

## I. Introduction to *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* as an Orientalist Document

Jamaica Kincaid's *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* is a book which presents her experiences that she collected while visiting the eastern Nepal in 2001. She came to Nepal with full preparation according to the suggestions of Dan Huxley who had visited Nepal in 1995 for the purpose of collecting seeds for Washington, hometown. The author along with Dan, Sue and Bleddyn started their journey to eastern Himalaya of Nepal to collect seeds to take them to their gardens in Wales (for Bleddyn and Sue), Kingston, Washington (for Dan), and North Bennington, Vermont (for the author).

The author observes the major rural tourist attraction centers of eastern Nepal like Khadbari, Num, Chichila, Uwa, Topke Gola, Sampun, Chepuwa, Chymtang, Suketar and Taplejung and so on. She talks about people, their activities, culture as well as socio-economic condition and impact of the then Maoist activities. The book merely describes the three weeks activities done by them and performed by other Nepalese whom they met during the trek. She describes her activities since she has left her hometown, Vermont till she returns from the trek of eastern Nepal Suketar to Kathmandu blending the reality with her personal imagination.

In the novel she focuses on mysterious feature of natural beauty of Nepal and compares it with the magical power. Her presentation seems like colonial writer's description of Nepal. This novel does not truly represent the eastern Nepal where Jamaica Kincaid, the author and narrator, of the novel and her friends visited during their trek in 2001. Due to the influence of the Western observation she could not present how Nepal and the Nepalese were during the civil war through her book *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*. Kincaid tries to present the Nepalese society in her fiction from Orientalist perspective which is neither true nor reliable. She gets confused

whether the people belonging to those areas where she and her friends visited themselves were the Maoists or the supporters of them.

The account of a walk she took while gathering the seeds of flowering plants in the foothills of the Himalaya has its origins in her novel. The novel presents her love of feeling isolated, of imagining herself all alone in the world and everything unfamiliar, or the familiar being strange, of being afraid but at the same time not letting her fear stand in the way. She begins adventure into the mountains of Nepal with a small group of botanists. After laborious training and preparation, the group leaves Kathmandu by a small plane, into the Annapurna valley to begin their trek. From inside the plane it always seemed to her as if they were about to collide with the sharp green peaks. On arrival at the little airport in Tumlingtar was awash in camouflage fatigues. The group was determined in its goal of collecting beautiful plants – native to the Himalaya but will grow happily in their respective home towns. The group is accompanied by the Nepalese Sherpas and starts its journey. The group gets informed about the educational and health related problems of the regions from the school teacher and the health worker respectively. The group finds that Tumlingtar, where there lacks electricity, is lagging behind in development and is very difficult to pass the night. The group decides to go to Khadbari from Tumlingtar through the route of Jaljale Himal and the Milke Danda.

The group at 3,570 feet altitude comes to the village of Uwa, the place where they could spend the night and the village under complete Maoist control. The Maoists give them permission to spend the night only after paying them four thousand rupees. The problems given to the group by the leeches and the Maoist is similar to the author therefore, she compares the Nepalese Maoists with the leeches. When they reach a spectacular pass at 15,600 feet and stare back they forget all sorts of physical and mental torture they got during the trek. Topke Gola,

Thudam and Chyamtang are the heart pleasing spots for the group. Down at the village of Donje they have another run-in- with the Maoists. The Maoists lectured them all through the afternoon into the setting sun agitating against the indignity of being called mere terrorists by President Powell of the United States. The author, her friends and the Sherpas wanted to lessen their tension so Sunam, the guide, went to the village and bought some Chang, an alcohol made from millet. At the airport in Suketar, the Maoists are threatening attack but the group must wait three days for an airplane. Finally they get off safely from Suketar to Kathmandu. These descriptions of people and place cannot represent Nepali culture in positive way because she observes every event from the prospective of knower.

The main concern of this dissertation is to show how Kincaid in *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* misrepresents people, culture and rebuild the identity of Nepal of the eastern Himalayan where she visited. Misrepresentation is to give information about somebody or something that is not true or complete so that other people have the wrong impression about them. Misrepresentation undergoes crises that help to give false characteristics of people and the things. It works as a new epistemology to twist the people's multifaceted personalities and in the novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*, there are many examples which have misrepresented the Nepalese. Thus it helps to falsify the image of the Nepalese nationality among the people of the world.

The novel describes the people and place which is not exact and reliable. Her description is based on Orientalist perspective which Said defines, “*Orientalism* is the generic term I have been employing to describe the Western approach to the Orient, Orientalism is the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as topic of learning, discovery and practice” (73). Even though the author Kincaid is not originally from the West she writes the

novel from metropolitan city of US and shows little knowledge of the considerable misrepresentation of Nepal in the native language. Aijaz Ahmad in his book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* charges Edward Said and claims that even the Orient writers write against the east due to the influence of the West. In this regard he says:

Its global authority is in fact inseparable from the authority of those in the dominant sectors of the metropolitan intelligentsia who first bestowed it the status of a modern classic; while, perhaps paradoxically, its most passionate following in the metropolitan countries is within those sectors of the university intelligentsia which either originate in the ethnic minorities or affiliate themselves ideologically with the academic sections of those minorities. (200)

Ahmad's another complaint against Said's Orientalism is that it examines the history of Western textualities about the non-west quite isolation without paying attention to how these textualities might have received, accepted, modified, challenged, overthrown or reproduced by the intelligentsias of the colonized countries. Said's self description as 'the oriental subject', is something hazardous, for anyone whose own cultural apparatus is overwhelmingly European and who commands such authoritative presence in American university. Even though Ahmad finds the weaknesses in Said's *Orientalism*, the literary tool is very useful to understand the psyche nature of the west to explore the non west, Nepal.

The writer herself as the main character and narrator of the novel presents the Nepalese identity by using Western eyes and describes the then ongoing Maoist War of Nepal. In this research it analyses the conflict state of author's mind and its role of creating identities of Nepalese characters and effects of the Orientalist document. Orient is almost European invention and had

since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings haunting memories and landscapes remarkable experiences. The novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* exhibits many examples which are based on *Orientalism*. For Said relationship between occident and orient is the relationship of power. Said uses Foucauldian notion of discourse as representation to say orientalism as a discourse is rooted in real east\Orient. It is a discourse by west upon east not to find truth but to create truth. So, *orientalism* according to Said is not an airy European fantasy about the oreint but a created body of theory and practice in which for many generation there has been considerable material investment. So, orientalism is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological text. Said takes Orientalism as a horizon of thought and all the Europeans writing about Orient write with in that restrictive (not productive) horizon of thought. West, according to Said, had consciously tried to interiorize the East. Said believes that identity at any level can only be defined in relation to other. For self-definition and motivation people need enemies; competitors in business rivals in achievement opponents in politics therefore the Orientalist defines “us” for the west and “them” for the non west. West wants to interiorize non west to dominate it to save authority over non west. *Orientalism* is the representation of the Eastern world by the western world usually in disparaging tones. These representations or depictions are present in the form of writings, figurative arts and designs. One of the prominent scholars and the author of the popular book *Orientalism*, Edward Said, has put forth certain views on the subject. He refers to the myths and the ideas that were shaped in the post colonial era by the Western discourse and the Orientalists. Placing a special emphasis on the depiction of the Orient put forth by the Franco-British empires of the 18th and 19th centuries, Said puts forth this concept in lucid terms when he says that, "The

concept of the Orient is in essence a construct of these academic and literary discourses"(209).

Parul Solanki, studies the Orientalism and reduces its characteristics as:

Thus one of the most prominent characteristics of *Orientalism* is the prejudiced interpretations by scholars. One of the key *Orientalism* characteristics is the European textual representations of the colonial Orient. *Textual Construct of the Orient*: The texts include novels, travel books, letters, manuscripts, documents, and various other textual remnants of material cultural. These texts were based on the assumptions that Europeans had drawn about the eastern culture. In addition to the western assumptions, there is a distinct absence of what the actual inhabitants had to say. Thus, these textual discourses allowed a retrospective view of the political, social and cultural relationships and situations that existed in the post colonial era. Edward Said draws these concepts from the works of the social theorists, Michel Foucault who studied the formation of discursive texts as an institutionalized way of thinking that is manifested by language. (1)

Solanki finds orientalist negative attitude while they write about the non west and the text present the ideas to dominate the non west with their text. The texts lack proper investigation about the non west and thus present the fact blending the imagination. Since such texts dominate the academic sectors of the whole world, the texts successfully misrepresent the non west especially to those academic writers and researchers who have understood those places through the books and stationery. Solanki further analyzes orientalism and states,

*Distinguishing Occidental and Oriental Cultures*: This is linked to the first characteristic of *Orientalism* wherein the term occident is used to define the

western culture. Said argues that there existed a negative inversion between the two concepts where the "Orient" is characterized as an opposite of the "good western culture". Thus, there is a formation of a myth wherein the prototypical "Orient" is viewed as eccentric, backward, sensual, and passive. Its progress in comparison with the Occidental culture was always inferior and conquerable. *Power Relations*: Said defined the power relations between the two cultures as "the relation of the West and the Orient was a relationship of power and of complicated dominance". According to him this relationship of power existed as political, intellectual, cultural and moral power. This power relation is said to be the fueling force behind the myths and suppositions surrounding the "Oriental" culture. Thus, the discourse was created and employed by the western colonial power to dominate, restructure and control the Orient. (1-2)

He agrees with Said and supports his idea that the west considers they are superior to non west in any way. Therefore they are real and they assume the non west mysterious and are mythical so they are very difficult to understand. He therefore views that the westerners feel authentic to control over to non west for the reason they possess the power to correct the myths. Many incidents Kincaid, the author, mentions in her book resemble the qualities of the popular book hence the text is an Oriental document.

Many writers and critics criticized *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*. Amartya Sen examines the novel from the perspective of humanity:

Humanitarian identity is not bound by specific dogmatic, racial, or religious boundaries or constraint, but advocates a religion of humanity. Kincaid's *Among*

*Flowers* points toward a humanitarian identity, in which the world can come together through various paradigms. She achieves it through nature, for which the feminists came up with the term eco-feminism and the whole book of her journey thorough the Himalayas. (21)

Above lines focus on the humanitarian identity of Himalayan region of Nepal and Nepalese people. Her narratives touch various paradigms of Nepalese identity and merge it with nature and ecology. She examines the author very positively and she makes a single garland of human beings showing the author positive attitude towards the Nepalese from whom she got help and whom she met on the way during her trek. She looks at the text forgetting all sorts of partialities

The book has the repetition of the description of the same thing in different ways and in different circumstances highlighting the scheduled of the trek. Reviewing Kincaid's writing style of *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*, *Sunday Times Newspaper* writes “[. . .] Novelist Kincaid tells of her journey into the foothills of the Himalayas in search of rare plants to bring home to her Vermont garden. Much of the book feels repetitive, in an almost meditative way, as the author uses plain yet lyrical language to record the quotidian details of life in the wilderness”. (3)

Miller Jean Beaker favours the writing style of the novelist and responds to it as:

*Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*, Jamaica Kincaid has written of her trek through the mountains of Nepal gathering seeds to plant in her Vermont garden. What promises to be a literary trek through some of the world's highest peaks ends up feelings more like a slow down an endless sidewalk while there are a few remarkable descriptions of the mountains



and rivers she crossed, most of the book is filled with the author's introspective whining. (9)

Above lines describe the journey of the writer and purpose of writing which highlights the natural glimpse of Nepal, mainly the eastern Himalayan region. Despite her off-beat writing style, or because of it, Kincaid succeeds in capturing the mysterious atmosphere of her surrounding and the frustration of seed collecting combined with the real danger of confronting Maoist guerrillas. She manages to give an impression of possessing a contrived naivety through her writing style which is simplistic and complex all at the same time. In this regard Rice comments:

That's style for you, what gets published and what doesn't. I'd be interested to know how much editing went on. Agents and editors are notorious for cutting and suggesting re-writes for clarity or length. This book is purposely short, by Kincaid's own admission, probably her stylistic view point won over her editor in previous publications so that aspect was a non-starter in this one. (21)

Unlike Jean Baker Nicolas finds the novel based on pseudo-philosophy and hollow observations towards life which reads artificial. As someone who has trekked the Himalaya, in this regard he claims, "I can only surmise that Kincaid was on some shallow, self-absorbed trip of her own. Don't just take my word for it, read just one of her own passages" (27-28). For him the author does not have anything new to give to the readers as well as to those who involve in the trekking since she does not include anything by analyzing the fact and reality of the country where she visited. He blames that her writing contains her own feelings and in monolithic way therefore the

text is based on pseudo-philosophy, false or pretended philosophy, ignoring the whole native Nepalese, circumstances and insulting the poor Sherpas and prorating her own personal feelings even ignoring her own friends who visited Nepal with the common goal of collecting the seeds of flowering plants in their respective states.

Obviously, Kincaid's concentration does not seem toward the culture and indigenous people through which it helps the other people who are learning to travel for seed hunter and related fields. Her book does not succeed in exploring the Nepalese, their culture and tradition as it is supposed. The book does not become much informative and guidelines to the people who want to know about Nepal through the publication. R. Rice supposes that the book should be more informative to the people who want to know about Nepal, her beauty and the people living in the lap of the Himalayas but he finds there is not a distinct between other writers who write the text sitting in the corner of the world without visiting and the author work because the author fails to explore Nepal, the parts especially where she visited as they really were. In this regards R. Rice reviews the book and comments, "She is not a traveler author, and although this work is set during her physical journey, it's like every other work of her is about the psychological emotional and social journey we all make" (1). Pheebe Glenn positively favours the author, "This is a lovely book which beautifully describes extensive trek in a remote area of the Himalayas; the style is most engaging and includes wonderful description humor and great sensitivity" (8). He finds the text has included the every moment that happened to the author and her friends with the plain vocabulary and the text is very easy to understand. Paul Panich reviews this book as a garden story and says, "I'm thinking about Jamaica Kincaid, especially in her latest book, *Among Flower: A Walk in the Himalaya*, whose memoir is masterpiece about competition in the garden but also the story of a lice of her life [. . .] is a marvelously

compressed, witty and droll miniature” (27). Panich symbolically represents the leeches and the lice she encountered during her trek with the author’s personal physical and mental torture she got during her life.

Shiva Sharma, one of the critics of this novel, reviews on the Nepalese identities which Kincaid presents in her novel:

Mainly, she talks on particular time and space although she hide the reality and fantasize the natural beauty of Himalayas as well as she presents herself the people living in Himalayas as the supporters of terrorists or themselves involve in these kinds of activities. Her presentation of Nepalese identities is one of the latest examples of western mind who never writes what they saw in reality. The politics of ideology play vital role in this novel which continues the western belief on Nepalese people and Nepal. (2)

The novel not only describes the natural beauty of Nepal but also analyses the socio-economic and political system and compares its change and development process that makes the novel more confused and controversial. Kincaid does not have enough knowledge about the subject and she is guided by the pre-conception so it could not reflect the fact. It is based on her own perception of knowledge which helps to misrepresent the Nepalese of the east, their activities and culture as a whole.

Regina Cash-Clark, an assistant professor of journalism at Ramapo College of New Jersey and a freelance writer and editor comments reviews the novel as:

Award-winning author Jamaica Kincaid adds to her nonfiction repertoire with her adventurous travel memoir, *Among Flowers*. Once again sharing her love of

gardening as she did with *My Garden* (Farrar Straus & Giroux, November 1999), Kincaid brings to life her experiences while on a seed-gathering journey from her North Bennington, Vermont, home to the mountainscapes of Nepal's Himalaya to find plants for her home garden. Horticulturalists and those with a general appreciation of flowers will best enjoy the dedication of Kincaid and her three travel companions and the events that follow. (1)

For Regina Cash-Clark the novel is a masterpiece for those who want to visit the Himalayan regions of Nepal for collecting the flowering seeds, since she has included the danger and physical hard some that one needs to face while making a trek to collect the rare plants and seeds. Highlighting how helpful is the text for the horticulturalists she mentions as:

*Among Flowers* also documents the dangers of visiting a country rife with political unrest. Still, amidst a world of unfamiliarity, the author finds cultural links in the most unlikely places, such as terraces in the highlands of Nepal with that reminded of her native Antigua.

Yet, if the journey doesn't grab you, the language very well might, as Kincaid is at her best: "I love the garden, my love for it had brought me to this place, walking in the foothills of the highest, mountains on the earth looking for flowering plants . . . which would thrive in my garden." Fans of both the garden and the author will not be disappointed. (1)

In short, the author observes everything of the eastern Himalayan of Nepal with western eyes and forgets the reality of life living in hard geographical location. She does not mention the difficulties which the people living during the civil war. She is unable to reflect the reality of

changing Nepalese identity because she uses her own emotion and imagination to describe the places she visited during her visit to Nepal and people living in those areas, so, the novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* is an Orientalist document.

## II. Misrepresentation of Nepalese people

In *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*, Jamaica Kincaid examines and rebuts some major qualities to represent the Nepalese. She focuses on visibly marked professions of the Nepalese rather than the more behavioral and as a developing country citizen's identities to represent them. She represents the Nepalese often very effectively using her own ambiguous Anglo/ Latin identity to illuminate her points and arguments. In her description there we find certain Western ideological influences. She observes the Nepalese and draws the conclusion on the basis of the western perspective. The novel misrepresents the Nepalese through the use of literary tool *orientalism* coined by Edward Said. According to him, Orient is the invention of the Occident especially a European, and gives the identity to the Orient of his own and ignoring who really they are. For Said, the 'Orient' was "almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experience" (1). The Orient is generally referred to as non-West. During the trek to the eastern Himalaya she had accompanied with the guide Sunam, Cook and his assistants. In the novel she represents the Nepalese and named them according to the profession they carried out. She misrepresents the poor Nepalese porters who became her servants due to the curse of poverty in the following ways:

There was Cook; his real name was so difficult to pronounce, I could not do it then and I cannot do it now. There was his assistant, but we called him "Table," and I remember him now as "Table" because he carried the table and the four chairs on which we sat for breakfast and dinner. Lunch we ate out of our laps. There was another man who assisted in the kitchen department and I could not remember his name either, but we all came to call him "I Love You," because on

the second day we were all together as a group, he overheard me saying to my son, Harold, after a long conversation on the satellite telephone, “I love you,”(26).

The author names the Nepalese, people of one of the economically poorest countries of Asia, so she is the Orientalist writer. In his book *Orientalism* Said defines Orientalist as, “Anyone who teaches, writes about or research the Orient – and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist- either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist” (2). Kincaid gives the Anglo name to the Nepalese and shows the nascent Orientalism in the text. By doing so she wants to show her dominating attitude towards the Nepalese. In fact, she is not supposed to have given name to the Nepalese, even if it was needed she could make the characters familiar to the readers with their profession without showing hegemonic power and mentioning the pretending nature. If she really wanted to represent the Nepalese youths’ name she could get help from Sunam, her guide, who knows both Nepali and English fluently. It is not good to judge the people on the basis of their physical appearance and their professions. Identifying anybody on the basis their appearance means ignoring to judge the social, cultural and economic condition of people. The partial identity of the people cannot represent exactly who they are. Elstain does not favour the author Kincaid and states, “. . . that is, persons are to be judged not by what they do or say but what they are” (Elstain 53). Real identity is only possible through recognition from another at a kind of deep psychological level but Kincaid represents the Nepalese as “Table” and “Cook” on the basis of profession they carried out so the author misrepresents them. Throughout the novel the Occidents call them with their nickname. Linda Martin in her book *Invisible Identities* comments that viewers can identify to others but such identities are not true and states as, “Of course, identities can be imposed on people from the outside. But that is more of a brand than a true identity, or more of an ascription

than a meaningful characterization of self. Identities must resonate with and unify lived experience, and they must provide meaning that has some purchase, however partial, on the subject's won daily reality" (83). The author's identification to the Nepalese is not true so it misrepresents the Nepalese as a whole. Supporting Alcoff's realism about identity, Anuradha Dingwaney and Lawrence Needham explain identity's lived experience as that which "signifies affective, even intuitive, ways of being in, or inhabiting specific cultures . . . it is perceived as experience that proceeds from identity that is given or inherited . . . but it is also, and more significantly" (Dingwaney and Needham 1996,21). While the one gives identity to another people belonging to different culture it raises a serious issue. The identity and naming is done on the base of the culture that they follow and in case if one misspells or mispronounces it may be a matter of humor thus the author's act of naming the Nepalese exhibits her dominating tendency over the subject matter's of Nepalese concern.

The idea of representation is closely related to Foucauldian concept of discourse as representation is the power network. Edward Said, who following Foucault's point argues that Western discourses represent Orient in order to govern and control it. Said exposes how the Westerners distort the Non-Western realities. In the novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* Kincaid represents the Nepalese with Anglo words to show Occidental superiority. The Occident is proud of a European identity and culture rather than the non-European people and culture. For Said, "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European people and cultures" (7).

Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* presents a relationship between Occident and Orient. The novel presents the Occident, the West as the economically strong and the citizens belonging to those countries as the citizens of the first world while the



Nepalese as the inferior. Said views that the Orient, the East, the non-west less powerful, dominating and inferior as, “The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (5). The novelist Kincaid too has presented the Nepalese in the same way. She landed in the airport of Nepal and she offered a porter forty dollars for carrying her luggage from the baggage area to the taxi station. She feels herself as the citizen of economically rich country and the porter, the citizen of Nepal, economically weak. She finds that she has paid more than anybody has paid to the porter. The act of paying fare for the rented people is compulsion and if rate were not fixed earlier then it would be fixed according to the understanding between the people who involve in transaction. The one who uses his\her labor may demand with the master if not satisfies otherwise accepts what the master gives, she gives more than what a poor labor has expected but which is not necessarily require to mention to the author. She boasts as if she provides a grant to the Nepalese as a whole. She states her Orientalist attitude in the novel in the following way:

We landed safely and I gave a man forty American dollars for carrying my suitcase from the baggage area to the taxi. Everyone was astonished by this amount of money, but I was so grateful to myself, whatever that was, in one place that I would have paid many times that more just to say. “Hi, I am me. (11)

The author and narrator of the novel expresses her manifest Orientalism. Manifest Orientalism refers to stated views about the Orient and the Orientals Edward Said defines it as, “. . . and the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth which I shall call manifest Orientalism” (204). The author exposes the relation of the Occident and the Orient. She talks about Nepali society where Nepalese do not have the sound economic condition.

When the author and her friends reach Uwa, the village, at 3,570 feet altitude, under complete Maoist control they encounter both leeches and the Maoist. Sunam Sherpa engaged with the head Maoist. Sunam pays four thousand rupees on behalf of the group and then only Maoists let them spend the night there. The author describes the village under complete Maoist control as she sees the banners hanging from house to house. She mentions that the people belonging to Uwa, the village under complete Maoist control, involve in cultivation of marijuana. She memorizes the activities of the people belonging to the village and describes them as, “we saw much marijuana growing wild, we saw people smoking the marijuana.” (72). She makes fun of the Nepalese presenting them as producers and consumers of sedative plant. To show superiority of European over the Non-west is one of the qualities of *Orientalism*. To present the citizens of the west as superior judge, learned man and powerful cultural will are the other essential qualities of *Orientalism*. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* says that the Orientalists present their identity hiding the identity of the non-west. “I mean to say that in discussions of the Orient, the Orient is all absence, whereas one feels the Orientalist and what he says as presence; yet we must not forget that the Orientalist’s presence is enabled by the Orient’s effective absence” (206). Kincaid in the novel describes the problem given by the leech as if they were only to face by themselves ignoring the presence of the Sunam, porters, cook and his assistant. Besides the group of the botanists, Uwa was the centre of dwelling for the local Nepalese but Kincaid even does not mention the Nepalese who accompany with her nor she presents the difficulty of life of the other Nepalese living in the region during Maoist insurgency period. According to Said, Orient is one of Europe’s most recurring images of “Other”. Kincaid has used her wit to describe the difficulty which is not false but is not a true in a sense that she emphasizes the Occidental sufferings ignoring the Orientals’ living in Nepal, the east, Orient.

Said finds such way of expression as one of the qualities of *Orientalism* and says, “The Orientalist can imitate the Orient without the opposite being true. What he says about the Orient is therefore to be understood as description obtained in a one-way exchange: *as they spoke and behaved, he observed and wrote down*” (158). The problem of the leeches was the common to all. Being the parasitic in nature, the leeches survive on other animals and human beings. But the author shows her superior complex stating, “when we realized our shoes were crawling with leeches that were eagerly burrowing into our thick hiking socks, trying to get some of our very expensive first-world blood” (73). She identifies the Occident with “we” and never talks about the Nepalese and never identifies them. The novel talks on presenting the West everywhere and makes the Orient absence and representing them inferior and misrepresenting. When the group is being obstructed by the Maoist and they too faced the problem of leeches the author feels insecure at Uwa. She suspects if all the villagers including the children belong to the Maoists. She doubts if the children are assigned to spy the village while they climbed into the trees and started chattering. Recalling the activities of the children of the village she writes, “All the children seemed to have walked up to a ledge that was right above us, and they climbed into the trees and began to make the sounds that some monkeys, who were also above us and in the trees, were making” (75). She further doubts if all the villagers were the Maoists and expresses the threat to their life as, “It was meant to disturb us but it didn’t at all. Nothing could be more disturbing than sleeping in a village under the control of people who may or may not let you live” (75). Edward Said dislikes the Orientalist activity of identifying the West and ignoring the rest so he says, “I mean to ask whether there is any way of avoiding the hostility expressed by the division, say, of men into “us” (Westerners) and “they” (Orientals)” (44). Is only the west blood expensive and rest of the people’s blood cheaper? Does the biotic factor differ from person

to person possessing the nature of superiority or inferiority? Experience of shocking blood by the leeches in Uwa is the group-related sufferings hence the author's priority only with the Westerns is the nascent of Orientalism.

The novelist presents the Nepalese girls and women also in her novel. She finds the Nepalese female not conscious of about their health and hygiene. She does not identify the women and give the name to them like she gave to the male Nepali youth who accompanied with her during the trek. When the author and her friends reach Mani Bhanjyang, a village at altitude of 3,700 feet, where they stopped for lunch and soft drink, the author sees a girl about the same age her daughter was then, seventeen, carefully watching someone's head and combing the hair. The author ensures that the lady, whose hair the seventeen years girl watching, was riddled with lice. The description of the author seems to be very much self-observed because it is not possible to see lice on the head of the people from a far distance. The author represents female Nepalese characters as, "I saw a girl, about the same age my daughter was then, seventeen, combing the hair of someone else with much carefulness; she was combing through her familiar's thick head of straight hair because it was riddled with lice" (42). *Orientalism* is one of the ways of misrepresenting the people of the non-west by west. The author in the novel presents herself as the braggart, a person who talks with too much pride. The deduction of the activities of the seventeen years old girl and her friend with riddle of the lice is evidence. Talking on about the characters of the Orientalist, Said says, "they are also *characters*, related to such types as the braggarts, misers or glutton" (65). The whole activities of the group with an objective of collecting seed by exploring the topography present them miser and presentation of variety of food items they produced during the trek proves them to be glutton.

Then the troop reaches to Chichila, and sees a beautiful woman. The author neither names the woman nor presents her profession but shows the activities that she was doing. When the author sees the woman she finds her beautiful with long black hair. The woman finds the narrator's hair so appealing that she comes near to her and sits besides her to touch the narrator's hair. The author expresses what the Nepalese woman might be feeling through her language but she expresses her envy towards the beauty of the Nepalese woman's hair as. The author might be presenting the universal fact-the fact of getting something which one does not have. The author wishes to have the long black hair which she does not have and the Nepalese woman want to get bond hair that she lacks. The author in the particular scene wants to present that Orientals are jealous of the Westerners. Said thinks that the Orient for the Orientalist are the aliens they are presentation without identification. The third person pronoun codification given to the Nepalese people in the novel supports Said. For Said, "Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are for Europe, and only for Europe" (70-71). Said seems to be right for the deduction of the Nepalese activities by the US metropolitan city living novelist, Kincaid while ignoring the real identity of the people. The way of presenting the woman in Chichila was very controversial because the author herself finds the woman and her black hair very beautiful but she states that Nepali woman is envious of her hair. Describing the woman, her hair and her envy towards the author's hair, Kincaid writes, "A beautiful woman, with naturally glossed, long black hair, saw my own braided-into cornrow hair and she found it so appealing that she came and sat beside me to touch my hair" (46). Said's Orientalism, Irwin writes, "seems to me to be a work of malignant in which it is hard to distinguish honest mistakes from willful misrepresentations" (9). While walking through the town of Tumilingtar, the author and her friends meet a crowd of the people. The author finds it

very difficult to distinguish whether they belonged to Nepal. She got confused to identify who whether or not they were Nepalese people. She describes the people whom she meets in the eastern part of Nepal at Tumlingtar as, “We passed the people who seemed native to India, and other people who seemed native to Nepal, and other people who seemed from somewhere in between” (35). Kincaid observes the people on the basis of their physical appearance. As Irwin states orientalist expressions are difficult to distinguish if they are telling the genuine mistake about the orient or making the willful misrepresentation Kincaid is doing the same. While she expresses her attitude towards the woman who feels jealous of the author’s hair, she presents herself as a good speaker of Nepali language and analyzed her as if she were a good psychologist and says, “she picked up my long plaits and turned them over and over, and using gestures, she asked if I could make her own hair look like mine” (46). If she was that much familiar with the Nepalese then she could be able to distinguish whether the people she met were the Nepalese or not. Due to generalization over identity she is neither able to give a private identity, an identity given to an individual like “Table” and “I Love You” to the porter and assistant cook respectively, correctly to the Nepalese who accompany with her trip nor she is able to determine the public identity, identity on about the belongingness of the nationality. The novelist expresses her dilemma after leaving Uwa, a complete Maoist control village, if Nepal is a land for the foreigners especially for the Indian and the Chinese. She does not distinguish the either the people she and her friends visit belong to China or India. She generalizes those who seem the Hindus to her belong to India and those people who seem the Buddhists to her belong to China. She talks to the people whom she meets after leaving Uwa in the following way:

I saw the people and took them in, but I made not notes on them, no description of their physical being since I could see that could not do the same to me. I can and

will say that I saw people who looked as if they came from the south (that would be India) and people who looked as if they came from the north (that would be Tibet). I saw some who were Hindus (they were the same people who looked as if they came from the south), and I saw some people who were Buddhists (they were the same people who looked as if they came from the north). (77)

Foucault finds it is very difficult to speak about others. For him to speak about others means to fix the limits or boundaries of something of their cultural elements therefore true identity is impossible. He states his idea regarding speaking to others as, “what properly belongs to a discursive formation and makes it possible to delimit the group of concepts, disparate as they may be, that are specific to it, as they may be, that are specific to it, is the way in which these different elements are related to one another. . .” (Foucault 59-60). Edward Said finds European domination over Asian and African countries. He believes, “European is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant” (56). Through Said *Orientalism*'s notion it is viewed that Kincaid, the novelist identifies the Nepalese people is the glimpse of restructuring Nepal as the land of foreigners only. Any written or verbal statement which raises the issue on about anything or anybody is a discourse. Foucault believes power is essential to create knowledge and the knowledge which is created through power is accepted as the truth by the people. Talking on about knowledge and power relationship he states, “No power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge,” that “power produces knowledge” and that “power and knowledge directly imply one another” (Foucault: 1979, 27). Kincaid in the novel views that Nepalese people do not possess the self identity but have the dual identity, one Indian and another Tibetan, religiously and physically too. Said in his *Orientalism* presents the Occident's identity superior to the Orient and he says regarding the superiority of European identity as, “the

idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all non-European people” (7). Defending Said’s idea that European only try to compare themselves as learned and intellectual Ahmad in his text *In Theory* claims “[...] its most passionate following in the metropolitan countries is within those sectors of the university intelligentsia which either originate in the ethnic minorities or affiliate themselves ideologically with the academic sections of those minorities” (201). Here, Ahmad criticizes Said’s *Orientalism* for its exclusive association of the west for essentializing the orient. As Ahmad argues, this tendency of essentializing the orient is not only the tendency of Europeans. According to him, Muslims too make distinctions between East and West. Similarly, Indian critics too posit Hindu spirituality against Western materialism. It means that the essentializing tendency is prevalent in all human societies and it is not the trait of the West only. If the author, Kincaid, is viewed from Said’s side then it is found that she exposes herself as an intellectual and states her superiority in the novel to the Orient as:

The intellectual curiosity of the plants man and botanist needs it, and the commercial enterprise of the nurseryman needs also. When I suggested southwestern China to him as a place of adventurous plant collecting, he said, oh why don’t we go to Nepal on a trek and look for some *Meconopsis*? Why we don’t do something really interesting, he said. (3)

She shows her superiority in these descriptions because she addresses her interest as intellectual curiosity and describes the negligence of the Nepalese people on natural objects. In this context, she describes her journey in this way, “That first visit he made to Nepal haunted Dan so that he wanted to go there again. It’s quite possible that I could hear his longing and haunting in voice when he suggested to me that we go looking for seeds in the Himalaya but I cannot remember it now. And so Nepal it was” (4). She memorizes the history of Nepal in the periphery of visiting



and tries to relate her visit with historical event of Dan which is irrelevant in itself because her purpose of visiting is not historical as well as great events of the Himalayas. She introduces her journey as important event of Himalaya's region and she claims that she knows the world after she returned from the top of the mountains which is her personal emotional reaction. She finds that her attitude looking at the things have completely changed as soon she returned back to Vermont from Nepal symbolically. She mentions her experience:

And the sky above all this? Again, only when I returned home did I notice that the sky above me hardly ever caused me to observe it with real anxiety, being mostly clear and a sad pale blue in the daytime and turning to grayish black at night. If I made particular note of water, land, and sky when I returned home, it is only because when I was away, walking in the foothills of the Himalaya, that became the world I knew. I knew with certainty. (8)

In reality nobody becomes a wise man after returning from Himalaya. Nepal, the non-west, the country with the highest mountain of the world would be the land of the wisest unless she was wrong because the path finder to the Occident trekker is the Nepalese themselves. Kincaid describes the cultural, material and intellectual relation between Occident and Orient.

*Orientalism* is reinforced, by certain knowledge, the Europe or the west literally commanded the vastly greater part of the earth's surface. The novelist Kincaid thinks her group is superior to the people living in the Himalayan region. She feels pride for being superior to the Nepalese. She describes the eastern Himalayan's region Nepalese as the persons who find more pleasure at looking at the visitors like her than carrying out the daily activities. She describes the Himalayan's people, near by Makalu Mountain, and their activities as, "Two men, dragging long thick trunks of bamboo attached to porters' straps wrapped around their foreheads, passed us as

they were going the other way. They seemed to take our presence for granted, as if they knew about us before they saw us, or as if our presence was typical” (80). When western people come to the non-western regions, they used guide book and travel books written about the non-western regions by the western writers in which non-western regions were interiorized because of such preconception the knowledge that an Orientalist got from another Orientalist the Occident fails to present the true depiction of the Orient. Kincaid reads a book by Frank Smythe entitled *The Kanchenjunga Adventure*, ignoring the book written by Nepali mountaineers. Reading the book by the foreign writer on about Nepal she got the preconception at looking at the things which causes problem for the true representation and hence the preconception shapes the identity of the people and the place and assists to misrepresent the nationality. In the case of *Orientalism*, the Orientalist believes in whatever the earlier Orientalists’ texts say about the Orient. So, as Said says, the texts about the Orient helped the Orientalists to form a truth about the Orient. Citing example regarding the danger of reading the text on about the Orientalist by another Orientalist said Said, “If one reads a book claiming that lions are fierce and then encounters a fierce lion (I simplify, of course), the chances are that one will be encouraged to read more books by the same author, and believe them” (91). “I was reading my book by Frank Smythe about his failed attempt to climb Kanchenjunga in 1930” (96). She shapes the mind that climbing Kanchenjunga was really failed attempt because she got the impression from Frank who in fact is an immature climber for the Nepalese Himalayas. In her writing she presents her and her friends as a subject and Nepalese people as objects. Identifying Orientalist as subject and the Orient as objects she makes the distinction between the Occident and Orient. When the troop was heading towards Num, the village, the porters and Sherpas were lagging behind the author and her friends. The author talks about the Nepalese porters and Sherpa as, “They lagged behind and sometimes

would disappear completely . . . We marched on, sometimes passing the porters, but then they would rush past us carrying our bags, our tents, our chairs and tables, our food, our everything at an incredible speed” (49). She further highlights the scenario and activities done by tourists in this way:

They were used to see in people who looked like Baldwyn, Sue and Dan, people of European descent. They were not used to seeing people like me, someone of African descent. But they knew of our existence. I noticed that women in general and old people and children were very friendly and spoke to us with a smile and in a friendly way. (28)

She describes the scene of Himalaya where other people from different part of the world also visited. She guesses new comers as African and talk with them like a westerner talks.

In the novel the readers find the superiority complex on writer because she tries to identify herself as civilized researcher and describes all the phenomena of traveling on the basis of her preconception. Her description could not highlight the local people as the people of the developing country of the world. She fantasizes every event and person living in the Himalayan region. She compares them with Maoist. In this regard, she says, “What is a long rat scurrying in a small restaurant in a crowded city next to a small village situated in the foothills of the Himalaya full of Maoist guerrillas with guns? (19). She is not clear about Maoist identity although she confidently describes the people meeting in foothill of village with weapon. She reads about Maoist People’s war and Maoist settlement so she guesses the people are the Maoists. *Orientalism* views the people belonging to non-west, Orient, are mysterious, Said says, “the mysterious Orient” (26). The author presents that the Nepalese people are economically so

poor that they are even unable to feed their children as per as approved by the science. On the way to Num, they reached to a village Muri where she saw a crowd of children who lost natural pigmentation of their hair and says, “some of the children had lost its natural pigmentation; it had been black but had become blond, a sign that some essential nutrient was missing from their daily diet” (51). The author exhibition of orientalist attitude reached to the climax when she expresses her pride while she makes the seamstress whom she meets at Num. Finding the seamstress in the remote area of eastern Nepal she becomes happy and expresses as, “we found a seamstress and that was a good thing, for in the three days since we left Kathmandu we had shrunk. In fact, if there had not been a seamstress our clothes would be just fine” (53). The author says with pride that she makes the seamstress stitch their underwear, fasten buttons, tighten pants and many other things. The author mentions the inferior job that the seamstress does and remains silence for stitching their valuable clothes. She says how she gets her clothes stitched by the seamstress as, “we employed the seamstress to take in our underwear, fasten buttons, tighten pants, mend something or other. She did it well and we were very pleased” (53). Unless she was manipulated by the orientalist attitude she would mention that she got the seamstress to mend their clothes and would not mention of stitching underwear with the high priority. Kincaid presents the Nepalese characters in a mystifying way through expressing disbelief on what they told her and her friends. Kincaid’s heart is filled with fear after the Maoist obstructed their journey at Uwa, therefore, she suspects the people walking on the way too belong to Maoist ideology. Regina Cash-Clark reviews the novel and says’ “*Among Flowers* also documents the dangers of visiting a country rife with political unrest.” (1) The author wants to know what the people are talking about from Sunam, the guide. The guide responds that he is unable to understand the local dialect. The author does not believe the guide and she makes

remarks on it as, “if we asked Sunam what they were saying, he would say he didn’t understand their language. The author and her friends have the hangover of the problem given by the Maoist so she suspected everybody the Maoist. She consults with the guide regarding the people whom the Maoists made their raid. Sunam replies as he understood the fact and tried to convince her. She does not believe him and expresses her conflicting state of her mind as, “I can’t really take the word of people who will kill their countrymen but not me” (62). She forces Sunam to tell about every person whom they met on the way and appealing to translate what they are talking about. Sunam responds very positively and replies that he does not understand the local dialect of that region she makes fun to Sunam and states disbelief as, “Whenever people we met seemed to be talking about us, though me in particular (sometimes it was the color of my skin, sometimes it was my hairstyle), if we asked Sunam what they were saying, he would say he didn’t understand their language. He would say that they were speaking in a local language that he didn’t understand” (63). She expresses her personal emotion to describe Sunam. The Orientalists considers themselves superior to the Orient and the Orient are the source of amusement to them. Kincaid finds Sunam’s activities mysterious and amusing. She expresses her feelings looking at Sunam as:

The mystery of what Sunam did and did not understand became a source of much amusement. What are they saying? We would ask. I don’t understand, Sunam would reply. A joke between Dan and me was: “What are they saying? \_\_\_\_\_ [a short pause] \_\_\_\_\_ I don’t understand,” and this would make us laugh until we ached in the last places left in our bodies that were not in pain from our exertions. (64)

The author disbelieves the guide, porters and every Orient but she believes only with Occident Dan, her friend. She expresses disbelief with the Nepalese, the native, and believes with the foreigner. Kincaid expressing the disbelief with the Nepalese and mentions, “I can’t really take the word of people who will kill their countrymen but not me. I only believed Dan because I wanted to” (62). The author finds herself and her group different from the beginning of her journey but at Ritak the group is over looked by the local as if they were a living cinema. She finds the Nepalese, who surround them, envy of the foreigners especially like her. She observes the Nepalese are lured to the activities of the west. The author describes the Nepalese whom she finds at Ritak as, “It seemed as if all the people living in the area had descended on our camp and were just sitting and looking at us. It was as if we were a living cinema” (100). The author further includes in the novel that the Nepalese representing the Orient are fascinated towards their daily activities like the way of eating and talking. She finds that the people belonging to the particular area of Nepal, Ritak like the color of the Occident’s skin therefore they peered at her. “Sometimes they peered at me and said things about me to Sunam, but of course when I asked him what they were saying, he suddenly did not understand the local language” (100). The metropolitan city author Kincaid culturally also tries to dominate Sunam, the Nepalese youth. She expresses a desire to share a tent with Dan and for this she begged permission with Sunam. She misrepresents the Sunam and thinks that sharing the same bed by a wife to another person except her husband is a part of Nepalese culture. Remembering the incident of getting permission with Sunam she writes,

“[...] and so we immediately told Sunam that we wanted to sleep in the same tent and that the tent meant for one of us should become the baggage tent. Perhaps he was used to people like us, perhaps something from his own culture informed him

that this was not a bad thing, perhaps he knew that there were more important things in this world than who slept in the same tent with whom; he said okay, that word exactly, “Okay,” he said. (25)

In fact, the Nepalese people are strongly bound by religious values. Therefore, all the people of the Nepalese community consider it is a sin to share a bed either with the male or female. Social problems and evils are the exception but in normal situation none of the Nepalese culture encourages exchange of the husband and wife publicly.

Her description shows that she generalizes the activities of the Nepalese. Of course, describing the action happening before is the job of the author but describing something which is far more distant from the sight and confirming the activities of the people who speak the other language than the author in an omnipresent way lead to the misrepresentation of the Nepalese people.

#### Misrepresentation of the Nepalese Land

Said describes imaginative geography as the ‘universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is “ours” and unfamiliar space beyond “ours” which is “theirs” (Said, 54). This practice, he goes on to add, ‘helps[s] the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away’ (Said, 55). Michael C. Frank, a lecturer of English Literature at University of Constance Germany posits the views on imaginative geography in *Orientalism* as:

Imaginative geography, then, is a strategy of identity construction which equates (spatial) *distance* with (cultural, ethnic, social) difference, associating the non-spatial characteristics of ‘self’ and ‘other’ with particular places. The ‘great divide’ between West and East as both geographical and cultural entities is just

one example of this strategy – a strategy that works on the level of both the individual and the collective. (2)

The novelist shows her Orientalist attitude towards the land of Nepal as she has expressed to the Nepalese characters during her trek. Edward Said compares the Oriental's land partly imaginative, partly political and partly doctrinal to the European. The Oriental land is the result of European invention. Regarding the land of Orient Said says, "The centuries old designation of geographical space to the east of Europe as "Oriental" was partly political, partly doctrinal, and partly imaginative; it implied no necessary connection between actual experience of the Orient and knowledge of what is Oriental. . ." (209). For Said the Orientalist defines the Oriental land as it is constructed on the basis of a belief of the European religion especially Christianity and on the out look of the European politics therefore the land description of the Orientalist on about the Orient is misrepresenting. In the novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* Kincaid, the author exhibits many examples where she defines Nepal with the Orientalist point of views. Her writing shows that she has written the novel without consulting with anybody who is familiar with Nepal and Nepalese. The severe mistake which she made in the novel makes the readers feel that she wants to distort the fact of the country knowingly to the people. Misnaming and dislocating the major city of Kathmandu she writes, "My hotel was in that area of Kathmandu called the Thamel District" (17). In fact, Thamel, which is one of the tourist dwelling streets of Nepal, lies in Kathmandu district. She represents Nepal; economically a poor country is not suitable for the rich tourist but a good destination for the poor European. The author presents evidence in her writing that many of the visitors mainly the European dislike Kathmandu especially Thamel and expresses, "I had read so much about European travelers in Kathmandu, none of it leaving good impression; seeing these people then in that place did not make me think



I ought to change my mind” (17). The author does not find Thamel a better place than the fair of her hometown. She compares Thamel with a fair and writes, “[...] I had when I was a child, going to something called “the fair,” something beyond the every day, something that would end when I was not asleep, when I was not in a dream. I did truly feel as if I was in the unreal, the magical, extraordinary” (17, 18). She herself has never seen the Garden of Eden but compares the land of eastern Himalaya region with the mythological garden of the west. Comparing the Garden of Eden she writes, “I was reminded again the Garden of Eden is our ideal and our idyll, the place where food and flowers are one” (65). Her interest of exploring the nook and corner of Nepal and creating a discourse about Nepal is the reconstructing the Orient. Considering the activities of the Orientalists in the Oriental land Said argues as, “. . . in which it was reconstructed by the Orientalist, in the precisely actual form in which the modern Orient was lived in, studied, or imagined, *the geographical space of the Orient* was penetrated, worked over, taken hold of”(209). The writer describes the natural beauty of Nepal which is representative because it is insufficient to reflect the reality and what she presents is also based on her own preconception rather than analyzing the reality of the country and its physical environment. In her interpretations there found emotional as well scathe description of the places of eastern Nepal and her capital, Kathmandu respectively. Before reaching Hedangna, the narrator and her friends reach the place which is very beautiful and compares it with the western mythological the Garden of Eden, the author suspects that the place where they have been standing falls into the category of a place with no name. The novelist presents her Orientalist attitude to the place and writes, “In this village almost every building had something written on it in red paint and the drawing of the sun in much the same way I had seen on the bridge earlier. I did not ask Sunam where we were, for I suspected it fell into the category of a place with no name, a place where he

did not understand the language” (65). Said finds that misnaming and identifying the Oriental land as mythological place as a quality of Orientalism and states:

The Orient therefore alternated in the mind’s geography between being an Old World to which one returned, as to Eden or Paradise, there to set up a new version of the old, and being a wholly new place to which one came as Columbus came to America, in order to set up a New World (although, ironically, Columbus himself thought that he discovered a new part of the Old World). (57)

The novelist has shown her estrangement about Nepal while making preparation to leave Vermont, a metropolitan city of US, for Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. The Orientalist views the Orient’s land inferior, unfamiliar and land of barbaric. Said views that the Occident views the Orient land imaginative and the Occident explores knowledge on Orient geography by dramatizing rather than studying the real topography. Said, talking on the geographical views of the West in regard to non west as, “For there is no doubt that imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away” (54). Kincaid describes Nepal in the novel as the land full of diseases which are not existed in the part of the west. She presents her attitude regarding this in the novel as, “I had myself inoculated against diseases for which I had not known antidotes existed (rabies) and against diseases I had not known existed (Japanese encephalitis)” (5). The author leaves her home in the mountains of Vermont at dawn one morning at the beginning of October. Everything was in its own position but she finds the environment very different therefore, she feels strange. The strange feeling overwhelms in her mind for the reason that she has been preparing to leave Vermont for Kathmandu. She expresses her nostalgia for remembering the exotic land of Nepal. She expresses her strangeness

remembering Nepal, the east, as, “And yet as I drove away from my house, I had the strange sensation that I might be seeing everything in the way I was seeing it for the last time . . .” (8). The author feels the same sensation on the day when she leaves her home, at the airport which is four hours away from her home and states, “I insisted to myself that everything I saw I was seeing for the last time” (9). The more the author comes to the east, the more her strange sensation deeply rooted in her mind. Arriving at airport in Hong Kong she expresses her anxiety as, “But even so in Hong Kong, in the airport, I felt strange: alone, lonely, excited, happy, afraid, despair, all at the same time” (10). She finds her anxiety and strange sensation exaggerated while she was leaving Hong Kong to Kathmandu just she landed on the national airlines of Nepal. Expressing her anxiety she writes, “These feelings were exaggerated when I got on the plane, Royal Air Nepal, and was told that time was not an hour ahead or an hour behind. . .” (10). While the author is preparing to leave Kathmandu for the eastern Himalayan she stays in Thamel, the heart of tourist attraction centre of Nepal, and analyses the then current political status of Nepal. She finds the condition is not favored for the tourist like her as the land is exotic. The feeling of estrangement was at the apex when she was in Thamel and describes her feelings as, “From time to time I lost a sense of who I was, what I thought myself to be, what I knew to be my won true self, but this did not make me panic or become full of fear” (20). The author’s feeling of isolation and strangeness has been increased in the heart of the author when she really experiences the land, Nepal and her capital city, Kathmandu. The author finds Thamel as untidy and unsystematic city. She compares Thamel and says, “It is a special area, like a little village separate from the rest of the city. It is filled with shops and restaurants and native European people who look poor, dirty and bedraggled” (17). The way she presents Thamel as a place where the poor foreigners visit to pass their days with little spending. Her presentation reflects

Thamel as a suffocating place for the tourists in Nepal. The author views the location of Nepal distant and views, “It meant that while I could calculate the rest of the world based on that thing called the hour being behind or ahead of me, when I was in Nepal fifteen minutes was lost or gained one way or the other, How confusing is such a thing, how magical is such a thing, how correct is such a thing” (11). While recognizing the places of Kathmandu and other places of Nepal where she visited, the author uses her over homogenizing, essentialist, reductive or simplistic ideas to reconstruct them. She presents Kathmandu as the land different from the European land and states, “Kathmandu is fun, and fun for shopping too\_\_” (16). She over homogenizes Kathmandu, as the place where the recent technology has not been developed as compared to the developed countries of the world and states the doubt whether or not the popular hotels in Kathmandu accept the credit cards. She presents her doubt regarding the acceptance of the credit cards in Nepal she says, “You will need money only in Kathmandu and in transit for meal and lodging (easily we can live for \$50/day, I think). I cannot recall if our hotel, the Norbu Linka, takes credit cards or not” (16). The novel sets during the political unrest, when then king Gyandendra suspended the elected government and the Maoist war was at a peak, in Nepal. The then degraded political condition of Nepal leads her estrangement into fear. She tells, “The irony of me getting into the local spirit of things was not lost on me, but this feeling of estrangement was soon replace altogether with a sense of being lost in amazement and wonder an awe” (20). The author fears to continue the trek where she had planned to visit and describes the then political scenario of Nepal connecting with the Maoist as:

The king had dismissed parliament, and I wondered how that would affect our trip, for the king’s dismissing parliament had something to do with the Maoist guerrillas, and I was going into the countryside where the Maoist

guerrillas might be, and since they couldn't kill the king would they kill me instead? (20).

In the novel she describes Nepal as a poor and underdeveloped place with various difficulties and the land is inflected war and conflict. She only presents Himalaya as the homeland of natural beauty and except that she describes Nepal on the basis of newspapers' news. She mentions Kathmandu in this way, "All places of commerce must be closed. We gathered up our seed and put them away until the next day, when they were shipped out after being inspected and the proper people allowed us to do so. And then we waited to leave those place, Kathmandu, Nepal" (187). The author finds the pitiable condition of the school located in Tumlingtar which was shown to her by a school teacher. She remembers the school where she sent her children to study while staying in Tumlingtar in tent and writes, "I could remember the school building in my village, a nice, very big red brick building that was properly ventilated and properly heated and had all sorts of necessities and comforts, and yet I had found much fault with it and had refused to send my children to school there" (24). She finds Nepal and Vermont, her home town, very distinct place and compares these places. Comparing Kathmandu, a city of crowd of aimless people, lacks even the basic facility of life that is water. The activities of the Nepalese people in Thamel reminds her the Nepalese do not belong to the twenty-first century but behaving like the people of some centuries back. She writes about Thamel as:

Just outside the window of my hotel was an area enclosed by concrete, of perhaps forty feet by forty feet. It had pipes, with water constantly pouring out of them ---- -- it was a communal place for doing things that required water. People were bathing, washing their clothes, or filling up utensils with water. Because of my own particular history, every person I saw in the Thamel was familiar also. The

person in the restaurant complaining about the lack of some luxury was familiar, the person at the public baths longing for luxuries of every kind was familiar, the person confused and in a quandary was familiar. (18)

She finds Thamel, the place where the European visit really lack the facilities and is an inferno but the native finding the place with all sorts of comforts for the tourist. She remembers Vermont while living in Tumlingtar in the tent under very difficult circumstances and writes, “I could remember my house with its convenient and fantastic plumbing and water to be had any time I needed it, just by opening the tap in my fantastically equipped kitchen” (24). The author got health worker to tell about the health related problems in the eastern Nepal and compares the condition of health facility in Vermont and writes, “I could remember my doctor, a man named Henry Lodge, who I often believe exists solely to reassure me that I am not about to drop dead from some imagined catastrophic illness” (24). She finds Nepal, a country, where majority of the people lose their life untimely lacking hospitals and doctors. She finds Nepal lacks market. The people cannot purchase the things that they need easily. The group finds very difficult to get beer in Tumlingtar and she remembers the market place in Vermont and writes, “I could still remember my supermarket, The Price Chopper, overflowing with fruits and vegetables from Florida, California or Chile, just so I could choose to buy or not buy, strawberries for instance, in summer, winter, any time I liked” (24, 25).

While she returns in Kathmandu she found the land is guided by money and different from Himalaya regions. She views that Thamel, where, there was the thread of Maoists, is equally insecure as the remote areas of eastern Nepal for the tourist and writes, “We looked out and saw a black tunnel of smoke coming from a building nearby, perhaps one quarter of a mile away. While looking we heard and saw at the same time a loud nose and an impenetrable, black, ball-

shaped cloud coming from a structure not far from the first one” (187). The author tries to present Nepal, a country without having any sorts of physical comforts but a beautiful garden; she compares her efforts of collecting seeds with invention and finds that the foreigners need to do a lot to raise consciousness thus writes, “The garden is an invention, the garden is an awareness, a self-consciousness, an artifice” (188). She believes that the seeds which they collected during their trek to different parts of Nepal would make their respective hometowns beautiful. She compares Nepal with nothing and says that what they got from nothing would decorate their gardens and writes,” [...] feel that we are making something natural when we make a garden, something that, if come upon unexpectedly, is a pleasure to behold; something that banishes the idea of order and hard work and disappointments and sadness, even as the garden is sometimes made up of nothing but all that” (189). Dr. Arun Gupto, one of the scholars of Nepal, reviews Orientalism and presents his idea how it tends to misrepresent the East as, “[. . .] the European sense of superiority, but resisting and rejecting their definition of the eastern cultures from the location of superiority, as if they have some predetermined authority to do such things” (52). Kincaid’s attempts too reflect her superiority over the land of Nepal. Talking about how fake information do the Orientalists present over the east regarding their culture, tradition and geography Dr. Gupto writes, “What I define you is you and the real you does not exist beyond my definition: this is orientalist perspective to dictate the other” (52). As Gupto believes what orientalist tells about the East is self created and does not contain the information that defines what exactly the East is, kincaid’s ideas on topography of the country is also based on her own observation and her attempts fail to represent the places of Nepal and hence the text *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* misrepresents the places of Nepal.

### III. Conclusion: Misrepresentation: A Semiotic Problem

Misrepresentation is to give information about somebody or something that is not true or complete so that other people have the wrong impression about them or it. Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* has also misrepresented Nepal and the Nepalese through the use of the *Orientalism*. In the novel the novelist names the people who assist her during her trek to the Eastern Himalayan region. She names them like "Table", "Cook" and "I Love You" as if the Nepalese people do not have their name according to their culture and tradition. Her attempt of naming the Nepalese is neither true nor complete because the given names do not reflect the Nepalese culture and tradition. Every name has its significant to culture but the name she provides has nothing to do with the Nepalese culture. The author tries to present the Nepalese with her Latinized name but it misrepresents the Nepalese.

Misrepresentation undergoes the various crises that help to give false characteristics of people and the things. The author over emphasized the natural beauty of Nepal especially the eastern Himalayan region but shows her strong dislike with the leeches and other parasitic creatures, which are in fact complement to each other. She compares the land of Nepal with Garden of Eden in the one hand and on the other hand chooses the death as the best alternative as she faced that land. Comparing the part of Nepal with mythological garden seem to describe the country positively but in fact she blends the reality of Nepal negatively more than representing what the things are in reality. When the author is in Suketar where she had been waiting for the airplane she felt tired and exhausted. She further states that she had had the feeling of dying not because of the fear of Maoist whom she considered from the very beginning as a parasitic creature nor because of the hangover from drinking of a bottle and a half of beer but she thinks it because of the over effort of walking on the places which she previously consider with Eden Garden. Such type of imbalance writing makes other people confuse. Thus, the novel



misrepresents the country and her people. Misrepresentation through the writing especially through the international publishing house plays a vital role to change the thoughts of the people. Kincaid's novel gives the message that the Nepalese and their land are inferior to the foreigners. She presents the condition of the Nepalese and the country in that particular time when the country was facing the civil war, a condition in which the normal life of the people had been paralyzed both by the government and the revolutionary. Misrepresentation plays a vital role to change the thoughts of the people. It works as a new epistemology to twist the people's multifaceted personalities and in novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* there are many examples which have misrepresented the Nepalese people. Thus, it helps to misrepresent the image of the Nepalese nationality among the intellectuals of the world.

Misrepresentation is a significant turning point which causes consternation because it presents new problems to which there are no immediate answers. Misrepresentation is the product of hierarchy. When somebody finds some other people mimic and weak and possesses the power of domination then the misrepresentation begins. In the novel Kincaid presents her superiority over the Nepalese. She shows her presence with pride because she paid forty dollar to the porter who carried her luggage to the taxi station. Similarly while the troop was at Topke Gola, the porters were busy in preparing their meal and Sue and the author were busy in separating the seeds from the fleshly fruits, the author responses the activities of the porters and tells that the porters from Nepal, especially those who were making accompany with the author and her friends, know nothing, except doing the physical work. The novel muddles the persons who want to know about Nepal and her people. While the author and her friends are in troublesome condition in Chepuwa, in between the fear of leeches and Maoist, she finds the land exotic and unpleasant but when it is free from such she considers it even better than a place of

North America. Describing the disturbing place at Chepuwa she represents suspension either the Maoists would let them to live or not. Reaching to Topke Gola, a beautiful village, she praises Nepal as the land of the natural beauty. She finds the people in the village feed the plants to the animals as fodder, which was the valuable in Wales. Misrepresentation is a condition in which difficult question of who we are is often answered by how others see us and thus we may perpetuate by the myths which are made by others. Kincaid presents the dual identity of the country and people to the readers through her writing. Therefore, the one who depends with the author's description to know the reality of Nepal fails to get the right information but takes the things mentions in the novel as a true which causes irony, the reader knows the one but the reality is another.

The moving story of the novel could not capture the reality of the mountain where she had visited with her friends. She could not present the deep reality of the place and describes by using various adjectives and brings extra beauty in narration. She describes the situation and authority behaviors in this way "Dateline" or something like that. Maoist guerrillas had driven out the Nepalese authority at gunpoint. The author in the novel views how the civil war, a war within the country, destroys the physical infrastructure. She points a building which was set fire by the Maoist for the reason that the building was occupied by the soldiers, the then supporters of the government. She makes a picture of the place where she had visited. The author on the one hand praises the topography of Nepal and compares the same with the Garden of Eden and on the other hand misidentifies the Nepal on a way she likes. The author's tends to touch all the aspects whatever she viewed during the trek analyzing the socio-cultural and economic condition of Nepal through her own perspective, ignoring the reality. Therefore, the novel leads the readers to the condition either to take the things she described are real or only based on her own

imagination. The writing of Kincaid creates misrepresentation of Nepalese and good readers especially the readers of the international level consider the misrepresentation of the Nepalese the real because the novel reaches to the readers who exactly do not know Nepal and shape unknown country and her people as the author identifies in the text.

The land seems to be the cultivated land where various domesticated animals appear. The author describes the places near the Tamor River very beautiful and suitable for the cultivation of different types of cash crops and food crops. She makes plan to return Kathmandu at last. She finds the topography of Nepal only beautiful but not a comfort and cozy. Her dual representations, one as land of Garden of Eden and another the land with least comfort, makes the readers difficult to identify Nepal and the Nepalese therefore misrepresentation of Nepal and the Nepalese in the text is a semiotic problem. Her writing misrepresents the people whom she met and places she visited it created problem to understand what really is Nepal either really a Garden of Eden or exotic land as Edward Said views in his book *Oreintalism* , Kincaid misrepresents through the novel *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* has created a semiotic problem.

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