze* asserts : “The gaze...presupposes a system of social activities and signs which locates the particular tourist practices, not in terms of some intrinsic characteristics but through the contrasts implied with non tourist practices . . . ”(1-2). Disconnected from any paid

work, tourism activity is a moment of people to and in the sites outside the normal place of residence with an intense anticipation of pleasure. Tourist gaze is constructed through signs. “The tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself . . .” (2).

Urry says:

The following are relevant to understanding the changing sociology of the tourist gaze; the social tone of different places; the globalization of the tourist gaze; the process of consuming tourist services; tourist meanings and signs; modernism and postmodernism; history, heritage and the vernacular; and post tourism and play. (124)

Different social scientists have contributed their ideas to the sociology of tourism. D. Boorstin in his book *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo- events in America* discusses that the tourist can't experience “reality” but “the pseudo events” and while traveling in guided groups they find pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions; the observer remains gullible (qtd. in Urry 7). In *Global Diasporas* R. Cohn has to say that there is not single tourist as such but a variety of tourist types or modes of tourist experience. In his opinion, the ‘experimental’, and existential don't depend on environmental bubble of conventional tourist services (Urry 7). Distinctly, D. MacCannel asserts: the inauthenticity and superficiality of modern life, the sensual impression are based on “the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions” (qtd. in Urry 9). All tourists have quest for authenticity which has relation with universal human concern with the sacred for a tourist is just like a contemporary pilgrim.

The tourists save their life from such inauthentic intrusions in their gaze and take advantage of the opportunities. Similarly, P. Pearce and G. Moscardo say that it is necessary to distinguish between authenticity of the setting and of the persons gazed upon. Recently, M. Feifer has brought new concept of 'post tourist' who takes delight in the inauthenticity of the normal tourist experiences; a post tourist knows, there is no authentic tourist experience but there are only the games or texts; it is one of the cultural development of post modernism (Urry 12).

Culture has come to take an important position in the discussion of present day societies and their contemporaneity is maintained by postmodernism. Postmodernism dissolves the boundaries of between high and low cultures and the boundaries between tourism, art, education, music, photography, etc. Moreover, mass communication has metamorphosed tourist gaze assimilating postmodern qualities in it and tourist gaze has become the part and parcel of social and cultural practices.

The signifier post modernism is free-floating and having rare connections with things real. Certain cultural paradigms and sociological conditions have given rise to postmodernism. Basically, postmodernism does not indicate to the society as a whole but to the signs or symbols specific in both time and space which have got own domain of signification where certain cultural objects are produced, distributed and consumed. In them, signifier, signified and referent relationship exists. In this regards, S. Lash points that postmodernism "is a regime of signification whose fundamental structuring trait is 'de-differentiation'" (qtd. in Urry 75). Modern culture keeps both horizontal and vertical hierarchy and differentiates such spheres but postmodern culture destabilizes any hierarchies. When the discourse of cultural economy comes postmodern phenomena dissolves the difference between audience and cultural objects; it dissolves boundaries between artistic and commercial

productions for commerce and culture and are in unalienably intertwined in the postmodern. In postmodern perception there is not distinction between representation and reality; everything is emulation which appears more real than the real. Such development has close connection with contemporary tourist practices.

As the tourist sites venture to offer spectacular illuminations, the visual gaze is being prominent. Spectacle and cultural practices plug at each other resulting in anti auratic, electronic and mechanical gaze. This popular pleasure is anti elitist and a pastiche. Then Urry says, “there is a relatively new cultural paradigm, the postmodern . . . Tourism prefiguratively Postmodern because of its particular combination of the visual, the aesthetic the commercial and the popular” (78). And he further adds:

As a result there comes to be generated a kind of stylistic melting pot, if the old and the new of the nostalgic and the futuristic, of the natural and the artificial, of the youthful and the mature, of high culture and low, and of modernism and Postmodernism. (81)

Much ahead M. Frefer in *Going Places* talks about ‘post tourist’ (qtd. in Urry 91). She says that a post tourist necessarily does not leave his/ her house to gaze the typical tourist gaze in the TV and Internet imagining oneself really being there, that s/he comes away from the constraints of high culture to the pleasure principle to take delights in multitude of choice; and that s/he knows of being tourist and tourism as a game multiple texts with slipping authentic tourist experience. It is, then, evident that the tourist gaze is a social construction, its production and consumption is socially organized.

According to the perceptual capacity, the tourist gaze per se has two angles; romantic tourist gaze and collective tourist gaze. The perceptual capacity is variable

for it depends upon certain conceptions of nature and the circumstances in which people would like to gaze upon. In the romantic view “the emphasis is upon solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze” (Urry 43). One’s self is, in romantic gaze, not in society but in a solitude contemplating in nature; one seeks sacred natural beauty, besides, in collective tourist gaze. Here, the destination of gaze gets designed as public places which seem deserted and strange when people don’t visit them. It demands large numbers of people who could give carnivalesque quality to the site. In the large metropolitan cities with cosmopolitan character there are places of collective gaze where people from all over the world gather to add its glamour and gracefulness. The flock of people don’t just cramp the city rather provide fine market for the desperate tourists.

However, Urry asserts:

The romantic gaze is an important mechanism which is helping to spread tourism on a global scale, drawing almost every country into its ambit as the romantic seeks ever – new objects of that gaze, and minimizing diversity through the extension of . . . ‘Pleasure periphery’. (44)

Besides the romantic gaze that emphasizes solitude, privacy and a personal semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze and the collective gaze that invites people to give liveliness or a sense of carnival . Various writers have shown that there are other gazes which vary in terms of socialities involved, lengths of times taken and character of visual appreciation. Spectatorial gaze involves collective glancing and collecting of different signs from sweeping scenes; reverential gaze involves consuming the sacred spirituality of the religious heritages; anthropological gaze involves how the visitors view the sites to locate them within an historical array

of symbols and meanings; environmental gaze involves a scholarly discourse of scanning various tourist practices for their footprint upon the environment; and the mediatized gaze involves how particular sites famous for their mediated nature are viewed (Urry 150-51).

Under tourism, there is heritage industry which has generated much debate; heritage is an object of collective gaze but it is authentic and historical. In contemporary times, fascination towards the sites of heritage is intense and increasing. Historical buildings, memorial monuments and conservation areas, sites of arts and architectures and in certain cases indigenous settlements with their original workaday life, their festivals and ceremonies, their folk culture also vehemently fall under the heritage industry. They embody special aura as they on the one hand are the emblem of ancient civilization and at the same time remain on the verge of the extinction and on the other they bear living memory of ancestry that are sufficient to take people back to authentic root. For the tourist, heritage bestows the open air museumisation of human history. Adding to it, Michel Wood writes: “Now that the present seems so full of woe . . . the profusion and frankness of our nostalgia . . . suggests not merely a sense of loss . . . but a general abdication, an actual desertion from the present” (qtd. in Urry 95).

Recently, heritage industry is going under different changes; it is being privatized. However, this initiative has “inspired new ways of representing history through commodifying the past in novel forms “ (95). Opened under private sectors, such buildings of historical importance, public parks or gardens, museums, art galleries help to carry on the essential reality of typical society. They get widespread support for sustaining heritage through their economic benefits and people think that their lives are richer for having the opportunities to visit sites of heritage. “Significant

number of people who have not visited such sites,” Urry accounts, “expressed very positive sentiments towards such heritage work being undertaken” (98). People have really developed their sensitivity to appreciate certain kinds of landscapes and villagescapes, they feel delighted gazing grand country houses set in attractive rural setting. Further interest is arising in visiting the countrysides in order to see the equipment and machinery of farming, and the life patterns developed in agriculture. Though modern man is losing his attachments to his work, neighborhood family or anything of his own, he’s at the same time developing an interest in the real lives of others. This fascination with other people’s work is bound up with the postmodern breaking down of boundaries, particularly between the front and the backstage of people’s lives. Such a development is also part of postmodern museum culture in which almost anything can become an object of curiosity for visitors (97).

With such attraction with the things of others, heritage is playing an important role in the world tourism and it is more central to certain parts of world where still the ancient indigenous cultures are surviving – heritage maintains the relationship between the notions of history and authenticity. Live debates are rising concerning the evaluation of causes and consequences of heritage. Such development particularly involves the revivals of values and heightens the decline through a shifting of the culture at present. A new understanding of the history emerges with an analysis of the conditions in which nostalgia is generated. Roy Strong, thus writes:

We all are aware of problems and troubles, of changes within the structure of society, of the dissolution of old values and standards
The heritage represent some kind of security, a point of reference, a refuge perhaps, something visible and tangible which . . . seems stable

and unchanged. Our environmental heritage is a deeply stabilizing and unifying element within our society. (qtd. in Hewison 46-7)

The visualization of heritage offers patterns of life that would have emerged around those objects. It presents various social experiences. Heritage can be developed as national industry. Certain aspects are more important about heritage: as a strategy of economic regeneration, it strengthens local income. It can be yoked with the trends and designs of postmodern art and architecture.

Urry points three things as more important considering the relationship between local areas and tourism development:

First there are local people who are often concerned to conserve features of the environment which seem in some ways to stand for or signify the locality in which they live. Second, there are a variety of private sector owners and potential owners of tourist related services. And third, there is the local state, which is comprised of local authorities as well as the local/regional representatives of various national level bodies including tourist boards. (103)

The heritage industry sustains its life through the interconnection of local producers, the private sector owners and, on top, by the state's support. Tourism presupposes certain places for pleasant gaze and something natural. Proper design of the site of gaze is possible only through state involvement to attract tourists. Globalization has made it possible for all sorts of places to come under tourist gaze; they are not just the centers to produce symbols of power but pleasure. The postmodern consumers view each such places from various perspectives. What a local sees in the place differs from what visitors do. People have different worldviews living in same locality. Universalization of the tourist gaze is assumed postmodern phenomenon. As in the

ancient time pilgrims journeyed carrying their yearning for spiritual fulfillment, tourists in postmodern times are the pilgrims for aesthetic yearnings. This ceremonial aspect changes the conception of history. “There has been a decline in the strength of a given and uncontested national history,” says Urry, “instead a proliferation of alternative or vernacular histories have developed There is a pluralization and indeed a ‘contemporary-isation’ of history” disseminating it worldwide (118).

Recent developments are taking tourism from the margins of global order to the center of the emerging world. Infrastructures are developed everywhere and most people of the world both orient and occident are being global visitors. Transportation, hospitality, travel design and consultancy, production of global tourist sites and images and disseminating them worldwide is also developing wider and, creating global-hybrid.

By tourist gaze it is not meant only for individual motivation but a systematized site prepared by social practices and discourses. Such gazes implicate both the gazer and gazee in an ongoing and systematic set of social and physical relations. These relations are discursively organized by many professionals, photographers, writers of travel books and guides, local council, experts in the heritage industry, travel agents, hotel owners, designers, tour operators, TV travel programmers, tourism development officers, architects, planners, tourism academics and so on. These all agents produce and serve various tourist services at the same time being themselves benefited.

We cannot forget the role of globalization in an attempt to draw a line of culture and its mobility. Globalization is a trend toward increased economic, social and cultural connectedness between individuals, business and public organizations across international borders. It also means a set of beliefs that promotes such a sense

of connectedness. Aspects of globalization have existed for thousand years through travel, migration, trade and the spread of culture. The trend accelerated in late 1900s largely as a result of technological developments which included improvements in transportation, painting, sound and video recording and computer technology. As a result of these and other advances many business developed international products, services and organizations in an effort to do business in a number of countries. It improved international communication, raised global awareness of important issues and many people believe that it helped the spread of travel and tourism.

III. Rewriting Cultural History in *Dreams of Peach Blossoms*: A Textual Analysis

Playwright Subedi really foregrounds the common perspectives in his endeavor to reaccount history. He is conscious of all things in his attempt. Though the play is set in the ancient and elite durbar square, the audiences never enter into the royal palace. The whole play is enacted without giving the inner view and inner life of the palace. It ends where it begins. The scene

shows the entrance to the palace with wooden cot where the guard sleeps. The old *hiti* or water place with stone spouts, images of the *pote* deities and slabs appear in the background. One tree with few leaves stands against the skyline. When the curtain opens, the guard is seen frozen in the middle of the stage. (59)

This stage direction in the beginning of the play creates an atmosphere which the playwright holds throughout. Common civilians never knew what happened inside the palace; they ever remained outside and away from it. Showing the Guard's cot, the stone slabs and *hities*, the writer begins his play the eyes of ordinary people—unlike the old history.

The old historians believed that history is the authentic account of linear events; for them it passed on progression from the beginning onwards recording what happened in a serial relationship of events. They even granted that we are perfectly capable of uncovering the facts about historical events and, for them, those facts revealed the spirit of age. However, Subedi retaliates such elite and hierarchic perspective through his New Historical standpoint. He brings multiple voices in the story which interpret the former history for themselves. The poet, the Guard, the girls and women, the tourists and their guides of the contemporary times are all such mouthpieces who foreground understanding of history from their own perspectives.

They are well versed that the history written by the kings silenced various marginal voices and dominated all others making them the unacknowledged martyrs of civilization.

The Poet and the Guard in the play are such sensitive characters who unfurl many untold stories. They fill life in the frozen and dead history and awaken the audience disillusioning them of their limited knowledge about the past. “Images scamper,” says the Poet and he speaks loftily about people’s lamentations and their dreams that they have never materialized (59). Further, describing the wise architecture of struts in the precincts of the square, he adds:

But the dreams were here
 Are here now
 They were then dreams for those
 Who lived behind the carved out wood
 Oh! Listen to the sound of water
 In the dry lake
 . . .
 As memories on the treeless backyards
 Time here is the silhouette. (60)

Though much time has passed since the square is made, the dreams people had in their lives are kept freezing in their arts. Those dreams are still eager to speak their wishes and they are like the dried lakes there with their unseen waves moving around. The Poet learns the bygone pages of times and tries to convey what he has brought in his memory. When the kings were ruling mightily in Bhaktapur, they never tried to understand their subjects’ agonies. They tried to express their love of art and architecture murdering the real love people had among each other. People ever had

dreams and they have dreams now too; but, the rulers never tried to understand them. They are manifested in the arts people sculpted and are carried along times for eternity. Those who expressed their love of life and art, those who made it possible for the culture to survive always lived behind the carved out woods. The Poet traverses back into the cemetery of history and reveals the cruelty done upon artists. He charges the Kings' history to be a dry lake; however, he finds the people's agonies in such cemetery. To speak about such nightmare he has no words; time itself was also imprisoned there.

The playwright brings the nightmarish life of the Bhaktapureans. The people love their music truly and when they play it they merrily release their reality. It is the music that the rulers patronized in the past. People had to play and perform only in accordance with the rulers' will but, above such predicament, the playwright spontaneously invites them to the stage. In the beginning "musical sound is heard from inside the courtyard. The musicians cannot be seen, only the soft music is heard" (59). This creates a real ambience on the stage and the audience are taken back to history where they can experience its real flavor. The music is a combination of meditative and lyrical moods" that fills the audience with tearful reality that the people suffered throughout in the name of culture. Bearing it the people gather themselves festively on the stage. Dressing "in the costumes . . . (of) Newar women of Bhaktapur in earlier times" women come on the stage (61). The music enlightens the atmosphere and the Poet cannot help describing it with lofty language: "The music rises like sun from the pagoda roof in the east"; he adds, "The music rises like women dancing in ripples" (61).

The playwright himself writes in the preface that he got the original interpretation of the Guard, who stands there freezing just like sculptured pillars with

their silenced dreams. Believing that the truth can never be just only one and timeless, the playwright tries to account history from the below—from the marginalized people of society. The commoners' experience is more authentic than the so called history of the dictators. "(T)he guard of the palace told us that he heard music at night; he had seen wedding scenes where "*Maijus* were unwillingly sitting for the ceremony," the playwright writes, "people played drums and sang. They organized feasts. But when he (the Guard) told these stories to people they didn't believe him, which made him very sad" (45). Such interaction might have inspired him to foreground the untold stories people still carry with them in the city of Bhaktapur. History is not just what is recorded in chronological anthologies; rather, it is a matter of interpretation through which appear the commoner's voice more prominent. When people were ignorant about the nature of knowledge, linear account of events stood as history; everyone respected it but, as time went on, the so called truth appeared problematic.

The guard unfurls himself of his experience:

I tell you, one day

Like this day or the day when

Anything that happens under the sky

In this Bhaktapur town

Is a story. (62)

He has witnessed the events of the palace and people as he is the timeless caretaker. From the corner of the square he silently observed the happenings and realized that history is no less than a fiction. He is aware that history cannot remain unchangeable; as time passes, peoples' desires and interpretations change. "History and culture must be described as constantly changing constructions made by variously interested men

and women” and its meaning differs from perceivers to perceivers, from time to time” (Guerin 248). In this regard, Forest G. Robinson says “a principle of flexibility, a sharp eye to the distortion in all perspectives, a cultivated pleasure in the discovery of doubleness and subversion” (qtd. in Guerin 248) is necessary to see something from new historicist view. The Guard discloses the problems and better understanding.

Scrutinizing these phenomena, the playwright assumes himself as oppositional to the power structure of the society; he questions the inequalities and seeks to restructure the relationships among dominant and subordinated culture. He knows meaning and individual subjectivity is culturally constructed and, thus, be reconstructed. To retaliate the grand narratives, he presents the subtle and sublime stories of two lovers and their disasters. The commoners’ stories are equally vibrant. An artist and his beloved appear on the stage to reveal their beautiful world:

Girl: Where did you travel today?

Boy: I traveled over the stones

Chiseled them with love

And carved shapes out of sky

Girl: where did you save this overflowing sound?

Boy: In this heart of yours and this universe of stones and

wood. (62)

This interaction between the lovers is not only their love to each other but their love of culture and art at the same time. The conversation unfolds their rooted affection to what they do. The boy creates shapes on the stones with love and it is his own way to express creativity. When the girl asks where he carved his love and overflowing rhythm, he answers: in his beloved’s heart and the world of woods and stones. There is no discrimination between the love to culture and love to his girl. This is how

culture survives. This edenic ambience of the couple is a beautiful projection of people's harmonious life.

However, the dictators never tried to preserve the artist's deep love to his culture. They put guard on others' skill. Being jealous of such rare skill of art, they attempted to silence the artist for ever. What harm had he done to his country? The dictators were not ready to endow freedom of his life. "Suddenly, a couple of strong men come out and try to capture the boy, the artist lover" (62). The girl tries to defend her lover with a gesture of anger and confidence but she fails to protect him. Finally they capture the boy and she "follows them when they take him forcibly" and they could never meet in their life (63). Such is the agony artists and lovers suffered under their benevolent kings. The playwright beautifully reveals the agonies and tensions of history and creating awareness in the audience he shows what is true picture of lamenting culture.

What happened to these artists is never told. They are banished from the country making them disabled. The girls wait in the hitis expecting lovers' return which is never possible. The artist's beloved laments:

But there will be no hands to give them shapes
They've gone forever from the world
That they created from earth,
Stone and sky for us to live! (64)

Banishing the artist from the country, the King disturbed the progress of arts; the King made people suffer for lifetime. But when he writes history he expresses his deep love of art. He records the discourse from his own subjective position. The artist could have given shapes to innumerable woods and stories but they are irretrievably lost from the world. The artist carved the shapes at the cost of his own life. Who

wrote about it? Nobody. The playwright excavates such unseen tragic facets of history. The woman opens her sigh:

I filled the water jar
 Waiting for him to come and meet me there.
 But he never came
 I was told that since he had made the wood speak,
 Shine and sing in forms
 Usually powerful,
 He was banished never to return to this place.
 I've waited for him to come upto this day
 He was a great artist, my darling love. (66)

In the name of being art lovers, the kings wanted their people to carve woods and stones in their desired shapes. Once it was finished the artist was not allowed to live because he may make similar other shapes in several places which the kings didn't want. The artists were either killed or chopped off of their country so that they would never return or never chisel any shapes. But, their beloveds waited in the hitis expecting to meet with them. After long the women hear about the artists' banishment; they were banished because of their patriotism, love of the rulers. But, the history says what the kings have made for their immortality. Those who actually made the arts were rewarded of banishment of the cruel kings were celebrated as the protectors and promoters of art. Their history is never attentive towards the tragic separation of the true lovers.

Foucault asserts that truth is created out of power. Power holders create discourses which work dominantly to make anything true. The voice of the powerless never comes forwards. But power doesn't emanate only from the top of political and

socio-economic structure. Particular cultural conditions create such social language at a particular time and place and it conveys a way of understanding human experiences. But new historicism believes that such discourse cannot adequately explain the complex heterogeneous cultural dynamics of social happenings; what the kings had to say in their history is simply a narrative of stories that are inevitably biased according to the conscious or unconscious point of view of those who write them.

To reveal the tensions out, next, the Poet permeates himself into the agonies of women and brings out their sufferings. Women have been suffering as no one suffers in life; they have their feelings, sentiments, wishes and desires but never addressed.

The poet says:

Waiting for the touch of lovers

...

And all these girls

Whose lovers' arms are amputated

Legs cut

So that they may not create other monuments

Like these ones. (77)

In the history that these kings wrote, they wrote only about their glorious saga; they wrote what they feel pleased and they neglected their subjects' pains. In the history from the above the parameters of politics are assumed to be enunciated from the rulers and it can do nothing other than equating politics with the interests and activities of those who are directly involved in operate state institutions. It is artists who labored to erect the timeless monuments; we are proud of our ancient heritage. Have we ever tried to observe the other untold aspects behind their glory; of course, not. The artists were such innocent ones who made fine buildings/ monuments. Once they completed

their art work they prepared their own graves. The jealous kings thought that they will make many such monuments without their desires and consents and killed such possibilities for ever by cutting their hands and feet off. There are numerous such stories in history which in old history are never paid attention to.

The Poet and the Guard are the archetypes of original witness of the civilization of Bhaktapur city. They bring true story of indigenous people to the fore that are ever but behind the curtain. The King's history was such a biased one that never tried to expose the agonies and tragedies people painfully bore on their bosom. However, the people are never frustrated of such silencing. The Guard reads the stories of the ancient architecture and, thus, says:

All are vibrant in lines
 Carved out to tell the stories
 Of these occasions
 When I've seen them and wept
 With love and sadness
 And told you all about. (78)

He has seen the march of history along such turbulent times. He has seen the kings' glorious pretensions; he has seen the ceremonies, feasts and jatras with music filled events; he has seen how the untold and unrealized dreams of the artists and their lovers are carved in the pillars and precincts of the Durbar Square; he has seen how the artists are amputated and banished; he has seen how the women and girls are staked of their love and life just for the happiness of rulers. However, these all stories are freezing in the architectures and no one tries to listen to their traumas. Playwright Subedi's venture brings out all the distortions of history out and makes us frighteningly aware that history of our heritage is the history of elite rulers who

silenced all other stories to valorize their own history. Subedi trumpets those all marginalized voices and attempts to articulate history from their position. His dissatisfaction towards the history is its biased ness in unveiling the authentic traumas that several women have undergone. Such traumatic experiences had to be revealed but it did not happen because of politics being imbedded in the elite society. It is in this point that the writer exposes the insufficiency of traditional history and he strongly questions it. The playwright is more sensitive to observe the *Maiju* tradition of the city.

Abhi Subedi's "*Dreams of Peach Blossoms*" has dreams which he expects to materialize – dreams that problematize the existing injustice in the history to create an egalitarian history; dreams that would disseminate our glorious history and culture throughout the world. However, to show his hidden optimism, he exposes the failed dreams of the people that are carved in the wooden architecture and stone slabs in the city of Bhaktapur, it is his attempt to arouse a serious cultural consciousness and an endeavor to correct the distortions and inequalities in hitherto carried understanding of history. To understand it , it is significant to know his treatment of time in play. In the play, the poet goes across back into time "to understand his ancient cultural heritage" and in the play "he juxtaposes the indigenous elements with foreign influences."

Not only the arts and architectures freezing in the square of Bhaktapur durbar, the writer scrutinizes the culture of the city dwellers. Though much time has passed since the square was made, the dreams people had in their lives are kept freezing in their arts. These dreams are still eager to speak their wishes and they are like the dried lakes there with unseen moves moving around. The Poet learns the bygone pages of times and tries to convey what he has brought in his memory. Marriage

system of the ancient kingdoms has got historical significance in Kathmandu valley. In the preface the playwright says that “*Dreams of Peach Blossoms*” is about “relationship among people, treatment of women by strong men, and the march of time through millennia in this (Bhaktapur) city of ancient civilization and arts” (45). He dramatizes the unseen part of human civilization in which people are left to agonize timelessly there. With the similar opinion, Carol Davis writes that the poet travels “across time to understand his ancient cultural heritage before its ideas and icons are lost for ever” and thereby he juxtaposes elements with foreign influences and mixes historical values” wishing his “audience to preserve what is precious in their culture” (179). We have read about the kings’ offer of their daughters to the prince and neighboring kingdoms to lessen the probable threat to the weaker states. Moreover, marrying off the daughters to some distant places which they have never imagined was a practice ancient kings carried in this city.

So far marriage in Bhaktapur is concerned, it is distinct and indigenously original in this city- marrying the daughters, *Maiju*, far off. Its lineage goes as far as to the marriage of Bhrikuti to the Tibetan king. Since then, without due attention to the *Maijus*’ wishes and desires; girls are passed away just like a river incessantly flows to an unknown place. The dramatist has keenly observed this cultural phenomenon that has been living over a long period of time and he reveals tearful separation of daughters from their home country- an issue demanding serious attention to be studied from new historical perspectives. He looks upon the opposing tensions related in history and endeavors to retell it from a new boundary in which those daughters could give an outlet to their tearful history with a consciousness of being timelessly dominated.

More outstanding in the play is the tradition of injustice done on *Maiju* in the name of marriage. Kantipur daily writes, the play “has disclosed women’s sensitivities that has failed to remember. Excluded from the stories but affecting the modes of ages, the layers of women’s psyche”(83) are exposed providing disheartening experience to the audience. The playwright creates the scenes showing when such experience began and now, in the name of tradition, people are still carrying to the present despite the women’s tears. Prabhav Basista writes: in the name of culture “*Maijus* are disposed off in the history of pains. For the historians it seems like the legend of Bhrikuti but it is the testimony of *Maiju*’s lamentations” (94). The young women come to the stage and speak thus:

First: But this happened so long ago.

Second: No, it’s happening here today; she’s crying in the eyes of
these stones

...

Fifth: she’s become a deity of my heart. (69-70)

The women are in oblivion of their destiny. Some believe that it happened long ago but others think that it’s happening in their own lives. And, take it as the predestined divine social order.

In the ancient time Nepali princess Bhrikuti was married to Tibetan king Tsrong Tsen Gampo. The legends valorize her marriage to the foreign country; the tales proudly say that Bhrikuti disseminated Buddhism there in Tibet; she looks Nepalese artists and introduced Nepali pagoda style of architecture widely in her home country. But no stories dare say about her unwillingness to be exiled away from her own country. Her father commoditized his own daughter and gave the beautiful princess to Tibetan king as if she was some object good enough to be a

present. Her father did so to please the foreign king to avoid the probable siege from his enemy. Bhrikuti was forced by this marriage to live in exile from her beloved homeland. Since then she has been an archetype of Nepali women exiled by arranged marriage. About her, the timeless Guard speaks:

This girl is getting married
 And going away
 Forever from here
 Where she may have to sit
 Quietly listening to a tongue
 She's never heard before

The Poet adds:

And, oh yes, the time
 She'll have to create for herself
 She'll make her space
 In the sky and earth. (70-71)

The guard has seen many instances of marriage since then. Having experience of the women's painful hearts and tries to say what she would have to do in a new place. She wouldn't be able to speak Nepali/Newari language in her new home without expressing her problems and dissatisfaction she would quietly listen and learn the new tongue and fancy of visiting her original homeland creating a pagoda bridge in the horizon that she may never be able to do. Sadly, in our history, "Bhrikuti's heroism, determination and spiritual purity in the face of travail are highly praised". Her arranged marriage and consequent exile continues to justify such marriage and the exiling of daughters to the unfamiliar homes of their new husbands. In his attempt to come to the present state of affairs, having provided the lineage of exiled daughters,

the playwright introduces us to Bhrikuti's cultural descendents who are thus being married off irrespective of their desire to stay in their hometown.

Maiju, being aware of this ill intended and imposed fate of girls, says to her friends:

How many girls did leave this place?

How many are leaving now?

Is there never a bond of love

With this land here? (63)

The discourse about *Maiju*'s tragic separation of their identity assumes power to stand as a tradition. In fact there is nothing like truth but it is the forced practice. The kings who held the power wanted to continue the discourse and those who tried to defy it were punished. Foucault says that the power creates certain discourse that circulates everywhere in the name of truth when in essence there nothing like truth in such discourse; as the power shifts another truths appear. Exiling *Maijus* is simply a trick of keeping the power up. Knowing that girls were/are forced to be away, she is trying to speak of her right to stay in her own land; she is trying to grow her love there and wonders why the girls are separated from their rights. Rightly the Guard speaks for the *Maiju*:

Today she doesn't want to leave

The world where she grew

She does not want to go another place

In the city of stone gods

Stone pagodas

And stones of different order

She is the child of Bhaktapur town

She is a baby of this wooden cosmos
 Her place is here among us fixed
 She still dances in our eyes
 Oh, poor *Maiju*
 How shall I forget her. (69)

The Guard reaches to the essence of grieving *Maiju*'s reality. As she grew in this land, she can never forget and be away of her memories. So now she doesn't want to leave such lovely world to live in an unknown world of stones where there are only hardships, where she would fight with the unforeseen problems. The stones would be quite unfamiliar and she would not tread on them easily. Why can't she live in Bhaktapur since she is the child of same city. The forced exile makes herself and her people deserted. In this regard Bhuwan Dhungana says, "women's dreams couldn't blossom, they fall like peach blossoms and with time they remain in the grave of history. These dreams are carved in the wooden architecture of Bhaktapur" (96). Carved of her love in the wooden world of architecture, her silhouette dances in her brothers', friends', parents', and relatives' eyes. Ever being unable to forget her, they live with unhealing scars in their hearts. With his sentimental affection, the Poet also spills his affection adding to what the Guard has said:

Her dreams are shaped
 By these woods here
 She grew under
 The tiled and wooden coloured sky
 ...
 She stood on the fringe of the crowd
 Awed by the Lakhe dance

His cosmic gestures

His bridge between people

And gods. (69)

If *Maiju* has any dreams and world, they are only the ones carved there; she has learnt to live with the culture, performances, festivals and jatras there. Her friends and beloved ones made the space enough for her entire life there in the place of origin. The stones and woods are replete with her wishes and there is the sky to live under. But, her doomed destination separates herself of who she is and compels to create herself newly away being able to assimilate away creating an imaginative pagoda that takes her from here to heaven; she'd create her own mandalas and bridges as her predecessor Bhrikuti created herself in the "land of fleecy clouds" in Tibet (71).

So far the Guard, Poet and women are critiquing their past—the past so dear to their heart, yet, piercing. Their experiences are such testimonies that nobody suffered as such in the name of culture. Arising from the layers of time, *Maiju* overflows her questions:

Where does it all begin?

Where does it end?

Who can tell me what I am

A river or a woman

A joy of time or pain

That lurks behind wooden covers? (71)

It is an awareness grown in her; she tries to find when such maltreatment arose for the common people. *Maiju* who is about to be getting married and sent off like the historical character "Bhrikuti who is married off to a Tibetan king in the early part of Christian era, appears to be resisting her marriage that would take her away from

home. She is an archetype of all the young women who are thus married off” (115). Throughout the civilization women are never acknowledged who they actually are; the more time advanced the more domination they are painfully carrying. No one has ready answer to such critical existence. *Maiju* herself is in oblivion as to who she really is: a river that simply passes on and on or an object of joy to the rulers. It is ordinary people who do important things like keeping culture alive, carving the woods and creating shapes of stones. Yet, their existence remains always on the verge of questions; they are surviving terrible life. Now, she perceives the whole tradition as something made by ancestors to leave the minorities suffer timelessly; they are made for the joy of the rulers. As the river suffers, people are left same.

The poet realizes that *Maiju*'s questions “are momentous questions” that “she asked to no one” (71). She carried such burning questions as if she has hidden silent fire within herself. She observed “these blocks of wood”, and “these stones and bricks” and realized her potentiality but never ventured to release them out (71). Her existence remained painful just like a swallow hanging from a wooden beam. Now he penetrates into the root of things and reaches across the times to talk to the *Maiju*. He disguises as a king wishing to:

. . . fill up a silence
That permeates history
Like mausoleum
Over these women's times. (72)

The old history which was linear was biased against the dialogic voices of everymen. It only recorded the valorizing saga of the rulers only. Consequently, there are many silent zones where the minorities, especially the women are suffering. They did not know that power doesn't emanate only from the top of the political and socio-

economic structure. Foucault says that power arises from all the spheres and circulates in all directions to and from all social levels, at all times. He says, a discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience. The kings' history provides no space for others. Such history is like a mausoleum that hides whole women's and others' experience as it toes to a corpse. The poet wears the mantle and enters into the king's history "whose story do we tell today / more than the stories of these women / so vibrant so sad and so dear!" (72). In fact, real stories are distorted; women's stories are so vibrant which are dear to their life and at the same time they are sad stories. Speaking the voice of king who never tried to understand his people's agonies, the poet-king says to *Maiju*: "why dost thou cry so, my darling girl? / What is it that ails thy mind?" (72). Shaped by his elitist discourse, the King is unknown about the pain that he has inflicted to such innocent women; he doesn't want to know the women and expresses such cunning love to her.

Maiju answers him:

You should know sire

Why I cry

You have given me a time

That I can neither take nor live

Nor do I understand

Where it is that you want to send me. (72)

The long inflicted pain makes her confident enough to question the king who imposes women the fate of suffering. The king, who makes her cry, should know about her desire not to be exiled. She could do neither ways she likes but tread the way men have shown her. She is given to the unknown land where she does not know what

language she has to speak with the strange people. Without realizing it, the king tries to persuade *Maiju* of her destiny: “A woman is the most universal of all creatures / who will find her tongue wherever she goes” (73). Who compels a woman to be such creature? It is the so called superior ones who compelled women to live in a new country hardly adjusting there with the panics of learning a new language and following new culture and tradition. *Maiju* expresses her grief stricken language as the king treats her as a lowly creature. She speaks the language of pain that has been carried for so long. Women are living but they are no more than the dead ones who cannot speak their own voices. *Maiju* says: “A woman is such a martyr / whose story is not written” (73). Never being able to live life on their own wills, women live their life in life-in-death situation. Their existence is like that of a thirsty man in the ocean who is not allowed to drink even a single drop from there. Women are made the martyrs whose wishes are never fulfilled but hidden in mausoleum. *Maiju* pours her questions:

Did you know that I have a sky of my own?

Did you ever see that I am a child of songs?

Did you know that I grow with my dreams?

Your concern is history

That is written by swords

I am a prestige that you stake

In the flash of your weapons. (73)

Maiju speaks with confidence arising from the silent zones of history of the king who never thought that women had their own worlds, dreams, desires and wishes; that women were nursed by native wind and culture and grew with them. Only in the name of giving continuity to tradition, the kings underlined their own stories. They

forgot about the powers that come from various layers of society. Not only the rulers but also the ruled also have their stories as acute as any incident in the history.

Thinking only about “my” history, the kings shone their swords and valorized the battles and victory behind that women were at stake of life and existence. They killed the innocent people in the pretext of proving themselves brave. *Maiju* adds further:

You kill the innocents
 And say this is woman’s role in history
 Your history is the grave of woman
 Where you write the epitaph-
 “one inside this grave was always invisible.” (73)

Maiju is objectively narrating the biased history which couldn’t acknowledge the role of women in it. The kings made women the martyrs and said that it was their role in history—to live and die for others. Then such history is the grave for innocent women in which the epitaph is of the king’s hymn. Hidden beneath are the women who always remain invisible until the time history is observed from the perspectives of minor people. To add more light to what *Maiju* has said of the king’s injustice, young women come vibrantly and spill their anger. One says: “you’ve written your history / over my darling love’s heart” that reminds us of the banishment of the artists after cutting their hands and the exile of *Maiju* (74).

Another young woman speaks same: “you’ve written your history with my tears”(74).She waits in the hities filing her water jar and waiting her lover to come there who would never come. All the women say, “In your history we are all invisible/in your history we are evenings/broken into these songs” (74). This review of old history by the women make it sure that the so called history kings kept was written from their interests because they only had the power to make their discourses

true. Others who tried to make them visible were hurled either to the cemeteries or exiled from their homelands.

Playwright Subedi vehemently intends to unveil such fearful silence in the history hitherto carried with respect. He wishes to problematize it just trying to empower the minorities like guard, poet, artists and women. It is an attempt to disillusion people of the marginalized zone from such parochial biased history and awaken them of their space and regards. Consequently, the women turn energetic to seek answers to all the questions which aren't ever addressed.

They wish to “turn the river’s direction” bringing the inside out of their history (73). They know that the king is not going to change that pattern. When the King asks her “How should I turn thy history”, *Maiju* replies, “Oh king, don’t do anything / I know you’ll not do anything for me” (73-74). Though the King pretends knowing everything of his times, he never knew how his subjects suffered. The stamp of being malice is such an imprint in the king’s psyche that he can not alter *Maiju*’s story that he has “been narrating for so long” (74). Rather, women themselves are going to change the river’s direction asking difficult questions. In the voice mixed with anger and confidence, *Maiju* says:

We will seek the answer to this all
 In the river
 Across the river
 In this cosmos of stones and woods
 Tears are not failings
 We will conquer with them one day. (64)

This is the quintessential expression on behalf of all women. Now women aren't going stay quiet with the injustice they are given. They'll come out; they will analyze

the history; they will analyze the wooden cosmos and the chiseled stones in which “Eros spoke on the carvings” and in the “shapes of unspoken sounds” (60). The women are hopefully coming onwards with their tearful eyes which are now, not the symbols of failings but of inspiration to dig the cadavers of history. Of course the truth will not be subdued: they will surely conquer one day. With such determination *Maiju*’s confluence happens with the river Bagmati; with eyes full of tears *Maiju* speaks:

River Bagmati
 You are the dream
 That flows like my dislocation
 You can not be a river
 If you can not find a space downstream
 I will carve out my space too
 In the perpetual flow of dreams
 Bagmati, oh, pristine river,
 You are the stage
 Where I shall play my own drama! (80)

History of the river Bagmati and the history of women in this ancient are quite similar. Both of them are the silent sufferers in human civilization: the river is neglected and destroyed its holiness and purity and the women are also deprived of their freedom. However, both of them are carving their future course of events. Bagmati flows to an unknown land and *Maiju* passes to a strange country—to suffer for lifetime. Yet, they are the potential who can at anytime turn violent against the injustice and biasness. The rivers and the *Maiju*’s tears’ liquidity is not the symbol of silence and submissiveness. Liquidity is the symbol of power that moves anywhere

carving its own way. We have numerous mythical instances when women and rivers have been divine powers to save ailing humanity. D.P. Bhandari asserts, in this context:

When there is extremity of domination and injustice, Hindu Goddess Durga, Ambika or Bhawani appears vehemently strong hearted like rocks—an archetypal image . . . women in the earth are quite near to the image of river. Liquidity is not the symbol of powerlessness but power; movement is the symbol of liveliness. (84-5)

Bhandari adds divinity to *Maiju* who is flowing away as the river water does.

Movement is the symbol of life and it brings solution to all problems. Thus the playwright goes beneath the layers of *Maiju* culture and enlivens his memory with her cultural history. Subedi, next, ventures to discuss about the contemporary challenge to the culture and the need to globalize it through heritage industry.

Now developed as a worldwide network and global industry, tourism is about finding certain pleasant places interesting to gaze upon and about people's mobility for recreational purpose. Today, when things of one corner could move hastily around the globe, people are more fascinated to gaze upon world's most attractive natural, cultural, historical and architectural sites. Despite the public opinion that tourism is an invasion in the silent pool of culture creating disturbing ripples *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* demands a serious analysis from a tourists' perspective. That it is set in the ancient square of Bhaktapur Durbar, that it dramatizes the ancient indigenous way of life Newar people are living there, and that it is one of the world heritage site enlisted by UNESCO in the Kathmandu valley, the play fuses ancient and contemporary lives in harmony forecasting a vehement possibility to develop it a modern heritage pilgrimage.

When the discourse in the play is seriously unfolding the rare and silent zones of history with people living typically there the tourist guides bring tourists in this Eden of culture. Facing the enchanting architecture from the yard of the square, Guide 1 proudly announces: “Nepal has a great tradition, you know / Come and enjoy this visit! / It is not expensive / Cheaper than Basilica” (78). This quintessential announcement valorizes the proud and great tradition Nepalis are living. The Guide welcomes the tourists to gaze what he could offer at an affordable price that is comparatively cheaper than some of the world’s tourist sites like “San Marco”, “Duomo”, “Potala”, “Taj Mahal”, “St. Paul”, etc. (79). These are the most famous and most expensive tourist locations and our ancient civilization is also no less than then. For a contemporary mobile tourist these sites are the pilgrimages of aesthetic enchantment. John Urry says:

The tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other ‘times’ and other ‘places’ away from that person’s everyday life. Tourists show particular fascination in the ‘real lives’ of others that somehow possess a reality hard to discover in their own experiences.

(9)

Things original are the really the authentic sites. Their existence and real lives fascinate the viewers who like to view others’ and take delight.

The more civilization advances the more people develop their desire to learn about the ancient things. Culture is just like a holy river that flows along times with its heightened importance. Those who own it be conscious of their root and endeavor to it and those who are the ‘others’ be sensitive of something distant from than in time, place and experience. The playwright is quiet conscious of it:

Culture like this wooden cosmos

Is to wait

For the myriad eyes

To fall like the gliding times

From here to eternity

On these jolts of lives in times

So dear to my heart! (80)

The playwright perceives heritage as involving a strong sense of lineage and inheritance; this consciousness provides an identity conferring status; thus, he fills the ancient architecture and the culture with life that universalizes itself being the patient waiter to welcome its visitors. Time is the breath that makes culture immortal to live from here to eternity. With the changing global scenario, however, culture cannot remain meek and indifferent to the demands of time. For its long life, it is necessary to assimilate as heritage industry. When it turns into heritage industry it plays perfect role to sustain the indigenous human life. As sight of tourist attraction it can be run as a part of a local strategy for economic regeneration connecting it with the trends and designs of postmodern architecture and, thus, to develop postmodern museum. “(T)he development of heritage not only involves the reassertion of values which are anti-democratic,” says Urry, “but the heightening of the decline through a stifling of the culture of the present” (99).

The increased fascination of the developed world with the cultural practices of less developed societies provides an advantage of flourishing heritage (industry) as national industry. Though we are living in the backward society, our heritage could be one of the finest sources to uplift our standard. Inviting the tourists at Thamel to find everything of Nepalese culture there the Guide says: “Ok. We will wait for you

in Thamel / In the cosmos of antiques / Not very old, you know” (79). Generally those who do not care about the flux of postmodern times think that selling the icons and antiques to the tourist is degrading culture; the priceless culture shouldn't be like commodity that people sell in the market at bargain prices, they think. But such idea lets culture suffocate in the history which would, at any time, disappear for ever. It is essential to make our culture worldwide. No one preserves it for us. The tourists are such pilgrims who only pay to gaze upon it and it is unjust to call them the invaders or ravishers. It is unfair to say that tourists don't have sensitivity to understand a foreign culture.

Realizing this fact, the playwright follows the medium of trade to disseminate our novelty to the world. What will get lost if we offer our typical dances, clothes, dishes, arts, architectures to the guests with reasonable price? If there is any fair way to earn from as well as preserve our culture, it is the way of global market. The more we offer to tourists the longer cultural life sustains, the widely it travels through the world and the prosperous we become. Rightly the guides say:

Guide 1: Come and enjoy the taste of *momo* at Bhrikuti Momo Centre

Guide 2: And *sekuwa* at Kailaspati *Sekuwa* Corner located in the
street,

Guide 1: behind the carved windows, mini Buddhas and Shivalingas,

Guide 2: Round the corner in the cobbled street! (77)

The names mentioned above are different from the names the tourist can find in their homelands. In a way, it is the playwright's idiosyncratic way of popularizing our homely cultural icons. Those who are interested to know about Bhrikuti and/or Kailash can find much here. The playwright is not bit hesitated to resist the parochial traditional thought of keeping culture aloof from global effects and draws a new

tunnel to perceive it. He has well understood the best way of keeping culture alive. There is a complex relationship between tourists and the indigenous populations of the places at which the tourists gaze; “The resulting artificiality of many tourist attractions results from the particular character of the social relations that come to be established between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ at such places”(Urry 50). All the spaces of tourist gaze now have to compete widely and it has led to significant changes in defining what is auratic and extraordinary for an international offer.

To say that the tourist guides are not the authentic interpreters is to shock their hearts. They are proud of their heritage and try their best to convey good informations to their best. A guide says to the tourist: “Bhrikuti is the big daughter of Nepal” (70) and tells of her departure from here to Tibet. He even says that Bhrikuti took Nepalese artists who dissiminated the architecture of “pagodas, to Tibet and China”(76). It’s easy for the tourist to know about the birth of Pagoda style in Nepal long ago. The innocent Guide says he has not the wider knowledge about what happened in the history but he has understood about Bhrikuti’s role in popularizing Nepalese art and architecture: “we do not know China or Tibet but she took many people from her maiti here somewhere” (77). It’s evident, Nepali culture is rich in hospitality and in sharing what it could offer to the world.

Abhi Subedi’s attempt of rewriting history is one of the postmodern technique of combining history and fiction together to expose the multiplicity of histories and their malleability in course of time. When he talks about historiographic metafiction, Hutcheon has to say the essence in these words:

In most of the critical work on postmodernism—it is narrative—in fiction, history and theory that has been the major focus of attention..

Historiographic metafiction incorporates all three areas of concern: its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past. This kind of fiction has often been noticed, but its paradigmatic quality has been passed by; it is commonly labeled in terms of something else—for postmodernist.

(246)

Subedi is successful in capturing what Hutcheon has said here.

IV. Conclusion

Dreams of Peach Blossoms marks a break in the existing historiography. The playwright transcends from here back to the ancient times to critique the culture of the kings that has been hitherto carried. During his analysis, first he shows the problems in it and hopefully ends the play wishing to preserve and globalize what is precious of our heritage.

His attempt to record the history of the minorities, who have been suffering timelessly, in an egalitarian way and his latent desire of globalizing the ancient art and architecture, marks a metacultural attempt of redrawing the boundary of cultural history. The cultural and the metacultural perceptions of the art and sculpture of the Bhaktapur Durbar square, the performance arts and the *Maiju* culture revitalize their importance in present day world order.

The Poet, the Guard, *Maiju* and other women, and the tourists with their guards are in fact everymen of our world who are sensitive enough to carry the heritage proudly further in times. With his metacultural discourse, the Poet revisits the *Maiju* culture that began since the time of exiling Bhrikuti to a Tibetan king in sixth century A.D.; he reveals the injustice women are burdened in their existence to arouse a sense of correction in such distortion of history.

The guard has his living memories which account his eyewitness of the artists' cutting off of his limbs and banishing them from their homelands; he reveals the tearful separation of *Maiju* from her home country to a strange world where she is doomed to create her nostalgic pagodas and bridges to come back home. Next, *Maiju* herself critiques her own past and consequently aligns herself with the river Bagmati which powerfully carves her own way; she ventures to seek answers of the difficult questions that are posed in her existence. She becomes an archetype of Hindu

goddess Durga to fight against the injustice. Finally, for the eternity of such endeared history, the playwright brings tourists to gaze into our roots; he wishes to flourish our heritage industry globally.

Such idiosyncratic discourse of presenting the problematics of culture and his own way of correcting them—the cultural and metacultural perceptions—for its eternity gives *Dreams of Peach Blossoms* laurels of making it a contemporary classic.

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