

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Interconnectedness between Land and Humans in Lil Bahadur Chetri's *Mountains*

Painted with Turmeric (Basain)

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English for Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts in English

By

Mohan Poudel

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

May 2011

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

This research entitled “Interconnectedness between Land and Humans in Lil Bahadur Chetri’s *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*” by Mohan Poudel submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University has been approved by the under signed research committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date:

Acknowledgements

This research paper has become the great lesson for my experience. Along with the academic ideas and concepts it has made me aware of great lesson of patience in practical life. The remarkable credit for this learning goes to my respected teacher Shankar Subedi, thus I am very grateful to get chance to learn from his mentorship during this research.

I am grateful to Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, the Head of Central Department of English for his cooperation. I also want to owe my thanks to my other teachers and seniors whose direct and indirect counseling and help has guided me for the completion of my research.

One of the most important factors to complete any task is feeling within of confidence that, I can do it! My cordial friends Anil Bhandari, Prakash Panta, Samba Sapkota and my brother Hari Poudel are the source of such energy and encouragement in my case. Therefore, my special gratitude will be reserved for them for their courageous words and regular suggestion they helped with. Materials to complete this research have been drawn from wide varieties of sources, for my approach to these materials help from my friends Rajan, Anil, Santosh is remarkable one. So they deserve credit for the completion of my thesis.

Last but not least, regular support, encouragement, positive thinking of my family is of great worth, for which no words of my gratitude can convey what I owe for them.

Mohan Poudel

April 2011

Abstract

Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain), the novel by Lil Bahadur Chhetri, explains the story of dispossession and displacement of Dhane and his family. This research observing this story from the vantage point of eco-criticism has linked these consequences with the nature or land. Land is common property of all and foundation of life. Therefore, it is very intricately connected with each and every activity of the creatures on it. Misuse or abuse of it by its inhabitants results into drawbacks upon themselves. In *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*, feudal social structure has interpreted and used land as materialistic entity for their utilitarian purpose that ultimately brings not only problems in human-nature relationship but results into tension among humans. In the novel that tension reaches climax, as Dhane is dispossessed of his land and house thereby bound to leave the village.

Contents

Acknowledgement

Abstract

I. Man-Nature Affinity and *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* 1-14

II. Interconnectedness between land and humans in *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* 15-57

III. Eco-critical awareness in *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* 58-61

Works Cited

I. Man-Nature Affinity and *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*

This research aims to problematize the representation of land in Lil Bahadur Chhetri's *Mountain Painted with Turmeric*. Arguing the whole nature as a big organism of which human is a part with intricate connection this dissertation aims to validate the ecological insight that a human-centered framework is a serious problem not only for non-human but for human beings themselves. With this claim this research has proved that in the novel landlords' materialistic construction for land has resulted tension in their social life.

Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain) the novel by Lil Bahadur Chhetri set in the far eastern mountain region of Nepal concerns with the general livelihood of the common people who have nothing to do with the different pros and cons modern world has been engaged in. With the projection of simple and common events of the life it is successful in depicting the subtle and stark realities of the life. For this novel revolves around a character Dhane and his daily activities, so it is the story of Dhane, a poor peasant who struggles very hard to improve his economic stand.

Dhane is so much determined to harbor the seed of his sweet dream of easy and free life from the debt. He wants to grow this seed to a big flourishing tree and bring happiness and cool shade of peace to his family. He has a plan to restore the foundation of the roof poles that has been made rickety by the termites of his debt. He works hard envisioning the better economic stand thereby his ability to get his sister married and happy life with his son as twinkling star in the society. But, unable to burst out of the net of the monetary debt he is prone to suffer from one after another calamity in his life. Dhane unable to bear those liabilities of debt has to be dispossessed of his belongings; land, house and sweet dream, and abandon his village for the journey of uncertain future. So it is the story of impoverishment, exploitation,

dispossession and banishment of Dhane's family, that expresses the profound division and worsening relationship between those who possess and those who are slowly stripped of their meager possessions.

In this research this very point of dispossession, exploitation is brought in to relation with ecological consciousness. Unawareness or the negation of the biotic use of land has resulted in materialistic perception of land in feudal social structure of *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*. Such construction of the land in the novel has been brought in to the question by this research. Landlords have used it to dominate the poor. In this way the materialistic use of land has turned the relation of mutuality and cooperation between human into dominators and dominated. Nande and Dhane are to act as they do because of the unethical use of land in their society. Mutual and reciprocal treatment to nature helps society remain sound and balanced one. Therefore, it is the necessity to recognize the existence of the nature of its own beyond the terms of human interpretation. Going deeper than the story of Dhane on the cover this research has attempted to approach the background (the land) on which this story of exploitation, subjugation and dispossession is based. In another word the project has tried to bring two, believed to be the different worlds; world of human or society and the natural world that consists of land, nature and other creature on it, at the same level to trace out the intricate relation between each other. Any problem in one leads to the hazard to another one. In the novel landlords' mistreatment or humanitarian use of land has backgrounded the natural use of land and thereby has lead to drawbacks over not only nature but over human society itself. In the novel as a result of humanitarian use of the land the relationship between landlord and peasants is deteriorating and poor and weak like Dhane are to wander in uncertain future being not more than chattel.

The novel opens up in feudal social structure. This social structure has its base on land as the mode of production. In this society everything is determined in relation to land i.e. the class of the people, social status, monetary income, power and dominance in the society. Therefore, they have constructed land in instrumental terms. For them it is property that makes social life easy, it is thus matter of reverence, pride power, in the society. Nande Dhakal is powerful and enjoys all sorts of privileges. He has remarkable dominance on justice in the society. This is because he is the landlord, possessor of the plenty amount of the land in the society. Dhane, a poor peasant, and other poor people of the village like him lack land thus, they are poor. For the smooth continuance of their life they are condemned to take help from landlords. These peasants have their labor but land is under the control of landlord that makes them dependent over landlord, so inferior to them. Therefore, such construction of land has made it a means to dominate for the landlords. They circulate their power through the land under their possession. They trade land, rent it and make their monetary status strong, and in the name of help again that monetary power enables them to dispossess those poor and increase their possession. Land has served their utilitarian purpose. Therefore, forgetting the natural use of land instrumental use has created imbalance in the society and the nature in the novel.

“Nature is the common base of all. Every creature of the nature is member of the same biotic community. Thus they have the relation of dependence to each other for their survival” (Madhu Khanna 110). They have common right over the resources of this nature. Therefore, “using them on the behalf of the some minority is not the natural use of the nature” (Paul Taylor 20). In the novel too, Nande, and some limited people have their unchallenged dominance over land. They use it for their economic income. With this, they are able to maintain their dominance over other poor people.

It has instrumental purpose for them. They background or deny the natural use of land and use it as a tool, means to maintain their dominance in the society. Such conception and use of land has preserved their making for themselves as controller, user, ruler, master than dominator of these resources. They find the ultimate worth of these sources as to be used by them. Such perception gives them the “illusion of disembodiedness” (Val Plumwood 98), and themselves belonging to the other sphere exclusively of controllers and rulers like them.

Utilitarian approach to the nature results into the competition and unnatural struggle between Nande and Dhane to possess more land in an unappeasable manner that results meaningless loss in nature. For the matter of ego Dhane’s seed bed is destroyed, Nande’s buffalo is killed. For the entertainment, people like Sano Sahu unaware of right to live of other creatures kill dove, go for hunt. Such use of nature has not only altered the human-nature relationship, but has affected the intra-human relationship too. The whole biosphere is connected if we agree with Barry Commoner: “everything is connected to everything else” (quoted in Glotfield xix). Human is also one part of that circle thus connected to it. Whenever there is disturbance in one part of the circle human too can’t remain from being affected by it. Negation to natural use and valorization of the monetary and instrumental mindset has created competition and struggle between Landlords and peasants to control more in an unappeasable manner that results over-possession of land by landlords thereby the cause of poverty and domination of poor like Dhane. This equation between landlords and peasants has worsened their relations of mutual reciprocity and co-operation as a members of the same biotic community.

Even though, monetary mindset of landlord makes them feel improvement in their power and wealth with the dispossession of Dhane, actually beyond the sight of

landlords the emotional and reciprocal relation between Nande and Dhane as a co-member of same society has been replaced by the monetary and utilitarian relationship between peasant and landlord. Nande's son though, feels himself as dominant and powerful with his activities in village and over nature, but his bully manner has been the matter of criticism of the villagers that has negatively affected the mentality of villagers towards landlords. Thus, negation of the natural use and valorization of the instrumental use of the land has its drawbacks upon human itself. In the novel *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* landlord's attempt of denying the natural value of the land so as to foreground their power, supremacy has resulted to the dispossession of Dhane, which has symbolized the deteriorating relationship among human beings.

Lil Bahadur Chetri's *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* has been analyzed from various perspectives by various critics. Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan in *Nepali Upanyas ra Upanyaskar* (1980) along the line of social realism argues that the novel is primarily a portrayal of village society and that for this reason "the social circumstances of a person's outer life take the foreground rather than his inner life. Although Dhane is the hero, the society depicted in the novel is its central reality, and the author is conscientious in his description of it" (255). Pradhan goes on to say that Dhane's dispossession is the "economic aspects" of the novel, while the flight of Jhuma and Mote Karki is its "social aspects" (257). In the same line Donald Richie in "Social Realism Enhanced by the Pastoral" interprets the novel as "a real craft product, using pattern and skills honed by history, celebrating our common vision . . . engrossing, instructive and moving" (11).

By going slightly ahead of Pradhan and Richie, Rajendra Subedi in *Nepali Upanyas Parampara ra Pravritti* (1996) describes *Mountains Painted with Turmeric*

(*Basain*) as an example of idealized reality” (91). He further argues that, though being an honest portrayal, *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* proposes no solutions for the problems it identifies:

Unable to swim in a sea of debt, Dhan Bahadur goes abroad. The soldier makes Jhuma pregnant, satisfies his selfish ends, , Mote Karki takes Jhuma and goes abroad because he fears that his reputation will be tarnished by his acceptance of a wife who has been made unchaste by another man. Both kinds of disorder are the realities of the society of that time. But, when Dhan Bahadur departs he leaves the oppression of a feudal and exploitive character like Nande Dhakal unaltered, and when Mote Karki departs he leaves an immoral philanderer like the soldier to his own devices. Both Nande Dhakal and the soldier are criminals, in both economic and moral terms, and they are spared the punishment for their crimes. (92)

In this way, Richie tries to find out social reality and sense of justice in the novel. He searches weakness in the society and among the people living on it as causes of injustice and exploitation. Unlike Richie, Manjushree Thapa in “Bookshelf” writes on the novel focusing on its translation rather than its own ideological and thematic issue. She argues:

Michael J. Hutt’s contribution as a translator and critic of Nepali Literature has been invaluable. With *Mountains Painted with Turmeric*, he brings to the light an iconic Nepali: the story of sheltered villagers faced with harsh, hanging world. Hutt’s rendition is sensitive and skilled. Through this translation he shares with us his deep empathy for a fine understanding of Nepali reality. (5)

Unlike all, Ann Hunkins, a poet and translator, analyzes the novel from Marxist perspective by linking the social injustice and exploitation with Maoist cause:

This is a moving story, depicting in wonderfully rich detail the round of village life; the daily farm works and chores, the gossip chain, the weekly market, the limited opportunities, the rapacious rich preying on poor, and women's particular vulnerabilities. Reading this story could contribute to understanding why poor villagers would join Maoist cause. (5)

In this regard, Hunkins traces the social injustice in the novel and links it as the base for the social realities of the following period (after the text has been written) of Nepal.

Concentrating on the views and ideas of above mentioned critics, we cannot find anyone addressing the part of land responding to the logic of eco-criticism. All of these critics are unable to depict the dimension of land in this novel. I have, however, explored and excavated the issue regarding environmental ethics, which primarily refers to strengthen the principle of organic world of nature. To impart and prove this logic, I hereby choose "Eco-criticism" as the principal theory, which is concerned with the environmental implicating of any literary text. It represents the relationship between human and non human natural world, and the proper roles of human in earthly scheme.

As eco-criticism is an ecological approach on the study of relationship between literature and environment, it studies the reciprocal relationship between human beings and land. The home ground of eco-criticism is the human's inseparable attachment with the soil in its existence. Eco-critics view that, eco-criticism is fundamentally an ethical criticism that investigates and helps make possible the

connection among self, nature and text. Hence, it is a response to the need of humanistic understanding of our relationship with the natural world.

Cheryll Glotfelty defines eco-criticism giving examples of other cultural theories, “Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of text, eco-criticism takes an earth centered approach to literary studies” (xviii). Therefore, the matter of concern in this approach always remains relationship between nature and human. For that eco-critics possess certain question while going through the text as “How is the nature represented in this sonnet? What role does physical setting play in the plot of the novel? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influences the way we treat it?” (Cheryll Glotfelty, XIX).

Despite the broad inquiry and desperate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world affecting it and affected by it. As Glotfelty explores in his *Literary Studies in the Age of Environmental Crisis*, “Eco-criticism takes as its subject the interconnectedness between nature and culture, specifically, the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land ; as a theoretical discourse it negotiates between the human and the non human,” (Glotfelty-XIX). For Glotfelty, eco-criticism also can be characterized by distinguishing it from other critical approaches. Literary theory in general, examines the relation between writers, texts and the world. In most literary theory “the world” is synonymous with society- the social sphere. However, eco-criticism, Glotfelty opines, expand the notion of “the world” to include the entire ecosphere. He further says, if

we agree with Barry Commoner's first law of ecology "everything is connected to everything else" we must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system in which energy, matters, and ideas interacts.

In this sense eco-criticism is the response to the need for humanistic understanding of our relationship with the natural world in an age of environmental destruction. It is obvious that environmental crisis is the result of human's disconnection from the natural world and it is also a result of specialization that fails to recognize the interconnectedness of all things. It is interdependency, and it advocates the holistic ideas. As a response to felt need and real crisis, and as an inherently holistic practice, eco-criticism also has an inherent ideology if not moral component; the holistic view of the universe honors the interconnectedness of things.

Since eco-criticism has interdisciplinary nature it invites all perspective in to its tent in order to understand the co-existence of living and nonliving entities. So it is not just a means of analyzing nature in literature, it implies a move towards a bio-centric world view, an extension of ethics, a broadening human conception, global community to include nonhuman life form and the physical environment. Johnathan Levin in *Forum of literature and environment* says:

Eco-criticism is marked by tremendously ambitious intellectual, ethical, political and even sometimes spiritual agendas. Though there is already great diversity of an opinion in the field, eco-critical dialogue often aims at nothing less than the transformation of human environment and ecological consciousness. By and large eco-critics tend to believe that a considered appreciation of these processes can

help restore a harmonious balance between nature and human culture.

(1098)

Eco-criticism embarrasses the opinion that no branch of knowledge can ever be devoid of eco-centric implications. All knowledge follows the earth; nothing can be understood in the absence of any special or temporal point of reference. Because of this reason, eco-criticism establishes the earth as a crucial for the understanding of ethics and religion, art and literature, philosophy and physics, culture and politics and all other discipline. Therefore the earth is the source of everything. Even man as a part of it depends on the earth in every aspect. On the Vedic attitude of similar relationship between man and earth Raimindo Punikaram writes:

In Vedic attitude towards the earth springs from human kinds' primordial experience of being on the one hand a guest and the other an offspring of the earth. The earth is undoubtedly mother and close to man. But, at the same time, she is alien, other and aloof. The earth is the foundation of, the basis out of which all emerges, exists on and rests. The earth is the basis of life. (120)

So, eco-critical reading helps to establish a culture that respects the non human world and realizes, if the interconnectedness between human and nonhuman member is understood, in many ways it can heal the environmental wounds human have inflicted upon it. Eco-criticism looks upon how literature clarifies human responsibility to respect non human entities.

By and large eco-criticism assumes nature as organic whole having cosmic unity of her components. It is sensitive to interdependencies. The lives on earth are connected with each other and wholly dependent upon such basic natural elements for their survival: sunlight, water and air. It extends the concept as “growth and energy,

balance and imbalance, symbiosis and mutuality and sustainable and unsustainable uses of energy and resources” (Barry 264).

In general, eco-criticism analyses the role that the natural environment plays in the imagination of a cultural community at specific historical moment, examining how the concept of “nature” is defined and what values are assigned to it or denied it, and why the way the relationship between human and nature is envisioned. More specifically, it investigates how nature is used literally and metaphorically in certain literary or aesthetic genre and tropes. This analysis in turn allows eco-criticism to assess how certain historically conditional concept of nature and the natural, and particularly literary and aesthetic construction of it have come to shape current perception of the environment.

The consciousness of moral importance regarding the relation of plants and living creature to each other and to their environment leads the move towards ecological organism. Ecological organism is the interrelationship between the living things and their physical environment. It further refers to the ecological chain of interdependence. In this organism, every element is positioned equally as a part of the whole cosmos. Moreover, if there is any harm to one element, the whole chain is disturbed; everything is equally participated in this circular chain. In this respect in *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, Paul W Taylor explains the meaning of the inherent worth of all living and organism and how this concept coupled with the rejection of human superiority can be used for on the basis of justifiable system of environmental ethics “one of the central aim of the environmental ethics has been to contest on anthropocentric, instrumental valuation of the nonhuman natural world, and to argue that new ways of thinking about and

valuing it are needed” (18-19). Thus it is inevitable to put forward environmental ethics to cope the ecological crisis.

In contrast to anthropocentric world view bio-centric world view preaches its focus on horizontal relation of all the entities of the world. Bio centric view focuses on nature having its own rights to be protected, and create harmonious relation among its all components. In this very respect, Hinduism puts forward its logic that human are part of nature and have integral relation with all nonhuman and reinforces the eco-centric view. The Gita, Hindu holy book, extends environmental awareness and interconnectedness between man and nature. In Gita lord Krishna in his dialogue with Arjuna says, “That which creates diversity and all that can be seen or known is called Prakriti. Prakriti is also the material cause or the material out of which everything is made. Prakriti is the original source of the material world” (705). To the extent, bio-criticism taking the side of Hinduism extends the moral responsibility and obligation of human beings to conserve the Earth as mother. Human should not harm the nature because we are part of the nature; species have right to continue, and nature has intrinsic boarders than mere species survival. All species have a right to evolve without human interference. If extinction is going to happen it should happen naturally, not through human actions. So to control the whole biosphere there is natural cosmic rule. To exist within this world one should remain under the circulation of the very rules otherwise there can't be any expectation of sustainable and balance existence of the creatures. As Berry Commoner says “any living thing that hopes to live on earth must fit in to the eco sphere or perish” (105 quoted in the Rueckert, Literature and Ecology).

Through the text *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* we find feudal society's constructed human centered instrumental view is prevailed disregarding the

ecological rules of the biosphere itself. But concerning with this unjust anthropocentric value of nature I am exploring the ecological ethics which needs 'eco-centrism' as a position to prove the logic of ecological interconnectedness and ecosystem. Therefore, eco-centrism turns away from the social constructivism and instead emphasizes eco-centric value of meticulous observation collective ethical responsibility and the claims of the world beyond us. In this way, this study is the thematically bound to the unity of all life so as to enhance the organic vision of the nature. Therefore, there is no separation between human and nonhuman natural world. Rather there is interrelationship, interconnectedness, and inter-assimilation among all the components of the nature. No one can overlap and put on the shadow the role and biotic right of other over its valorization. In fact, this study regards nature as having intrinsic force that attracts everything towards its tent and regulates every aspects of natural world. Similarly, same force context growth, decay, beauty and terror of human life.

I hereby have become wholly conscious of the ongoing environmental crisis due to the people's own anthropocentric vision in the natural world in *Mountains Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*. For this, via this study, I pinpoint the fault of irresponsible human activities like Nande, human being are distracted from nature and, than breaking internal and harmonious bond between human and land. I, regarding myself as bio-centric, reject the exploitation against the land committed by instrumental vision of landlord like Nande. The main motif of this study is to uphold the horizontal relationship between man and nature and to discard vertical relation rooted as in insight of landlord like Nande. Treating nature as organic whole itself and man as part of it, this study seeks to acknowledge the power of nature and human

communion with elemental world of nature. Hence, it reinforces to have ecological gratitude on the egalitarian earth.

Finally, I have tried to depict the biocentric vision as the negation of landlord's thinking of anthropocentrism. I have been devoted to locate man and nature in a very intricate web to find out solace in such tension and imbalance created by the landlord. To prove the earth egalitarian, I have been very scrupulous throughout the separate chapters. All the chapters deal with the sole theme of organic whole and the bio-centric vision as chapter I is the introduction about what the study is, reviews of different critics and about the stand point of thought that the research has based on. Chapter II substantiates the evidences from the text about the claim the study has made. Similarly last chapter, Chapter III has made overall connection and concluded the claim of the study. In this way the hypothesis of the research has been proved.

II. Interconnectedness between land and humans in *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*

The novel, *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*, has depicted life of the common people of the far eastern mountain of Nepal during the decades of 1950s. The society on which the novel opens up is the feudal one. Land is the mode of production of this society, so it is the base of the feudal power structure. Therefore, reading beneath the surface of the story we can see the pervasiveness of land motif as the guiding thread of the novel. Each and every activity in the novel revolves around the matter of the possession and dispossession of the land. In addition, what consequences characters have to face is also the product of their relationship with land. In this way, in every aim, cause, and result there is the presence of traces of land motif. With the help of thorough textual analysis, this research has attempted to trace the relativity of human-nature relationship and intra-human relationship.

This research thinks of nature as a big organism as J.E. Lovelock has argued in *Gaiya*, “All other creatures and entities in the nature are the part of this organism” (249). Supporting this very idea this research has described that misuse or self centric use of land, though may seem economically profitable for certain time, in long term such treatment of nature results in ill effects upon human beings. Maltreatment to nature results, of course, tangible effects upon nature but along with that it has effects upon intra-human relationship, too. This means this research attempts to show the relativity of human-human relation with human-nature relation.

The feudal social structure, on which *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* is set, has problem of way of dealing with the land. It is a must on the part of creatures to depend on land for survival but the land is treated and used for instrumental purpose in the novel is not. In the feudalistic society of the novel land

has completely utilitarian and materialistic use. In natural use of land, it combines every creature as a member of the same biotic community with the base on same land, but in feudalistic society of this novel, land has been used as a means to divide the society, circulate the power of the landlords, and subjugate the peasants. People are categorized on the basis of possession of the land they have as landlord and peasants. Landlords are those who possess plenty of land, thus have dominance and privileges in the society. They can hire the peasants like Dhane to work on land, thus enjoy the powerful status as master or the “big heads” of the society. The society is under their control just because the only mode of production for survival, land, is under their possession. Peasants are those who have no or least amount of land under their control. So, they have to depend on landlords for land to invest their labor. Such created dependency of peasants like Dhane on landlords makes them dependent thus inferior in social strata. Even though the labor of people like Dhane is the only way to continue the life of the society, they are exploited by their own labor. In this manner, land has been used as a tool to subjugate and dominate.

Such implications in the novel regarding the use of land have created the race between two poles to have possession on land and to control it. High status people like Nande are in attempt to amass more property and land under their possession to maintain their supremacy in the society. On the part of the peasants they are facing the hardships to save their little possession from landlords like Nande. However, they too have dream of having direct approach to the land for their daily easy bread earning beyond the exploitation of Landlords like Nande. So, all of them have materialistic and possessive conception towards land.

However, land has its own intrinsic value. It is intricately connected with the existence of creatures. It is foundation and base of everyone. In general life of the

novel, in our common observation too, land is the guiding thread of novel. Everyone; Nande, Baidar, Luintel, Mote Karki, Dhane, and Leute is directly related to the land. From the early morning to the late night land is their place to toil on, to be engaged on, and wander around. “Thus, land is the dwelling place for creatures: animate and inanimate... thereby foundation and supporter of all” (108 Madhu Khanna). It is the reflection of interrelated wave of earth, water, plants, animals and human life. All these components are interdependent in grand design of creation. So as Aldo Leopold argues in *The Land Ethics*:

Land is not merely soil; it is a fountain of energy following through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals; land ethic reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of land. And health is the capacity of land for self-renewal, conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity. All the creatures are the members of the biotic community, and if its stability depends on its integrity, they are entitled to continuance. (43)

As Leopold opines, land is source of energy that helps the existence of the creatures. For sound existence human has to remain in mutual manner with nature helping the integrity of both. It is upon land that men intact the drama of life, animal kingdom finds their homes, tree and forest stands firm. Thus land becomes a couch for all sorts of activities, human or non-human. So it is responsibility of human to conserve the diversity and health of the nature.

Every creature of the biosphere is connected and depended on land in common. Land also pours her grace in everyone in common and equal manner. In other word, common grace of earth can be found in every creature in nature. “An

essential feature of the earth is her fragrance which pervades all the product of the earth, the herbs, water nymphs and celestial creature bear it” (107). Along with natural dependency culture created social, economic dependency is also on earth in feudalistic social structure of the novel. Rueckert’s words express this dependency in better manner, “Everything is rooted on earth” (Rueckert 107). All people animals and plants solely depend on land for their existence. Madhu Khanna further clarifies this reciprocity of living things with nature in her essay *Nature as Feminine*:

The earth is supreme, loving, life sustaining mother. She is beautiful, fertile, nurturing and generous. She is close to human as their skin. As a person’s entire existence depends upon her, man is of earth, part of earth. She is merciful compassionate mother whose benign heart pours unconditional love to all, irrespective of their talents and station in life. She is gracious leader and the protectress of the world. Help mate of human kind, she lives in friendly collaboration with all. (108-109)

Khanna asserts earth as mother figure, which always remains as the foundation of the existence of the creatures. And continually keep nourishing with her resources and productivity. Therefore, the earth is the vitality that generates growth and germination. “She nourishes the potent seed which completes its life cycle in tree the flower the fruit and once again the seed” (109), the earth reveals her power in the form of grains, which are bounty, and simultaneously the basic source of nourishments. “She is a continuous source of food and herbs valuable for healing... all her birthlings remain bound to their source, and their relationship is one of intimacy and solidarity” (109). Every creature depends over nature for their natural necessity of food. Higher class landlords like Baidar, Nande and peasants like Dhane, Terse etc. along with the cattle under their possession as well as other animals depend

on land for their food. To meet these demand peasants, the working hands of the feudal society like Dhane, work and labor on the field for the whole society, though the distribution of the outcome is not ethical one but influenced by the power of the big man like Nande.

The peasants cope up with the seasonal cycle. They grow different corps, fruits and vegetables as basic source of nourishment according to seasonal varieties. They tame cattle like goat, buffalo, and oxen to further support their daily life. These very production of earth helps the people like Baidar, Mukhia, Dhane, Mote Karki, Luitel to operate their economical and social life regardless of their class. They sell their product in Hat bazaar. Mote Karki gets earning by operating his activity of trading goats in market. Dhane has dream to rescue his family from the debt on the basis of growing crops and depending on his buffalo:

The buffalo is pregnant, and she already god a sturdy calf. And, she gives plenty of milk too. In a year or two the calf will grow up and we will, another female calf the next time she gives birth that will be better still. My little boy will get some milk to wet his throat his as well. If we put a little aside for a few days we'll have ghee, and we'll surely make a few annas. That would be enough to pay interests, and we'll keep the butter milk. If the maze is good this year I'll use it to pay off half the debt and we'll just live on millet. (2)

In this way, people are to continue their reciprocity with nature. They behave and walk along with seasonal cycle. Their agricultural cycle moves on in accordance to the natural seasonal cycle. That very agricultural cycle has become the annual process of rising and falling. As Michel J. Hutt writes in the introductory part of his translated version of *Basain, Mountains Painted With Turmeric*, agricultural cycle starts with

the arrival of the rains towards the end of the Jeth or Ashr as its climatic point. During the month leading up to rains, the weather grows warmer and farmers plant crops such as maize wheat and potatoes. The livestock that has been grazing close to village through the winter is taken up to higher pastures. When the monsoon breaks rice and millet seeds are sown close together in the freshly plowed, flooded paddy fields. As the rain is during Bhadau the maize crop is harvested, husked and dried and the rice and millet are weeded. The first rice and millet is harvested during Asoj. Then during Kartik, while the fruits and the vegetables are abundant, the weather clears, and the livestock begin to return from higher pasture to the fields around the village. During Mangsir, the big late rice harvest takes place, barley and wheat are sown and late millet and lentils are harvested. In Pus and Magh, the rice is hulled and husked, and straw is stored away. As spring comes around again and the season begins once more to rise, the rain watered fields are plowed and the first maize is planted. Altitude is the main factor governing, when a given crop is shown transplanted and harvested: the greater the altitude the later the growing season.

Similarly, varieties of crops are planted in accordance to varieties of land for example: crops such as rice can only be grown in the fields that can be flooded and are therefore usually in near the valley bottoms. As Khetri's Dhane and his family are likely to live at somewhat lower altitude than most Limbus. The village appears to be situated at middle altitude, with irrigable "Khet" fields situated in the valley floor (Besi) below it, and forest and austere land above. People's daily activities, their situatedness in the nature, their agricultural activities, and all the other matters in their lives are continually in reciprocity with the nature and its rule. They are in common dependent on it.

These multiple strands bind human with nature. There lies the mutual dependency and reciprocity between villagers and land in common. Understanding of this only can create sound existence of all creatures. Paul W. Taylor further says:

When we take this view we come to understand other living things, their environmental condition, and their ecological relation in such a way as to awake in us a deep sense of our kinship with them as fellow members of the earth's community of life. Humans and non-humans are alike are viewed together as integral parts of one unified whole in which all living things are functionally integrated. (The Ethics of Respect for Nature 83)

So understanding of intricateness between the creatures of the biosphere develops the affinity in the relation, and helps to maintain balance among them.

But in the novel there is a difference among people on the matter of perception and perspective towards their dependency on land. From Mukhiya, Baidar to Dhane and Terse all are in common the part of the same biotic community. They function in this very nature and they have their basic dependency on land in the same manner. Nonetheless, their attitude towards the land and feelings for it is not same.

People are shaped, and behave according to their social norms, guidance and different discourses prevalent in the society. They thus attain their attitude towards their surroundings: land, nature, animals, co-members of its own race (human) in accordance to their status and position in the society. The way Dhane feels for his land as “only source of life” and for his buffalo as his security of life cannot be to Baidar, Mukhiya, Luintel. They just have economical attachment, not more than profit and loss. They have lost emotional attachment with them as they have converted everything, land, animal even the existence of human, into money. Nande rents his

land just because it is the annual rent that matters in exchange for land for him; Baidar sells his buffalo in 120 rupees, when Dhane becomes unable to pay his money, for that very money he brings return Dhane's plowing oxen and buffalo. When the novel reaches the climax, judicial community where remains the dominance of big people, landlords are in Nande's yard to convert Dhane's security of life and future in money:

All the big men of village gather in Nande's yard to decide Dhane's fate. . . Dhane was anxious about how much would they value his property at? Once sahu has been paid off would there be little left over for journey or would that disappear as well? A price was decided on for the house and yard and livestock, paper were drawn up and signed.
(99)

In this way, Dhane's only source of survival, certainty of his present/future and the whole life, and even identity suddenly are turned into six hundred and fifty rupee by the 'Big men' of the society. The patch of land and the livestock, which are equal to Dhane's heart beats, are snatched by Nande as value of his so called "loss" done by Dhane.

In this way, landlords define everything in monetary terms. Dhane feels land as his life. He behaves with other things in nature as member of his life. He weeps for the calf of his buffalo and recognizes as part of life of his family then addresses it as "mother figure". Here we can see his rejection of human superiority over non-human, which is required to adopt the attitude of respect for nature as Taylor believes:

The basic connection between human and nature can be made through the denial of human superiority. Once we reject the claim that human are superior either in merit or in worth to other living thing things, we are ready to adopt the attitude of respect. The denial of human

superiority is the only option that can lead us bio-centric outlook on nature. (83)

In the text Dhane seems quite aware of this matter. One morning, the calf was lying with its leg spread out and one leg quavering in his last moment, when Dhane saw it “he nearly loses his sense” (58). Because, it was the seed of Dhane’s future that he had planned to grow up and give his family recourse under it’s flourishing.

Dhane was standing beside the calf, his eyes brimming with tears. The calf turned its eyes towards him and gave cry of utter misery, as if it wanted to tell him in its mute infant’s language that this was the last hour of its life. Dhane wiped his tears filled eyes with the hem of his shirt and sat down beside the calf. “Go now my mother go happily. May your soul find joy in the other place!” The calf gave one strong kick then gave up its breath as if it were obeying his command. (8)

Dhane has emotional affinity with the animals. He has sympathy, thus he can weep for them. The calf is not only his possession but his nurturing mother figure, which Dhane has recognition of. This heart touching scene shows mutual emotional sharing between Dhane and his buffalo. Dhane talks with them. He feels his heart chilling when he finds his cattle being hurt. One day, when Dhane finds his buffalo with bruises, which he guesses had been caused by some blow from a stick. He was speechless. Paralyzed with his helpless condition, he slowly mutters, “Who hits you like this? You must have gone to someone’s crops. That’s just how it is” (10). He expresses his scorn for the social manner of behaving and his helplessness to the situation.

Maina waters Tulsi every morning. It is her routine of her daily task. Dhane and his family have to toil on land. From the early morning till late evening they are

working hard on the land. They work on it, touch it, feel it and keep contact with it. The soil remains no more just 'soil', but their co-partner for the whole life. Both contribute to round the cycle of biosphere. They irrigate the land with their continuous labor and sweat. In return nature (land) provides them with its product for their nourishment. This makes them feel and behave to the nature in kind and intricately related emotional manners. Only that can make ethical relation between human and nature. Aldo Leopold in *The Land Ethics* says:

It is unconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land and high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in philosophical sense . . . so evolution of land ethics is an intellectual as well as emotional process. (46)

So for reverential relation emotional attachment is too essential one that can keep affinity between two sides.

In the last scene when Dhane and his family were to leave their village after getting relinquished off their land and house Maina fills up with emotion. She starts to talk with their cattle. Maina, hearing doves cooing goes inside and shakes out a handful of grains out of earthen ware pot. Finding them startled to her activity she talked to them "who will feed you when we are gone? What will become of you? Who will fill this stomach with you?"(102), then remembering the oxen she hurries to their stall. When they see her the oxen blow through their nostrils: 'phu, phu'. Maina gives them some hay and strokes them. Then the words come mechanically from her mouth "Today your new master will come they will give you tasty foods and mash... don't ever kick anyone, work honestly. Or else you'll be beaten: ..." (102). She is overcome by her feelings and tears roll down from her eyes. To one side, an old

nanny goat is tied up, and beside her a pair of kids lay chewing their cuds in the straw. As Maina come near, the goat bleats at her. And, she strokes it, pickes up the small kids, sets them on her lap and puts her cheek against theirs. It lookes as if three creatures were whispering to one another. This affinity, kinship makes peasant people like Dhane, Maina near to nature than landlords like Baidar, Nande.

In the novel, Dhane's family struggles to maintain a comfortable living in the society. Farm works and chores are the most important for them, because totality of their ways of being depends on such activities. They have to rely on their industry and labor but the sorry thing for them is that they do not have their own sufficient land. In the name of wealth they have little patch of land and house, a pair of plowing oxen and few goats and doves. Maina, Dhane's wife, handles household activities and shares hands with Danne in his farm works. Jhuma, Dhane's sister, works in her own field, works for wages in other's field, does exchange of labor and brings foddors and foliage for livestock from the forest nearby. With the help of plowing oxen Dhane takes land from landlords on rental basis. This means Dhane's family has complete dependency on land, but lack of proper amount they even with their hard working can't maintain their easy life.

Dhane needs a buffalo to ease his hardship of lack but does not have money to buy. Therefore, peasants like Dhane have to expect some grace of help from landlords and money lenders. In the feudal social structure for the poor peasants sustaining the life with and without the help of feudal lords like Baidar and Nande is most challenging one. However, Dhane is prepared to buy old Baidar's buffalo on credit in terribly high price and old Baidar demands him to pledge his plowing oxen as security. These plowing oxen are everything for Dhane's family. Moreover, these

livestock are also things of necessity for their survival. While for landlords and money lenders, these are the mere objects to be bought and sold for profits.

The old Baidar is prepared to give me a buffalo but he is asking terrible sharp price and then of course I have to pledge my plowing oxen as security. If I don't pay off the interest each and every month, I'll get no peace at all . . . if anything goes wrong I'll lose the oxen and everything else as well. But, what could go wrong, the buffalo is pregnant and she has already got a sturdy calf. And, she gives plenty milk, too. In a year or two calf will grows up. And, if it get another female calf the next time she gives birth that will be better still. My little boy will get some milk to wet his throat as well. If we put a little aside for a few days we will have ghee and surely make a few annas that would be enough to pay interest and we'll keep butter milk. If the maize is good this year I will use it to pay off half the debt and we'll live just on millet. (2)

Dhane is in plan to buy buffalo form old Baidar in order to improve his worsening condition. He is in necessity to have a buffalo. He envisions his improving future with the help of buffalo thus; he dares to buy that even in terribly sharp price. Though Baidar's high price threatens him, but belief over himself and his labor he hopes everything goes well. With the income from buffalo and his crop he plans to pay his debt back. Thus, there is relationship of necessity between peasants like Dhane and land as well as livestock. He needs buffalo to better his condition; similarly plowing oxen occupy a significant space in Dhane's life. Because it is through plowing oxen Dhane earns his living out of tilling his and other's field. Plowing oxen for Dhane becomes bond between him and is land or peasantry that is the only and ultimate

source of his survival, for peasant like Dhane can't think of any use of land without plowing oxen. Despite all the risk Dane takes the buffalo from the Baidar and he is quite optimistic regarding betterment of his livelihood. Dhane's thoughts of his peasantry and debt make him worried but when he thinks of his land and livestock, he becomes hopeful regarding his improvement in his economic status. Therefore, his relationship with land is that of nourishment, solidarity and intimacy. Chhetri writes Dhane is both handsome and healthy because he is living on nutritious fruit on his homeland and fresh mountain air to breathe in; "his frame attest to the mountain air and the nutritious food of his homeland. . ." (3). Land for Dhane's family is only source of survival and their entire existence depends on their attachment with the land. So, he is ready to lay down a bet on the last breathe of his life for every four cowries.

On the other hand, the relationship between landlord like Nande and land is of control, subjugation, domination as their perception and perspective towards it is very type. In feudal society people like old Baidar, Nande have powerful stand just because of their direct approach to land. They are landlords just because of their control over land. They, relinquishing peasants from their direct access to land, play the role of mediator between land and peasants thus able to maintain dependency of peasants on them. So, their supremacy is over peasants' othering. In this process, land has become tool, means, and landlords as users. Thus, this equation makes landlords feel land as their possession thereby means to gain control over society. Landlord's attitude towards land is of control. Deeply considering the term "LANDLORD" makes clear of their attitude. 'Land lord' means lord of the land. This means they have construction of themselves as lord figure, who is master, controller and user of land. They believe that land is the thing they must have controlled over, their existence is

just to possess land. So their relation with the land is of control. They think they can give the meaning to it, which is beneficial for them. Simon Pugh on this puts the light on relation of nature in real and its constructed meaning by culture:

The ‘natural’ is the cultural meaning read in to the nature, meaning determined with the power and the money to use nature instrumentally, as disguise, as a subterfuge, as a pretence that things were always thus, unchangeable and inevitable, which they never were. . . in this case nature is forced to be recipient of social values and becomes a social construct.” (Pugh 2)

In this way constructing land’s value on their own, landlords through their access to land play the role of mediator between land and peasants like Dhane, thus the person who only can give the peasants a means to grow their foods for survival. They pretend to be savior of the peasants with their created control over land. With this equation between land, landlords and peasants, peasants like Dhane remain on the periphery making essential the existence of landlords for their existence. This control of landlord over land subjugates the value of peasants and lands itself, because without the grace of landlords both poles can’t be of use. They have relationship of subjugation on valorization of the status of the landlord in feudalistic society in *Basain*.

In this manner land has become the means and tool to get control over society. This status lets landlords remain at the top of the social hierarchy. Thus they have power functioning over every part of the society. But they are unaware of that, this very perception (instrumental use of land) is the cause of the tragedy of their life in society. Rueckert in his *literature and ecology* says:

We are violating the laws of nature, and the retribution from the biosphere will be more terrible than any inflicted on humans by gods. In ecology man's tragic flaw is his anthropocentric (as oppose to bio-centric) vision, and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violet and exploit every natural thing. (113)

So, an attempt to humanize the nature has ill effects on human himself. But unaware or denial of the fact Nande like landlords with instrumental use of land are in attempt to be powerful. They get income from land and with this they are wealthy thus have influence in the society. They are capable of helping poor with money and land, too so they are important. To take the grace of help peasants have to bow in front of them and accept their superiority. So landlords to keep this status intact are alert to keep their single line approach over land. For that either they relinquish other from approach or make others' approach product less or use less. This means, land is for the production so if landlords unable to detach other from direct approach to land they make their control over its production by controlling over components necessary for production on land. Dhane formerly has his little patch of land and is able to run his life even though in hardship. His desire for better life makes him to buy buffalo, but lack of money compels him to take grace of help from Baidar. This big man to deteriorate Dhane's economic condition asks him to pledge his plowing oxen as security. Plowing oxen are the link between Dhane and his land. On the base of which, he is capable of production, though little from his land. Therefore, control over oxen is control over his production as there remains no use of land alone. Similarly, when Dhane got land and oxen both, his production is controlled by controlling water to irrigate his fields. When Dhane is to plant his fields Nande's son tries to control water by damming the channel of water to Dhane's field and takes to his field.

Furthermore, at last when all these remain useless to detach Dhane from his production they ultimately capture his land.

In this way, to avoid the independency of peasants landlords create control in one or another way over one or another components to control the production of land. They use land for their utilitarian purpose. Control of land for them is the way to prevail their essentiality for the poor and weak people. Therefore, they perceive land as thing, means and themselves as controller and only user. So landlords like Nande feel themselves lord figure or master of land who only have right to control over it. They feel they have grace on peasants by renting land for tilling to them, though disguise fact is of domination or, to snatch what peasants possess little.

What, are you planning to move out?

Not because I am to do so. You people wiped out my place to live.

No we haven't wiped out it, you serf! I bought you oxen and gave you some fields, and told you make use of them. But, you went mad and killed my buffalo, and what's this you are saying? If you sell your property you will get a little for your travel cost. If you go into Madesh, you'll get some work to feed you! Or will you head for Mungalan? (98)

Here Nande wants to prove his lending money to Dhane as a help without any ill intention further. However, what Nande wanted was, Dhane should move out so that he could acquire his property. He is in need of another property so that he could set up one of his nephew. He tries to prove his grace on Dhane of giving oxen and field, as if he does not know it is his son who had let loose buffalo on Dhane's seed bed in the middle of the planting. Therefore, Landlords treat land as things to be possessed and treat peasants as things to be ruled by them. They keep themselves on the position of

master who can use his means and things anytime anywhere and in any manner they like. Thus, they have relation of domination, control, subjugation and exploitation with land. L. White JR has said in *Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*, “What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them” (148). Dhane thinks himself dependent on land to survive thus feel keen to land but Nande and his son assume themselves as possessor, owner, and master of land thus they think land and nature as mere resource for their unrestrained use.

Matter of relation is concerned with the perspective. Dhane has regular compulsion to labor on land makes him keen and near to it. Even though, in terms of authority landlords are the mediators through which peasants have to approach to the land, but in terms of production it is peasants like Dhane who are the mediator between land and landlord. Only due to peasants’ labor and industry landlords get their crops to feed themselves. So peasants are near and attached to soil for production that leads to emotional affinity to land unlike landlord. Peasants like Dhane toil on land throughout the day and happy to play with soil. They find it natural to stained with patches of mud on their body so they address their life and existence to the land. But landlords, who do not have to work on the field just because they can hire working hands like Sane Gharti for their production, Dhane to rent their land, they easily get feeding food, luxurious life and powerful status to rule other. They in the equation of production remain far from land and forget the dependency on nature. They think themselves as independent of nature; in terms of Val Plumwood they have “illusion of disembeddedness” (98), means they negate their dependency on nature.

Landlords have great approach over land. Most of the fine land is under their ownership. This control of land makes peasants depend on landlords’ grace. No

matter how laborious the peasant is he cannot do anything independent of landlords, as they do not have sufficient land to pour their labor over. Similarly beyond the agreement of landlord, no matter how much fertile land is, it remains fallow without the labor. Thus, this in-between position of landlords prolongs their authority in society. Their power dominates and functions throughout the society. This helps them assume themselves on centre of everything; everything circulates on periphery of them. Thus, they create themselves as special to all creatures of the nature, even their co-race member (human) those who are not in power.

Sense of hyper-separation develops the conception of themselves as belonging to a superior sphere apart a rational sphere of exclusively of those in power. This self enclosed outlook helps them to lose touch with themselves as creature that are not only cultural being but natural being just as dependent on a healthy biosphere as other forms of life.
(Plumwood 99)

Through seeing themselves in terms of mastery as primarily rational being who are outside nature, they are subjected to illusion of autonomy service and control taking the functioning of lower sphere (constitutes of peasants land and other natural entities) ecological system, which supports everyone entirely granted, needing some grudging support and attention only when they fail to perform as expected.

But in reality, nature is a big organism. Human beings, plants, animals and all the living creatures are only part of it. “The entire range of living matter on earth from whales to virus, and from Oakes to Algae, could be regarded as constituting a single living entity” (249, Gaiya). This big cycle of organism revolves around on the basis of universal rule as Madhu Kahanna argues; the entire earth by the virtue of its animation is sustained by a harmonious cosmic principle. It is the self regulative law

of harmony. It is impersonal power, the underlying regulator of all life on earth at the natural and human level. Thus using and behaving the nature as the possession of human, more precisely those who are in power, is negating the biotic necessity and even existence of other members. Nature is always procreator and supporter of all creature. It always provides and supports for necessary and balanced environment for creatures. One has duty for the health of it. Paraphrasing the words of Ian Mc Harg, “Each individual has responsibility for the entire bio-sphere and is required to engage in creative and co-operative activities”(Design with Nature 28). Nevertheless, unconscious of the factor, humans misuse it and exploit it. They interpret it in their own way thereby attempt to prove themselves not as a part or perceiver from nature but the controller and the user of the nature.

In the novel, observing the background on which, the events and circumstances develop, we can find a harmonious environment given by the nature for everyone to exist on it with mutual coordination. Up above a great range of mountain is spread out across the sky line. Below, the village is situated on the middle altitude of the hill. Above the village there is a big jungle and pasture land. Below the village at the feet of mountain lies a broad expanse of level land. Around, different high ridges can be seen. From the side of ridges streams of two ravines flow continuously that burst from higher source. These streams bring life to the fields in the valley below. Like this to run the cycle of the life everything is managed to be available easily. Village is on the middle altitude by this people can do up and down as season changes. There are fields in valley to grow crops. Streams supply the necessary water. As a source of fuel there is jungle up the village. To support their daily life people can rear cattle, for that they can depend on jungle and pastures above the village. For

healthy life mountain air and water of source is available. To please the tensed mood and tired body beautiful sceneries are available.

In this way natural life is harmonious and balanced one when seen exclusively leaving the social haphazard i.e. scene of exploitation by humans. So being unaware of such smooth life and environment people are enacting their self centered and exploitative activities over this scenario. They are using, representing, and describing the nature, land and animals living on it in their own manner. People in order to lead their social life are ignoring their natural life and existence. So nature (land) is made as symbolic or representative disguise of different social values as accepted by the people in the novel.

In the feudal social structure mode of production is land. Thus the people with approach over the land remain independent thus with higher social status. Having control over plenty of land is matter of pride, power and glory. The people like Baidar, Nande Dhakal, Subba and even Leute Damai with abundant land and property can enjoy privileges maintaining high social status. Mote Karki is leading a comparably comfortable life in village because he possesses a “fair amount of khet and bari land” (27). People like Nande remain ‘Big Men’ of the society, it is just on the background of the amount of land they posses. Nande owns so much land that it is out of his capacity to till it. Thus, he keeps plowman like Sane Gharti, the poor people, to labor for him. And the remaining land after his use, he rents to the people whom he believes able to repay the rent annually. He has remarkable stand in the society, thus even in the cases of some sorts of injustice and unfair situation from his side people prefer to remain silence. They do not dare to speak against him and his family. Nande’s social stand makes his son capable of torturing the simple and innocent people in the village:

Nande Dhakal's youngest son . . . had had a tyrannical nature, and he had been brought up with great indulgence, so that once he comes home there was always some quarrel or other going on in the village. He would assemble the gang of youths, usually plowmen or servant from his home and visit the village at the night. There he would steal a goat from someone's pen, or beat up a village lad, or harass one of the girls. He was happy when he made other people miserable, and it was his nature to tease and humiliate those, who are weaker or poorer than he is. The villagers cursed him behind his back but they could not say anything. (57)

It is Nande's very social status that influences justice of the justice committee and makes Dhane to pay for Nande's loss leaving loss of Dhane's side unaddressed. It is the very approach over the land or self dependency for land that makes Terse Damai influential in comparison to Dhane. He is very wealthy. He has plenty of field of his own. So he needs not to defer to anyone. Though he is from lower caste than Dhane he is up in the social ladder than Dhane due to his approach over land. He has strong position in the society means he has higher social status than Dhane. It is because of this status, when Dhane's buffalo destroys his buck wheat Dhane is condemned paying fine to Leute Damai. Dhane just because of his dependency for production is poor and in miserable condition. His dependency makes him to bow in front of money lenders and landlords. Thus, he is in many cases deprived of his rights in the society and, is down in the ladder of social status. Dhane, who is fined for the destruction his buffalo did in Leute Damai's buck wheat field, has to remain helpless when his buffalo's womb is injured and calf is stillborn. Again he is the same fellow who is unaddressed by the same justice committee when Nande's son knowingly let the

buffalo loose on his seed bed in the middle of planting. But, inversely he is punished for the deed done unknowingly in the madness of temper. Thus, here land remains major factor to determine the social status of the person.

In this way, crushed in the mill of injustice farmers and serfs like Dhane suffer everyday to earn their living. Because of their condition of poverty, they are oppressed by the burden of the daily labor. The peasants and herdsmen have to toil in the field all through the year except few days of festivals. They don't possess any land thereby they are forced to work for landlords who always oppress them. So, in this context land becomes an instrumental tool to suppress people thereby to accumulate more property and wealth for feudal lords. This is not good for the health of land and human community too. Aldo Leopold criticizing such economic self centricism of human says:

A system of conservation based solely on economic self interest is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore, and eventually to eliminate many elements in the land community that lack commercial value but that are (as far as we know) essential to its healthy functioning. It assumes, falsely, I think, that the economic parts of the biotic clock will function without the uneconomic parts. (The Land Ethics 42)

But, unaware of the fact Nande rents his land to amass the monetary power. His one and only intention behind his land is accumulation of money. He is not interested to provide his land on rent to anyone who has not strong economic stand, "a vagabond with neither oxen to plow nor food to eat" (50). If he is not sure and confirm that his annual rent can be obtain from the tiller of his land he is even ready to snatch the land from those who are planting on it.

His such intention is clear when Nande is pouring out his anger at Luintel to his wife getting irritated by the decision to give up tilling his land; “he said he would plant then, and I rented them to him and the serf gave them up after a year! He is crazy!”(51). It is not that out of sense of help to Luintel, Nande rents his land to him instead of other who were planting their field, but because Luintel is one of the wealthy person who has his own plenty of land and he has good economic status. Thus it is more secure for Nande. In the case of Dhane too, the situation is same. Nande offers his land to Dhane for tilling and also lends him money to buy oxen not because of seeing the pitiable condition of Dhane but out of his own monetary interest. He has under hidden intention to acquire Dhane’s land thus he is ready to lend money to Dhane by keeping his land as security of his loan. Dhane is unable to repay his debt to Nande and time is to over soon, Dhane thought it is better to hand over his property to sahu before they come and confiscate his land and throw all his belongings out of his house. So, he plans to leave the village for the journey to the unknown destination, then Nande’s these inner intention comes on surface. As Chhetry writes, “This was what Nande wanted that Dhane should move out so that he could acquire his property. He was in need of another property so that he could set up one of his nephew on it” (99). Therefore, Nande’s intention behind helping Dhane is just his greediness to capture Dhane’s property.

Everyone in the novel possessing proper amount of land for tilling are economically strong one. If only Dhane would have his own plenty amount of land he would be with economically strong stand. Land would provide him with proper food to feed his family and there would remain no necessity to take debt from others. Thereby harboring his labor he could have better production and then economical

income. Even on Sahu's land he has so many dreams depended. Land on rent also gives him sign of his better future

This economical dimension of land makes it as a social security. Nande launches his debt to Dhane after keeping Dhane's land as collateral. This security of land makes him assure of his investment. Dhane amidst his deteriorating condition is still secure to be member of the society till he has his land. His land functions as his social security, but the moment he loses the ownership of his little patch of land he becomes as an outsider. He can't think living in village with no land. In this way, land for the people of the village in *Basain* is social security.

Land is constructed from different social perspective by the people in the novel. It is the social security, one of the major cause of the strong economical stand thus matter of social reverence and higher social status. It is just because of this land, those who have approach over land are enjoying social privileges and special social rights. So, approach over land is just parallel to control over sources and agencies of the society. It has become means to get dominance and tool to circulate power in the society.

Social sense of security and privileges are regularly being enjoyed by the people with plenty amount of land. Accumulation of land has enable them create themselves as savior of those poor with no land. Hard working peasants like Dhane are not in condition to run their cart of life without expecting grace from moneylenders and landlords. But, tyrannous and leech like attitude of money lenders and landlords makes it impossible, even after depending on them, to improve the deteriorating condition of peasants' family. This very matter of dependency (created one) is being used by those big men to create the discourse of their supremacy in the society. They create such makings in the society and among the people that, control

over the land is the only matter to determine the place in the society. They have land thus they are higher class and controller of the other remaining sources and the people. Peasants like Dhane are meager, less worth thus of low class as they possess no land. Absence of land with them makes them powerless, in need of support; something needs to be ruled over. They are constructed as if they need the agency of powerful and big people to decide their fate and future. And, they are the things ready to be used by landlords and with no right to get easy and comfortable life with no stress for future. Peasants as resource, as labor and as externality, are subordinated. Plumwood in her essay *Blind Spots of Centrism and Human Self-enclosure* puts light on such othering:

In terms of land in feudal social structure there is radical economic inequality and hyper-separation between classes, those people who are owner and those who are counted as property or as externality. This hyper-separation is reinforced in the division between high and low culture as well as in cultural practices such as access or conspicuous consumption. (110)

Such separation as Plumwood has argued is reinforced through the division of the labor which is often framed in terms of reason/body dualism in which rational managers control hired hands, while inequality is justified as a matter of desert through a culture of rational meritocracy rewarding 'rationality' and 'individualism' that is hyperbolized autonomy. Many tasks of decision making and management, which can be beneficially amalgamated with the practical or mutual aspects of work, are reserved for managers with the purpose of setting them apart as distanced and controlling elite.

Splitting or hyper-separation and backgrounding or denial works together to produce typical hegemonic construction of agency. This split opens the way for the dominance of abstract rational management over those reduced to serviceable bodies that carry out the task management plans and dictates, and also allows appropriation of the agency and reward on the behalf of these counted as rational managers. To possess land means getting higher class and thereby authority to subjugate other helpless people. Landlords have accumulated land thus it causes absence of land on the part of peasants. On the basis of the very absence, landlords label peasants as lacking thus dependent and therefore inferior. In this way the superiority is established. Due to very superiority they get special rights like dominance on justice. As for example Nande and Baidar has dominance on justice committee, innocent and poor Dhane is fined for the mistake Nande's son has made by letting loose buffalo in Dhane's seed bed on the previous day of the planting(*ropain*).

Power is attained and accumulated with the possession of the land. Land is standing as matter of power. 'The more control over land the more power' concept is circulating in the novel and those people without land are too ready to accept the very hegemonic idea. Such makings towards land of course cannot show the sign of sound relation between land and human. Leopold talks of the possibility and condition of ethical relation to land in this manner:

It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value. By value I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in philosophical sense . . . Thus the evolution of the land ethics is an intellectual as well as emotional process. (Land Ethics 46)

As Leopold opines, for mutual relationship it is essential to have love, reverence and emotional attachment beyond materialistic intention, which lacks in the case of *Basain*.

Materialistic attachment to the land makes it as a thing to be possessed and have control over by human. They are to use this control to prove themselves as essential mediators between land and those landless people like Dhane. Such kind of attitude has initiated the race and competition between landlords and peasants to control and possess more land. But, this race is not the natural kind that is guided by the biotic necessity of the creature to depend over nature, rather it is guided by the making like 'the more control over land, the more power and dominance in the society'. Though, peasants like Dhane struggle to get direct approach to land for their easy two times bread earning they are also entrapped by this social discourse about land. Dhane also considers and accepts the supremacy, essentialness of those property owners, so that he considers it normal to the bully manner of property owners. Though he has burning fire inside his heart for those injustice and maltreatment towards him, he considers himself helpless poor creature, as if it is his fate to be dominated, as he has no land which landlords have. Therefore, they can dominate over him. He is ready to move on in accordance to their decision. Even in his dispossession and banishment from the village, he remains childlike follower. He feels it normal for landlords to be powerful and enjoy different privileges in the society as they possess the land (the source of power) and him as a poor creature doomed to be subjugated, as he has no possession of land.

Nande Dhakal is always alert to keep intact his possession and increase it more, to prevail his dominance in the society. He knows that it is essential to weaken other to make oneself powerful, thus he is always in rush to increase his possession by

dispossessing peasants like Dhane. For example, he invests over Dhane to buy him plowing oxen. Further, he gives land as the reason to buy oxen to landless Dhane. Then according to his internal desire and plan, he makes Dhane to keep his land as collateral. He is well-known to the fact that poor Dhane has no source of income to repay his debt and incase Dhane could not grow proper amount of crop then he will easily be able to capture his possession. This pre-planned conspiracy, though is not on surface previously, his internal desire to relinquish Dhane from his possession and be owner himself comes on the surface later. Dhane, being unable to pay his debt, before seven days, goes to Nande and asks him to summon the value of his property. In addition, asserts his desire to abandon the village. Then, this internal hidden desire of Nande comes to appear. Chhetri writes:

This was what Nande wanted: Dhane should move out so that he could acquire his property. He was in need of another property so that he could set up one of his nephew on it; he said, “If you want to sell your property come tomorrow I will call them (justice committee) here. Then, tomorrow we’ll make up the accounts and you’ll get whatever’s outstanding. (99)

In this manner, people are fighting and struggling for culture created instrumental use of land forgetting the biotic and natural use. “Land is the common base and foundation for the survival of the creature on the ecosphere” (Rama Lohani 14). Thus, it is the natural right and necessity of everyone to get base for their survival and there comes their responsibility to conserve it. As Aldo Leopold says in his essay *The Land Ethics*:

A land ethics then reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the

health well being of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is the effort to understand and preserve this capacity. (45)

Thus, earth itself is a commons, where every being has right to exist. But, instead of using land in ethical manner, recognizing essentiality of nature for human and other creatures, in the novel this dependency has been turned to be a means of making the value of those mediators (landlords) essential. As dependency over land is a must, those controllers of land have used this nexus of necessity between land and creature for their utilitarian purpose. Thus the land is treated as “property” and the land-relation is “strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligation” (38).

Practice of such utilitarian use of nature has let Nande and Baidar to forget the real and natural use of land. For them land is just property. Long ago abandoned natural use and regular practiced utilitarian use of land and nature makes them to naturalize the very instrumental use. They are very conscious about the contribution of land for their monetary welfare, and any kind of jolt in this contribution is not the matter of tolerance for them, as that is related with the matter of their ego, prestige. When similar unexpected disturbance on Nande’s regular smooth annual income arrives, while Luintel is giving up Nande’s field, Nande Dhakal is irritated and calls it Luintel’s craziness to abandon to till on rent. This condition really worries Nande. He finds land return less, further he is worried about his prestige. If his field would remain fallow, then Luintel will laugh on Nande’s prestige. At the very moment Dhane arrives to ask for his land. Nande finds this chance to blow strong one on Luintel as a great answer to his action. So, Nande is ready to lend his land and required money to buy a pair of plowing oxen by keeping Dhane’s land as security. On this Chhetri writes:

Nande was afraid that no crop would be grown on them on this year. Then Luintel would be able to laugh. "I gave them up" he would mock "And then who would come to plant a crop in Nande's field? Look they are laying fallow!" even if it means buying a pair of oxen Nande was willing to let the field to someone else in order to stick a blow to luintel's pride . . . soon Karki and Dhane came to face to face to Nande. Nande agreed to give Dhane the fields and was also willing to lend him money to buy oxen and meet the household expenses, with Dhane's house and land pledged as security of loan. (50-51)

Here Dhane gets land and money from Nande not out of pity and kindness towards Dhane's helpless condition, but out of Nande's desire to avoid any kind of attack on his prestige from Luintel. In this way they have been negating the intrinsic value of land while prioritizing the extrinsic value. Such valorization of extrinsic monetary value of land has increased the use of land as a means, tool, thereby land has been sold, treaded and rented thus turned out to be the thing of accumulation. And of course, the reverence for land as supporter, base and foundation of our existence has disappeared. This vacuity of emotion, reverence and symbiosisness leads to the one sided interpretation of the nature (land) which lacks the balance and reciprocity. Activities and behavior of Nande's son are good example of such situation. He is ruthless in his behavior. He entertains himself by torturing and harassing others. This ability in him is injected by his illusion of disembeddedness in nature and so called low culture of peasants. He thinks himself to be superior and ruler. He is guided by the mentality of separate and independent existence of himself. As Chhetri writes:

Nande Dhakal's youngest son had had tyrannical nature, so that once he come home there was always some quarrel or other going in the

village. He was happy when he made other people miserable, and it was his nature to tease and humiliate those who were weaker and poorer than himself. The villagers cursed him behind his back but they could not say anything to his face because he was the shahu's son . . . his principal tasks were walking around the field terrace killing doves with catapult, riding in to the nearby jungle on the horse back and hunting with loaded gun and so on. He had spent his day chasing doves around the fields and had returned to the hut in the evening. (59)

The biotic member of the same ecosphere who are supporting his existence in one or the another manner, Nande's son has no concern with. Their existence and life has just become things to play with for entertainment.

Such utilitarian use of nature has changed the people's perspective to be mere monetary, mechanical and emotionless. With such so called rational leading of the society Nande, his son and all the people they represents, with the disregard and denial of the natural activities have come in what Jenifer Price calls "losing track of nature" (quoted in Val Plumwood, 97), and in the process losing track of themselves as ecologically constrained beings. It has increased the gulf between human and nature. Human tendency to separate him from nature by creating binary dualism is just surrounding himself with high walls around him and disable to see nothing except him. "This self enclosed outlook has helped us to lose touch with ourselves as creature, who are not only cultural being but also natural being, just as dependent on healthy biosphere as other forms of life"(Plumwood, 99) and makes us lose some of our natural qualities. Nande, his son, Old Baidar's sense of piety, kindness that normal person has is perishing away from them. The pigheaded conception to dominate society by controlling land has changed their relation of intimacy and

reciprocity with their surrounding's plants, animals, nature and even human to economic and mechanical. They turn cruel and tyrant for single pence. Day by day they are being hypocrite. Baidar pretends to be a person of purity and just. On forehead he puts mark of sandalwood paste, and to keep remind the name of god he has kept his 'thego' as "Hariramko". He believes "alms and feasts to bahuns to be the highest duty" (5). However, from inward he is so much polluted, cruel, machine of greed that he "Was always on his guard when the poor and suffering of the neighborhood came to borrow something petty. He did not forget to get to crank up the interest when someone burrowed a rupee or two..." (5). His manners of exploitation come to be vivid by his selling of buffalo to Dhane in sharp price. His greediness comes under judgment form his words addressed to Dhane before selling his buffalo:

Hariram! The price of the buffalo is 120 rupees; the interest must be delivered to Hariram's house at the end of the every month. And, listen! If you are late by even a day during the month that you owe money to Hariram, I tell you I'll remove the oxen and the buffalo from your shed! There, what you say? (4)

On the part of Nande, too, situation is not more different. He owns the most of the land of the village. Good and most fertile land are also under his possession. He is not even able to till his land himself, thus to grow crops he hires working hands of peasants who lack least land, too. In this way by paying least wage of their labor, he is able to take all the credibility of the production himself. He rents the remaining land, which he even can't manage to till with the labor of hire person and earns the annual rent from that. He does not rent his land to those who really need it but to them from whom his rent is sure to obtain. For such security, he even does not remain from

disowning those who are cultivating land on rent formerly to rent it the wealthier person. His words in rage and anguish addressed to Luintel for his giving up of land to till expresses his same attitude:

Nande Dhakal was very irritated when Luintel gave up tilling his fields . . . he was pouring out his anger at Luintel to his wife “those fields produced so much rice, the serf did not know what to do with it all! He said he would plant them then I rented them to him instead of to others, who were planting their fields. I rented them to him, and the serf gave them up after a year! He’s crazy!” (50-51)

Here, Nande hires his land to Luintel just because Luintel is one of the wealthy people of the village. He has plenty of land that “He even can’t cope with his own fields” (47). Thus, Nande feels more secure to rent him his field than to other in the village.

On the other side Dhane’s condition is also prey to the very instrumental use of land. He is deprived of his natural biotic right to reach land for his survival. So, he remains just with his labor to struggle for survival. He takes in rent Nande’s land so as to cultivate it with his labor. But he has nothing to repay the rent but just the selling of his labor. This condition of selling his labor for the approach to the land has made him miserable. Toiling throughout the day he even can’t earn two times food for his family. He is to bet his last breath of life for four “cowries” for the survival of his family. In this way, land has been used as a means, cause and locale of exploitation. It is on the basis of the possession of the land class like high/ low has been separated thereby exploited. Keeping land as a cause there is struggle between people, and in such competition and struggle between people land itself has been exploited.

The natural and fair logic of giving credit to those who labors and works is denied in the novel. Some peoples are struggling for each nibble of food and their

whole life is passing with the tension and the pang of the survival. In the same place other people are enjoying their luxurious life furthermore; they are in attempt to prevail their domination and function power by controlling over the land. Therefore, Dhane here is leaving his village with the uncertainty of his settlement due to detachment from the land and house. On the other side, Nande possesses land exceeding his capacity to till it. So, he is unable to cultivate it. Thus it is certain to remain that land fallow. Such imbalanced situation; somewhere lack and somewhere over possession then disability to use it properly is not the natural and ethical use of land. This is misuse of land, and misuse is abuse, thereby exploitation of the land. In this way, in Basain land has been backgrounded to valorize and to maintain supremacy of human created social values. Here the relationship of the necessity between human and nature; being more precise, man and land has been substituted and replaced by the relationship of exploitation and instrumentality. Such misuse and exploitation of the nature has not only put at stake the relationship between human and nature but it has also affected the mutual and reciprocal relationship among human being in the society. The major example of such result is pathetic dispossession of Dhane and his banishment from the village for unknown and uncertain horizon of the future.

Due to dependency of culture on nature every incidents and activities happened over nature have their effects on culture and society in one or another way. Same happening we can see in *Mountains Painted with Turmeric*. The social life of the *Basain* has been affected by feudal social structure's exploitative attitude towards land. Dhane, the representative of peasants, is the main person to be affected by the ill effects of that exploitation. Moreover, though unattended but still affected side is of landlords like Nande and Baidar themselves, too.

Dhane has to undergo many hardships during his life just because lack of ethical and natural distribution of land in his society. From the starting, so called big men of the village has possessed the major amount of land. Life of peasants like Dhane is most challenging one as they have least or no land under their possession. Always they are thinking and dealing with their problem of two times food. They have no time to think more than that, as they are not still able to cope up with that problem properly. Dhane is always in search of the job in the village so that he can earn some money. He tries every chance and option expecting for the betterment of his condition. He tames buffalo, takes the land on rent to till, works on wage and other work available in his approach he has tried to get off from his state of poverty. Instead of improving, his condition gets worsen day by day. Just because of his worsening economic condition, he cannot get his sister married. And latter she gets raped by one cunning soldier from recruit. On this condition, Dhane is able to do nothing but watch and remain inaction.

Thus, the living of the poor like Dhane in the village is difficult one. Despite they work hard day and night in the field throughout the year they cannot even fulfill their basic needs of food properly from what they earn out toiling on the land. Even though, they live on the land, survive on the land, their entire existence depends on the land they are separated from the land and they do not have access to the land, since most of the land is under the control of the landlords. In a way, they do possess least or no land that is also under the threat of being taken away by those landlords and money lenders like old Baidar and Nande Dhakal. Poor people like Dhane have to bow down in front of rich people like Nande and Baidar for some grace of help. However, the tragedy is that, that very grace entraps the poor peasant like Dhane in vicious circle of poverty. These people do have a small dream of living their life

happily on their land being a free individual with the help of their industry and labor. But, their dream never materializes and turns out to be daydreaming. All through their life, they struggle to have direct access to the land while on the other hand those rapacious landlords and money lenders are intending to capture that least amount of land these poor peasants have. In the feudal social structure with feudal lords at the center these people like Dhane struggle helplessly to improve their condition.

Even though Dhane does not surrender and goes on trending the path of labor, the chain of problem continuously falls up on him. Fascinated with the thought of improving his economic stand with the help of pregnant buffalo, Dhane pledges his plowing oxen to buy buffalo. However, unfortunately when nothing happens as he had thought he could not repay the debt, and loses those oxen, too, “With one voice, the council judged in the Baidar’s favor and authorized him to take away Dhane’s oxen and buffalo . . . at last the moment arrived for Baidar to remove the tethers from the animal’s neck and after this had been done two of his herdsmen drove them forward” (42). Dhane loses his oxen and remains passive, but inside him he is feeling bitter. His condition of helplessness holds him passive and calm spectator of his dispossession. He takes exploitation of the riches for granted. Thus, the relation between Dhane and Baidar remains only in terms of debtor and creditor, exploited and exploiter.

But, even not defeated with the hardships of life he becomes ready to handle the forth coming life. Now Dhane tries to dominate his poverty by tilling the fields of Nande on rent. He keeps his land and house as security. But, due to his status unable to remain beyond the cycle of control of landlords his dream get disabled before it could reach to the success.

Landlords like Nande's son, who have an image of themselves as master and ruler of the whole society and nature around them as their property. Any voice against their expectation is considered as challenge over their prestige. They link such mere fact of illusion with the matter of prestige, status and identity. So that they make themselves ready to demolish such voice and a person to raise that voice completely, as Nande's son has done. It is the previous night of Dhane's plantation. Thus, it is necessary to fill the field with water otherwise, there would be no planting tomorrow. There are many big fields, but only two irrigation channels serve them that came down from the hills above. Everyone is busily planting his or her fields. They do not let the water into each other's field even for a second: someone else comes and closes it immediately, and there are constant battles over the channels. This day it is Dhane's turn to divert the water in to his field, but if he does not stand over the channels, someone else takes advantage. Therefore, Dhane has to keep going back. He goes to look a little while ago then comes back to rest a while in his hut; after a little later he is on his way out again. He is worried that, if someone shuts off the water tonight, tomorrow the soil will be dry and fields will not be planted. And, if they will not plant tomorrow he will have to wait for a week before it is his turn for the water again.

Dhane is walking towards his fields from the far side of the valley, expecting to hear the sound of water running down the channel in the distance, but he is surprised that even as he reaches the edge of the field he could hear no sound of following water. As he sees no water in channel he moves down the side of the channel. A little way off, the channel is diverted into the Nande's fields. He sees that the water going to his own fields has been shut off and turned into those fields instead. He sees Sane Gharti, Sahu's ploughman, dozing squatting down under homespun cloak. Dhane threatens Sane for shutting the channel on Dhane's turn to

irrigate his fields. But being guided by the hegemony of dominance of Sahu Sane justifies his deed and asks for the meaning of the turn for water if everything (fields, ditches) is under control of Sahu; “What do you mean, turn? This is all borrowed from the Sahu: the fields, the ditches. Other people only get turn after the Sahu’s fields are full” (53). Here, Sane’s mentality is also guided by the illusionistic perspective of the Sahu. He believes them to be the only owner and ruler of land, water and other natural resources. Thus, only they have primary rights over them. Other get chances if Sahu finds himself satisfied no matter what would befall of other people like Dhane. On the very issue of water, Sane and Dhane have row with each other. Dhane could not put up with this. By nature, he is not the person who puts up with other people’s taunts very well. Therefore, he gives Sane a slap on his face and couple of more blows on his back. Sane is still young, and he is no match for Dhane. Dhane’s hard blow makes him whimper. Sane Gharti comes sniveling to the hut. His sobs wakes the young Sahu and Sahu asks why he is crying. Sane, sniveling even more starts to complain against Dhane, “Dhane Basnet dinot just dishonor me, but beat me, too. And, he called the Sahus all sorts of rude names. He dammed the channel to our field and left no water for us at all. He shut all the water off and made it flow into his own fields”(58). Then young Sahu’s ear burns when he hears this. Then to teach lesson to Dhane he orders Sane to let loose buffalo in Dhane’s seedbed: “First thing in the morning, take a buffalo to that serf’s seed bed and let it loose. Then how will he plant his fields?” (58).

In this way, just for the sake of his ego Nande’s son ruins the existence of Dhane. So, it is great crime for the poor to raise voice against the ‘Big Men’. The only thing they could do is to be available for feudal lords as a tool to be used. So such reasonable attempt of Dhane to use his right to irrigate his field on his turn becomes

cause of ruin of his whole future and dreams he had cultivated out of those fields just because of Sahu's exploitative mindset. Next morning seeing his seedbed destroyed, Dhane finds all his future's plans and hopes come to ruined under the feet. Chhetri writes:

As he arrived at the top of the field the expression of joy, vigor and eagerness that had been on his face changed to a look of despair remorse and frustration. His eyes moved over the seedbed, where the Sahu's buffalo was grazing happily on his six inch sidling with Sane Gharti sitting to one side enjoying the show. Dhane's misery and furry turned him into a mad man. He was shocked to see the wheel of his fortune cheating him time after time. He had dreamed of such a future for himself based on these fields, he had poured out his labor on these field with such joy but now. (59)

Seeing his dream burning down before him makes Dhane a mad man and he comes to kill the buffalo. That becomes unfortunate deed of him to dispossess him off his wealth. The judicial committee, where there is widely influence of Nande, counts only Dhane as a guilty of the accident. Dhane has to pay the price of buffalo and penalty of killing pregnant buffalo. However, no one sees the damage on the part of Dhane. This unbearable liabilities of debt forced Dhane to hand over his house and land to Nande, and disappear in the uncertain journey towards the horizon.

Their journey will not lead them to reside in the forest or t resides in house. Their journey is not planned one. They are setting out without knowing where they are going. Where this journey leading, where will it end, where is its destination? Probably even, they do not know . . . with the first rays of the sun today, Dhane and Maina's new life will

begin. Perhaps it will be better than their past, or maybe it will be worse. Whatever happens, one thing is certain: when the sun appears to them they will be far away from this house, garden and yard where they spent a very large part of their life. (103-104)

Now Dhane's existence perishes away from the village. In addition, this very situation of detachment rich people like Nande finds as situation of improvement of their social position. They do not see anything regarding the destruction of mutual relationship among human and even they do not care.

Such domination has the same effect on the part of the other peasants, too. They are not self-dependent. Their dependency either for money or for land over landlords and moneylenders has made uncertainty of their foundation and base. Whenever Sahus feel uneasy they start to pull down peasant's base. Thus, they are oscillating between two points of existing and not existing. Terse Lamichhane conscious about this condition expresses the same feelings to Dhane before Dhane leaves the village. Dhane stops at Terse's home, as Dhane owes 5 rupee to him. While Dhane returns the money, Terse do not accept the money from Dhane but replies, "Feed those children on your journey. I do not need it. We are in the same position. How long does it take to lose everything, after all? If I could have helped you out with a few hundred rupees, today you would not be leaving the place of your father. But, what can be done?" (100). Therefore, people like Dhane Terse have uncertain life. They can expect their settlement in village so long sahus like Nande are pleased.

Peasant's complete foundation of life is dependent on sahu's debt thus, whenever sahus pull the rope of the debt all the stage off peasant's life shatters down and they become baseless, rootless, homeless, like Dhane. Peasant's life does not

matter much to landlords and moneylenders. They are just creditors and debtors who have only concerning factor between them i.e., money.

In this way, when land is taken and treated for utilitarian purpose the reciprocity among the people come to be violated. And, people start to treat each other as mere object and chattel. The abuse of land by making it the thing of trade and monetary value Dhane's family turns out to be mere chattel in feudal social structure as Melvin Dixon argues regarding the use and abuse of the land: "As land is traded people are degraded, move to and from regions as mere chattels in an invidious property system" (quoted in Howarth 37). So, dominance of the feudal power on land has resulted into social and natural disorder. Thus in feudal social structure depicted in Chhetri's Basain landlord like old Baidar and Nande Dhakal have controlled the land so as to sustain the status of dominance in the society. But, poor people like Dhane's family do not have direct access to the land thereby they are subjected to the exploitation and domination of the riches.

Though poor peasants solely depend over land for their survival, they possess none or least amount of land. They have their labor and industry but ironically no land of their own. So they are compelled to work for feudal as their working hands in low wages. This is how land's fertility is controlled by the riches who abuse land by lending land to be tilled on rental basis and treating land as commodity for trade. Although all human and non human are member of the same biotic community, these landlords with the help of their monetary power not only oppress their fellow beings like poor peasant Dhane but also dominate nature as represented by land in context of Basain. Dhane becomes refugee in his own homeland. And, he has the sense of rootlessness and homelessness after Nande snatches Dhane's house and land. But, the sorry thing is that he is unable to utter a word in his defense because of the ideological

interpellation. So, exercise of the power on and through land contributes to abuse of land and degradation of the human values. As Madhu Khanna in her essay “*Nature as Feminine*” argues that when a man looks upon the nature as an object of exploitation, as a commodity for trading man is said to go against the current of life, and he instigates disorder, chaos, falsehood is swayed by the natural forces of darkness heading to disintegration.

Land is not such petty thing to be traded and treated in monetary terms. It has its something special value to human as well other creature. Land is existence, it is identity, and it is history of a person. Detached from land one has no identity and existence. Dhane’s family becomes helpless as they become landless. Dhane’s detachment from his land leads him towards unknown future, he loses his existence. Now he has no way and reason to stay in the village as he has been wiped out of the land and that makes him as if he has lost his identity. Thus, it is one’s duty to recognize these essences of land. Wendell Berry in the essay “*Taking Nature’s Measure*” argues that soil is our heritage, our history. That is, the soil is also to be read, interpreted, taught, learned from, handed down to the next generation and kept from becoming mere dirt. So we can feel the things we have not yet, we can learn and benefited from that we have not care yet of if only we want to and attempt to. So, we should recognize the way of nature to know what the real and natural way is. Berry suggests,

The use of nature as a measure proposes an atonement between our self and our world, between economy and ecology, between domestic and wild . . . a conscious and careful recognition of the interdependence between ourselves and nature that in fact has always

existed, and if we are to live, must always exist. (quoted in Danna Phillips 231)

Therefore, land is our base. And, existence beyond the dependency on it can't be expected. Thus, there must be the relationship of intimacy, mutual dependence and symbiosisness.

Domination, exploitation leads to ultimately our degradation. So, we must be careful not to be harmful while being dependent for our survival on land. "If one is radically depended on the other, the weakening and killing of the other will of course be fatal for the one" (*The Blind Spots*, 119), therefore the existence of human is not the thing of beyond and something unaffected of the effects on nature. In the novel *Basain* landlords' exploitation and misuse of land has turned their relationship with peasants to be of exploitation and domination. Landlords take land as the thing with monetary power and gain to rule over their fellows. Completely conversion of land into monetary entity has given rise to monetary aspect as determinant of relationship even between humans. So Nande and Dhane remain only debtor and creditors. Their relation after settlement of monetary matter gets finished. Neither Nande bothers to think of Dhane, nor does Dhane expect Nande to think of him. In this way these evidences show that there is relativity between human-nature relationship and human-human relationship. If former remains disturbed and degraded then the latter one, of course, remains disturbed and gets worsen. Because of this very cause materialistic perspective towards land on the part of feudal, Dhane gets disposed of his property and leaves his village forever.

III. Eco-critical Awareness in *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)*

The focal point of this research is man-nature relationship. Dependency of human on nature, effects of self-centric use of natural resources on bio-sphere and backfire of those consequences on human themselves are the matters this research has attempted to analyze in the novel *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* by Lil Bahadur Chhetri.

Nature is a big organism. Everything, human being, other creatures and land, all are the components of this organism. They all have equal and same existential importance in this organism. They are related and dependent on one another for their existence in different manner. Land is the common base for every creature, and resources on this nature are the sustenance for them. With this very circle of dependency and reciprocity, the cycle of germination and destruction is on balance and continuance. Therefore, as Barry says “everything is connected to everything else” (Quoted in Glotfelty xix), affecting it and affected by it. In this manner we can understand nature as circle of dependency, which is very vulnerable. Here germination, evolution and destruction of every creature and thing are need to be on the natural terms. Only with this, sustainable existence of balanced ecosphere is possible. Anthropocentric, self centered use and interpretation of nature results the imbalance in this nature ultimately that harms on human itself.

In *Mountain Painted with Turmeric (Basain)* this claim has been searched among the human’s use of land, their relation to land and consequence of that equation through this research. In the novel excessive possession of land by people like Nande, Baidar, Luintel and thereby with this approach their attempt to prevail their dominance in the society shows that land has been used only on the behalf of self-centric interest of the limited circle of landlords. They sell, buy and rent the land.

Thus it is the economic matter and entity for them. In this manner use of land for them is not the concern of life, survival and reciprocal engagement with nature for existence, rather it is the tool that enables them to gain economic and social power thereby helps to maintain dominance in the society, so it is “The fallacy economic determinants have tied around our collective neck, and which we now need to cast off, is the belief that economics determines *all* land use” (Leopold 46).

Such human created domination of land and unusual interfere has indeed exploited the nature, along with this, the effects those befall upon the society as result are also pointed by this research. Unusual control over land by the people like Nande, Baidar, Luintel, and its self-centered and utilitarian use has created tension among human in society. Member of same society who need to have mutual and co-operative relationship are entangled in internal struggle and exploitation. Excessive approach over land of people like Nande has prevented other poor like Dhane to have access to the land. This very sequence has created their dependency over landlord and by this they are othered, exploited among the landlords.

Dhane and his family due to lack of the sufficient land under their ownership are poor. So, they are prone to labor hard to fulfill their basic needs. Even after that they lack the peace in mind. Dhane always caught in the tension of poverty and debt is ready to try with his full might, every possible chances to improve his famished condition. But, in feudal society the position of the landlord as exploiter has worsen peasant's status along with of land. Unable to burst out of the net of the debt Dhane is bound to be dispossessed of his only place to stand, foundation of his family, a patch of land. Materialistic and economic making of land has converted the relation among Dhane, Nande, Baidar, Luintel mere economic one i.e of debtor and creditor, thereby of exploited and exploiter. Landlords, submerged in account of economic profit and

loss with their money centered mindset are unable to judge themselves changing hypocrite, selfish and regular perishing of their emotional instinct. Those people like Nande feel themselves powerful among peasants are unaware and unable to feel the scorn and dissatisfaction the exploited and marginal people feel for them. For them the ultimate and the only worth of everything is just money, they are money blinded unable to see other aspects of the relations.

Entangled in economic utility they have forgotten the environment of mutual co-existence among humans. The extremity of deviation of their internal relation is Dhane's dispossession from his property and banishment from his village. Dhane unable to bear the liabilities of the debt of sahus ultimately is bound to displace from his society.

In this manner by projecting the conflict of humans in *Mountain Painted with Turmeric* this research aims to indicate towards dependency and interrelationship between human and land thus the need of proper and prudential treatment of human towards the nature. Land is the commons. It is necessity of everyone to depend for their survival on it. But, in *Mountain Painted with Turmeric* landlords' self centered conception towards land has exploited it. Unnecessary dominance of one resulting displacement of other shows their lack of ecological awareness or carelessness towards mutual existence. It is necessity of each to be based on land, so we should use it in wise and prudential manner. If human, dominated by instant economic and social gain, got conception of nature as just for their unrestricted use, that leads dangerous result to befall on human's part. Thinking prudentially, lack of proper and eco-friendly use of nature results problems like ozone depletion, pollution, overfishing global warming and that can unleash potentially catastrophic climatic change and extreme and so on in human life. "So to be prudent in our dealing with nature is both

essential and benign from the perspective both of nature and of us; while to be governed by self-centrism or by instrumentalism in our dealing with nature is damaging but far from inevitable.” (Plumwood 129). Moreover, maltreatment to nature perishes human qualities like emotion, kindness and develops inhuman qualities that changes the perspective of them to each other thereby worsen the relationship among them. As Melvin Dixon argues regarding the materialistic use of land; “As land is traded, people are degraded, move to and from region as mere chattel in an invidious property system” (Quoted in Howarth 37). Therefore, balanced relation with nature is only proper and beneficial socially and physically for humans. Absence of this leads to, physically and socially, uncomfortable life for human itself. This very argument can be found in circular relation among landlord, land and peasants, and the result of that relation (domination and banishment of Dhane) on critical analysis.

Works Cited

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Chetri, Lil Bahadur. *Mountains Painted With Turmeric*. Trans. and Ed. Michael J. Hutt. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." *The Eco-criticism Reader: Landmark in Literary Ecology*. Ed. C. Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996: xv-xxxvii.
- Howarth, William and Anne Mathews. *Some Principles of Ecocriticism*. London: London Printer Publishers, 1996.
- Hunkins, Ann. "Bookself." *South Asian Newsletters* 68 (2008): 5.
- Khanna, Madhu. "Nature as Feminine." *Prakriti* vol.5. Ed. Kapila Vatsyayan. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, 1995: 103-116.
- Leopold, Aldo. "The Land Ethic." *A Sand County Almanac*. London: Oxford University Press, 1949: 38-46.
- Levin, Jonathan. "Forum on Literature and Environment." *PMLA* 114.5 (1999). 1098.
- Lovelock, JE. *Gaiya: a New Look at Life on Earth*. London: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- McHarg, Ian. *Design with Nature*. New York: Doubleday/ Natural History Press, 1971.
- Phillips, Dana. "Is Nature Necessary." *The Truth of Ecology*. London: Oxford University Press, 2003: 204-222.
- Plumwood, Val. "The Blindspots of Centrism and Human Self-enclosure." *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. New York: Routledge, 2002: 97-122.

- Pradhan, Krishnachandra Singh. *Nepali Upanyas ra Upanyaskar* [Nepali novels and novelists]. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan, 1980.
- Pugh, Simon. *Garden-nature-language*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.
- Punikaram, Raimindo. *Hinduism and Ecology*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Richie, Donald. "Social Realism Enhanced by the Pastoral." *The Japan Times* 86 (2008): 11.
- Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism." *The Eco-criticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996: 105-123.
- Subedi, Rajendra. *Nepali Upanyas Parampara ra Pravritti* [The Nepali Novel Tradition and Trends]. Varanasi: Bhumika Prakashan, 1996.
- Taylor, Paul. *Respect of Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960.
- Thapa, Manjushree. "Bookself." *South Asian Newsletters* 68 (2008): 5.
- White, L., Jr. "The Historical Root of Our Ecological Crisis." *The Eco-criticism Reader: Landmark in Literary Ecology*. Ed. C. Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996: 143-152.