

Tribhuvan University

Tenzing Norgay as a Subaltern Hero in John Hunt's *The Ascend of Everest*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

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Kirtipur, Kathmandu

February 2021

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Samir Duwadi has completed his thesis entitled, “Tenzing Norgay as a Subaltern Hero in John Hunt’s *The Ascend of Everest*” under my supervision. He carried out his research work from May, 2020 to February 2021. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Tenzing Norgay as a Subaltern Hero in John Hunt’s *The Ascend of Everest*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Samir Duwadi has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Acknowledgements

This research work would not have been complete without the encouragement and scholarly guidance of Tara Lal Shrestha PhD, Central Department of English, and T.U. Apart from providing relevant source materials, he guided me right from the beginning to very end, frequently checking the content and the structure of study, going painstakingly through the script and correcting mistakes. In this regard, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to him for being such a cooperative supervisor.

I am also thankful to Prof. Dr. Jiblal Sapkota, Head of the Central Department of English, for the approval of this research work. I would like to extend my gratitude to all other respected Lecturers, Professors and Faculty Members who inspired me to achieve my dream of being a graduate in Masters of Arts in English Literature. My special appreciation goes to my family, friends and well-wishers for their feedbacks and suggestions regarding my research work.

Samir Duwadi

February 2021

## Tenzing Norgay as a Subaltern Hero in John Hunt's *The Ascend of Everest*

### Abstract

*The research paper examines the transition and transformation of a subaltern hero, Tenzing Norgay Sherpa with reference to John Hunt's The Ascend of Everest. Though the text documents Sherpa as the supplementary agent of Mt Everest expedition of 1953 within hegemonic power structure, but his impressive personality which climbing skills establishes him as a subaltern hero. The transformation of Tenzing from an ordinary individual to an extraordinary climber creates an indispensable space within elitist discourse where Sherpa stands as subaltern hero. On the foundation of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?", this paper investigates how Sherpa speaks as a subaltern hero, who in the very beginning, is represented as a porter but in the later part of the expedition establishes himself as a subaltern hero despite the fact that there is meager space to him to act as key actor.*

*Key words: Hegemony, subaltern, representation, agency.*

Subaltern studies, unlike elitist notions, foregrounds the perspective that looks the history from below, where the various groups of people are margins of the society exist as constructive force. But, according to subaltern historians, it is a challenging task to find real consciousness of the subaltern for they often embrace the ideology of elite class. The recent concept of subaltern consciousness represents the subaltern as hero, which can be justified from various literary texts. The subaltern characters through play a supplementary role within the elitist canons can transform their existence into a subaltern protagonist. A remarkable instance is representation of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa in John Hunt's *The Ascend of Everest* published in 1953.

Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, in the beginning of Hunt's *The Ascend of Everest*, stands as a supplementary character- a porter. If he was able to ascend the top of the Mount Everest on his own existence nobody would have recognized him, Unlike other porters, Tenzing appears frequently, but his role is limited to the mundane activities of Everest expedition contrary to his contribution. Tenzing excavates the path to the top of the Everest but in the end the writer hesitates to credit him. This research articulates who speaks for his existence? How could we trust it as a true representation? However, how could Tenzing exist as an indispensable subaltern hero? Keeping these research questions into consideration, Spivak's ideas about subaltern and agency have been used as key theoretical tool, Spivak argues that unless a Subaltern (studies) reaches to a step of self-representation he/she cannot speak. Tenzing's existence therefore is not beyond this ambivalence of representation. At the same time, his indispensable existence as subaltern hero is noteworthy.

This research paper explores John Hunt's *The Ascend of Everest* as the reengineering of colonial legacy that,-portrays the Nepalese as the 'other'. However, Tenzing exists as a remarkable actor in the expedition. This paper investigates how Tenzing demonstrates audaciousness and maturity in climbing the Mount Everest. Also, one can find John Hunt's ideas to take side of the subaltern people in a very strategic move giving colonization a new form. Hunt himself seems to be guided by the colonial mindset and ideology during his expedition to the Everest. In his portrayal of Everest expedition of Tenzing, Hunt creates a persona of himself who is against the social stigmatization of subalterns; however, in doing so he simultaneously valorizes the Britishers while overlooking Tenzing. For instance, although both the parties, the Britishers and the Nepalese Sherpa, painstakingly ascended the top of the Everest, it was only the Britishers who were recognized as

the authentic ascenders while Tenzing as a courageous porter. After reading this text from the subaltern perspective, the researcher concludes that Hunt acts as the spokesperson of powerless subaltern Tenzing along with valorizing colonial agent.

John Hunt seems to be speaking on the behalf of subaltern in *The Ascend of Everest*. At the same time, there is implicit attempt of misrepresenting the subaltern as Hunt vividly justifies the subaltern as similar to the servant of the Britishers. He writes, “Sherpa’s carrying an awkward load of twelve foot pole, cut from the forest around Thyangboche” (99). The large number of indigenous Sherpa made successful exploration but they rarely played the protagonist role in the center. They are represented as carrier, cooks, soldiers, porters, guides, interpreters, pilots, watchdogs, as they are recruited and paid certain amount of money. The Sherpas are hence paid workers.

This memoir, *The Ascend of Everest*, has elicited wide range of critical acclaim from the different critics of repute. Since the publication of the text, it has received many criticisms of different perspectives from diverse sources. Some critics have paid attention to thematic analysis of the text whereas others have tried to dig out distinctive interpretations like British colonialism, Marxist standpoint, Realistic parameter while other talk about Eco criticism. Different critics see political issues in different reviews. Ortner in *Mountaineering and Treaking Tourism* claims that; the position of European whites with bourgeois “positions it critically against bourgeois existence, even as the sport demands the resources made possible by such an existence” (35). In this game of mountaineering and escapism, the point of climbing throughout the decades was to find something that one cannot find in modern life. However, as Ortner points out, what exactly it is about modern life that people are

escaping changes over time so that white people are want to climb the Everest for pleasure, victory and joyful excitement.

American Trekker Aubrey Sacco writes in *Backpacker Magazine*. This magazine, among other print and digital media, often advertises bucket list backpacking trips around the world. Sacco writes, “The implication that traveling in Nepal is safe because of the constructed media images of the Mt Everest, which reinforces notions of neocolonialism” (7). It structures Nepal as a personal discovery playground of Westerners. The dark side, when the unexpected fantasy of Shangri-La turns deadly, has its roots in colonialism. This article complains about systems of governmental policy and action that mired the investigation of Sacco’s disappearance; neglecting to recognize the socio-political and economic history of this country and it would be a best way of economy dependent on tourism.

Miller Maggie demonstrates in his article, “*An Exploration of Sherpas Narrative*”, Tenzing seems to be a faithful servant of British ambition. He is adapted to western nation of victory. He writes, “The raising and planting of flags as gesturing victory and news Sherpa of national or imperial influence ..... The clothing he wears and the equipment he carries, manufactured in Britain under a scientific investment by the British state” (8). He accepts British leadership, planning, technological advancement and enlightened rationality. Tenzing had been enduring vision of British Empire with humanist manner. Tenzing’s success, achievement in reaching to top of the Everest with Hillary demonstrates the progress with glorious way which way of Hillary’s celebration symbolized in silent acquiescence to the energizing and modernist advance of British.

David Robbins writes under the British Raj in South Asia the term ‘Sahib’ was used as a polite term to denote the white master “the term "sahibs," both in the



title and throughout the paper. The term is meant to cover all the climbers who have come to the Himalayas and employed Sherpa to help them climb the peaks”(5). The Sherpas are the ethnic group originally from Tibet but they reside in the most mountainous region of Nepal, high in the Himalaya the modern usage of the term Sahib- Sherpa relationship is to depict operations of power and hierarchy between the colonialist white man and the native other. The heroic qualities demonstrated by the Sherpa’s reveals the extension of the cultural aspects of the British hero. The Sherpa had internalized a sporting hero that is feature of cultural spirit.

Different critics and reviewers have their different perspective to analyze the text and most of the reviewers focus upon the colonial issues, Marxist, ethos, cultural values and economic issues. Although different critics have analyzed from various perspectives, few have gone through the lens of Subaltern Studies. So the research makes modest investigation on how Tenzing Norgay Sherpa establishes himself as a subaltern hero in relation to that particular Nepalese society, which has not been explored yet.

Antonio Gramsci adopted the term “subaltern” refers to those groups of the society of inferior rank who are the subject to hegemony of the ruling class. These subaltern classes include marginalized groups such as peasant workers and others, who were forced to stay from Germanic power. Gramsci, “is concerned with the intellectual role in subaltern’s culture and political movement into hegemony” (78).

The subaltern studies take the issues from the bottom and search their agency in history; it differs according to the nature of the country’s historical situation. The subaltern studies group then can never represent their real voice. The notion of community is frequently based in an inside-outside dichotomy of the subaltern subjective consciousness. What is represented by subaltern studies group is their own

voice. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak illustrates in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" argues "since subaltern people lack history, they cannot speak. She specially raises the issues of the females as subaltern who are 'more deeply in shadow' and states, "the subalterns as female cannot be read and speak" (104).

Subaltern Studies, emerged in 1982 in India to write the ignored historiography of marginalized people, tried its best to establish the subalterns as an autonomous body. This group led by Ranjit Guha, endeavored to provide the subaltern people with their own voice. The group is known as a group of historians who "aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Society" (vii). This group aimed to examine the general attribute of subordination in south Asian society in terms of class, cast, age gender and office.

Subaltern studies as a theory of change, sustained vigorous political commitment. The academic atmosphere was witnessing a great change at the time. Postmodernism and post-structuralism had a strong hold and the academic field. On the other hand, cultural studies were getting more and more attention from all sides. In this backdrop, subaltern studies also witnessed a change along with *Subaltern Studies IV*. The reason was that Subaltern Studies IV included the writing of two U.S. based theorists like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Banard S. Cohn who brought cultural mode to subaltern studies with her seminal essay, "Subaltern Studies, deconstruction Historiography" (1986). She contributed Subaltern studies to shift to representation from politics. She gives literary mode to subaltern studies. Spivak, in the *Subaltern Studies V*, reinforced the literary mode as she contributed to the translation of Mahashwetadevi's "Standadayini" as well as commentary on entitled "A literary Representation of Subaltern, Mahasweta Devi's standayini".

Spivak is credited to have given subaltern studies with the feminist mode as well as can be seen in “Subaltern Studies Deconstructing Historiography”, where she raises the feminist issues. Slowly but surely, subaltern studies was moving towards representation, critical theory and cultural studies from subaltern politics. Spivak in her essay writes: “The subaltern studies collective...generally perceive their task as making in theory of consciousness or culture rather than specifically a theory of change” (330). It was the first major shift that emerged in the history of subaltern Studies. Meanwhile, socialist Communist and Marxist system were deteriorating throughout the world. And, the academic world was moving toward post- Marxist studies. In such a context, postcolonial studies reminded the only domain which could provide a platform to the world voices. So, it remained as the center of hope for marginalized mass in the Third World countries.

These writers have tried their best to defend it from the harsh criticism of the critics. Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay “invitation to a dialogue” not only tries to defend it from the critics especially the Marxist ones but also pinpoints its problematic relation with Marxism. In 1988 Spivak’s seminal essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” got published. This essay is credited to have brought the Subalternity into postcolonial domain. In this essay she represents women as a subaltern group. They argue that it indicates the torn consciousness colonialism brought about in the middle class people by exposing them to two kinds of existence master- slave, colonizer- colonized, elite- subaltern and so forth.

In the British canonical text all the Sherpas are cheap but all the Europeans are expensive in John Hunt’s memoir *The Ascend of Everest*. The Sherpas are compelled to bear exploitation, suppression, injustice, victimization and domination under the British hegemony. John Hunt tries to capture bildungsroman issues of class

and physical body in climbing the Mt Everest. In this text, Hunt brings the idea of bildungsroman representative Tenzing is in main stream of ascending the Everest and he tries to give justice to Tenzing and other indigenous Sherpa. Hunt is compelled to present Tenzing Norgay as 'hero of mountain' and 'tiger of snow'. Tenzing's struggle and contribution proves milestone of exploration of Mt Everest. His courage and enthusiasm become source of inspiration to other Sherpa and climber of Mt Everest.

This thesis is concerned with expedition of the Mt Everest which has been designed dominantly by keeping Tenzing Norgay at the core in the popular history of exploration. Hunt puts his effort to reflect upon subaltern pictures in *The Ascend of Everest* in relation to bildungsroman. Hunt exhibits, "Tenzing to pose on top for me, waving his axe on which was a string of flags – United Nations, British, Nepalese and Indian" (187). The photograph of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa holding aloft his ice axe with flag of Britain, Nepal, India and the United Nations flutter in the wind and community of benevolent Sherpa are portrayed within different forms and positions in mountaineering. The protagonist Tenzing undergoes much suffering, somewhere and sometimes he himself is engulfed in pain, woes, high altitude sickness, and in other places he puts the vicious ideology where suffering is inevitable. Due to those changes and sufferings, his social life improves. Hence, there is bildungsroman which helps to portrays Tenzing as a subaltern hero.

In John Hunt's *The Ascend of Everest*, Tenzing plays important role to reach the top of the Mt Everest. In the text, there lies western gaze on the Sherpas who help in mountaineering. Tenzing is poor economically, politically, socially and globally. He has low economic status and is unable to purchase all the required equipments for mountaineering. However, the status of Sherpa has been changed as Hunt writes,

“There was wild commotions now throughout the valley, mingled with some political opportunism, mainly over the achievement of Tenzing, a native of Nepal, whom they rightly hailed as national hero” (203).

Tenzing Norgay undergoes through much suffering, however, the hope and consciousness vision emerged inside him encourages him to be bold, enthusiastic and face difficulties while ascending the Everest exactly as a characterization in bildungsroman as Smith and Watson have pointed, “development and social formation of young man” (189). Hunt bestows courage and conscience to Tenzing in order to provide him social justice. Hence, his deep instinctive insight into subaltern’s problems and dilemmas misrepresentation helps in presenting the realistic representation of Tenzing.

Hunt argues that both elite and subaltern have equal contribution in history of construction of Mt Everest but subaltern Tenzing Norgay Sherpas’s voices and deeds are not included in history as the primary contributor because he is powerless. Indigenous Sherpa actually indicates the long marginalized and subjugated people whose actions and deeds are not included in colonial and bourgeois nationalist historiography. While constructing history, both subaltern and elite play equal role but subaltern contributions are excluded while writing history. As a result, subaltern Studies provide space for subaltern’s voice and contribution in history. So that through the subaltern theory Tenzing is existential subaltern hero. Hunt writes, “Achievement of Tenzing and Hillary in becoming the first human beings to stand at the highest point on earth..... It has been rightly acclaimed the world over and we, the other member of the Everest team rejoiced at their triumph” (Xi). If there was absence of indigenous Tenzing, it would have been impossible to create the own history of elite European white man. Tenzing was helped the European elite to reach the top of the Everest. As a

result, colonial leader John Hunt's memoir mainly focuses on European pride so that most of the stories favor his own interest. Tenzing and all Sherpa communities are voiceless so that written histories are not in favor of them but subaltern theory helps to sustain their voice and contribution in history.

The first news broadcast about the expedition of Mt Everest was sent to the radio post from Namche Bazaar and the message was sent by the code message to London in that time the queen Elizabeth II learned of the achievement on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1953; the next day the news broke around the world. Later the year, Hillary and Tenzing were knighted by the queen. Here we can find the 'othering' of subaltern as Spivak uses a term subaltern in this light "the world subjects as a limited and limiting other" (522). Nepalese indigenous Sherpas are subject of Everest climbers and they are limited by the Britishers because of their poor economic, social and global status. The achievement of Everest Expedition is even broadcasted under the British command. The credit for the achievement was given to British colonial rulers, administrator, policies, institutions, and cultures. The Queen Elizabeth II is a symbol of colonial power. The Elizabeth gives British Empire medal to Tenzing. It is clearly shows that Tenzing's physical body and his courage are bought through the medal. It is British colonial strategy which has been proved by the following lines of the text:

Amid much chatter, we escorted them into camp where the Sherpas, grinning broadly, crowded round, shaking Edmund warmly by the hand offering a more respectful, indeed reverent welcome to Tenzing, their great leader . . . perhaps more than rest of us at the moment, realize the faint but glorious possibility of getting the headlines home in time for the coronation of her majesty the queen.

(195)

This statement proves that subalterns are included in the text with skillful manner. Hillary and Norgay are invaluable climbers of expedition of the Everest summit. In the course of struggle, Tenzing is the representative subaltern. The post-colonial Marxist feminist critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak claims that the subaltern cannot speak. According to Spivak, “the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier economic text, can the subaltern speak?” (522). John Hunt is representative elite to participate in writing history. He creates stereotypical image of Tenzing ‘tiger of snow’. Here, Tenzing has no space in construction of the Everest history so that hunt’s way of misrepresentation portrays Tenzing as a subaltern hero.

Subaltern refers to those groups of the society of inferior rank who are the subject of hegemony of the ruling class. It, according to Gramsci, “is concerned with the intellectual role in subaltern’s culture and political movement into hegemony” (78). Here, the indigenous Sherpas are inferiors, they in their own. In John Hunt’s *The Ascend of Everest* Hunt, Norgay’s real voice is hidden. For instance:

By the time we met in the Embassy garden, he appeared to be fully restored, if still a little fine-drawn; at any rate, it was obvious that there was no doubt at all in his mind as to his own fitness and the part he hopped to play . . .

Tenzing enthusiasm and sprit, however, that had said to me while still convalescing to offer his services, if only as far as the top of the icefall. (56)

In the past, indigenous Sherpas had their own identity. In their vein circulated ancestry blood with flavor of mountain and Himalayas. They had intimate bonding to climbing the Mt Everest. When European elites started to exploration of the Mt Everest with the help of the Sherpas, slowly their own identity became discursive. They defined the Sherpa through dominant social structure. Most of the Sherpas faced economic problem that is why they are compelled to earn money by trekking

and mountaineering. They have no right to move in autonomous way as they are going ahead as per the ideas of colonizers. The European elites shape Sherpa's identity through discursive way. Slowly and gradually Tenzing's identity becomes discursive under the hegemonic power.

In the similar fashion, Ranajit Guha, in his essay "Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography" remarks, "Colonialism was a rule with hegemony" (307). Here is Hunt and British expedition team rule with hegemonic power over Nepalese indigenous Sherpa. Hunt writes, "We had followed the Brigade of Gurkhas the voluntary services of five N-G-O-s to assist to Charles Wyllie in the task of organization the large force of colliers during the march out" (59). Subalterns are those of inferior rank who are subordinated in term of class. As an opposition, they are not those who are dominant, the ruling groups and the elites. Elites may be foreign official, N.G.O, organization and industrials etc. The elites were dispersed and varied; significantly their members might at regional and locals, either in a part of elite or according to circumstance and situation, classified as subaltern. Further, Guha maintains, "one clear demonstration of the difference between the elite and subaltern lies in the nature of political mobilization" (217). In *The Ascend of Everest*, Tenzing is a subaltern who always stands as an inferior and the main cause is his lower class status and his porter profession. In the Everest expedition all are led by Britisher they are elite and foreign people. Tenzing's physical body and stamina both are shaped by mountain geography so he is strong, well power, and enthusiastic; always ready to bear hardships but his stamina also proves to be inferior to British adventurers.

Guha believes that during the colonial period there was direct manipulation of power. Armed force and gun were used to control over the other. But hegemony



was used in the time of decolonization. Hegemony was simply applied in writing history. *The Ascend of Everest's* by John Hunt is representative of colonial commander chief in his own hand has power of armed force, gun and of writing history. He wants to possess his power from the top to bottom in all over the world. Hegemony was simply applied by Hunt while the writing history of climbing Mt Everest.

Subaltern studies attempts to write history from the below and it is term of power and knowledge. Michal Foucault claims, "the so called history is nothing rather than a discourse" (522). The history for him is the history of the power holders. History is always written by elite with power of knowledge and politics. They write history from the top that's why there is no space for marginalized history. Subaltern studies attempts to write history from the below. Tenzing is foundation and pillar of the Everest history and is superior to Edmund Hillary in terms of physical strength and willpower but Tenzing has been an agency of official discourses. John Hunt creates illusion of Tenzing's status. Hunt uses colonial politics over indigenous Sherpa which is proved by the following lines:

Accompanying the Sherpas were a number of Sherpanies: their wives and sweethearts, who hoped to be engaged as coolies on our journey to their native land of Khumbu. I was delighted to agree with this arrangement, for not only would they add color and gaiety to our company, but they carry loads as stoutly as their men folk. (58)

The benevolent Sherpas and Sherpanies were unskilled native laborers in the Everest expedition. Hunt shows great pleasure to sherpas' arrangement of carrying loads, which added color and cheerfulness to Britisher. Hunt demonestrstes:

At the same time as getting to know each other, we also made friends with our Sharpas. An arrangement which seems to give mutual pleasure in Himalayan travel is that each man is cared for by a faithful follower, who brings him his tea in the morning, lays out his sleeping bag at night, helps to carry his personal belongings and generally spoil his sahibs. (65)

Tenzing and all indigenous Sherpa are politicized by European colonial power. British aristocrats and proletariat Sherpa's have equal contribution to the history of exploration of Mt Everest but in the written histories there is not distinctive status of Sherpa because they are powerless they are only faithful follower. Their voice and deeds are not included with justice in history. The subaltern studies movement points out that historiography notion are often guided by elite's bias. Foucault states that, "third world subjects as a limited and limiting other" (522). The Subaltern theorists believe that subalterns are always used as a subject of ruling groups. They are marginalized and voiceless. The problem is that they cannot speak for themselves. They come into the agreement that the subalterns are always guided, taught and spoken by elites. So their real identity is not achieved easily.

Gayatri Spivak, in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" argues that, "The small peasant proprietor cannot represent themselves: they must be represented. Their representing must appear simultaneously as their master as an authority over them" (71). She has strongly made conclusive statement that the subaltern groups or the oppressed ones are indeed voiceless. The interplay between the pre-colonial and colonial structures of epistemic voice erases the space from which the subaltern can speak. Hunt illustrates, "Ed Hillary is the centre of party, mostly compose of Sherpa, as he demonstrates Cooke's specially adopted primus stove, aided by Tenzing as interpreter" (71). The subaltern hero Tenzing makes an attempt at self-representation,

yet this representation is not heard. The hegemonic listeners Hillary and Hunt do not recognize it, because it does not fit into the official institutional structures of representation.

The subaltern of Tenzing plays the important role to reach in the top of the Mt Everest but his identity can be preserved by deconstructing the elitism and creating the space in new historiographies of subaltern Tenzing to exist and speak independently. Hunt demonstrates, “Tenzing had done a magnificent job in getting us away to this encouragingly well-organized start” (60). Here Tenzing represents himself in enthusiastic way. He fulfills his responsibility very well. The elite groups made the subalterns marginalized and created false historiographies. John Hunt followed the tradition and made the subalterns marginalized in *The Ascend of Everest* that the class of Tenzing is victimized in colonial Hunt’s elitism. The tendency of unification is continually interrupted by the activity of the ruling groups of European white man that subalterns are always subject to the activist of the elite.

John Hunt has not presented the mutual cooperation between two main characters Tenzing and Hillary there is contradiction. Both play equal role to exploration of the Everest but Hillary has not been presents as much cooperative as Tenzing needs. Here is the politics of the intellectual elite class or bourgeois. That is why Hunt has observed the subaltern Sherpa from the bourgeois perspective. He wants to divide the subaltern and rules them. He presents the two contrasting forces between elite and subaltern. He depicts, “many minions are the sherpanies, who are busy, some cleaning cooking-pots or mending garments, others combining and planting each other’s long black tresses” (70). Hunt has presented pathetic conditions of the subaltern Sherpas and they seem accompanied by none in elite’s perspective.

Hunt's *The Ascend of Everest* lacking power, the recorded history of subaltern fails to justify the truth because history is loaded with the idea of powerful people with their own interest. Gramsci claims that, "the history of subaltern classes was just as complex as the history of dominant classes though the latter of necessary fragmented and episodic" (216). Recording the history is concerned with power. So that subalterns are depicted according to the lens of elites History includes in history but would be misrepresented. Like the colonial historiography, the bourgeois nationalist historiography wrote about the deeds and thoughts of those bourgeois only. It totally ignores the voice as well as the deeds of subaltern people who had played outstanding role.

In *The Ascend of Everest* subalterns are not guided by their own ego they are guided by bourgeois mentality. Therefore, subaltern's representation by the elite becomes nothing rather than misrepresentation. Spivak argues that "the subaltern must dare to speak for and themselves" (290). She speaks her anger saying bloody subaltern, as they do not speak. And they need mediation of the intellectuals for their representation so that they could be heard and spoken in the main stream.

Slemon adds features of mountaineering narratives were grounded in this structuring of nostalgia for the mountains and the imperial/colonial era to nostalgia for the mountaineer "Media and discourse focused on first ascents and new routes and extolled values of self-discipline, privation, training, technical knowledge, and teamwork" (206). When first climbing Everest European white man manages all. In the text, also, everything is managed by the European white - "Research unit, medical team, oxygen cylinders, thousands of feet rope, pitons, snap link, ice-hammers and axes, the mountaineering equipment items add after studying the difficulties encountered" (37).

The concept of triumph as defined by Selmon indicates “nationalist power more evolved to an embracing of nostalgia and romanticism that led to inter/intrapersonal and eventually commercially driven expeditions on Everest” (206). Undercurrents of colonial nostalgia informed the discourse and the era of postcolonial climbing, yet underneath this was the subtle awareness that the symbolic power of triumph could never actually do real political work. Nostalgia was the effect of this awareness of crisis in the discourse of colonialism. No direct power or political action could come from climbing Everest, and thus the focus of the reason for climbing shifted.

While sahib and Sherpa think these are relevant factors, most everyone has their “own stock of ethnic and national stereotypes” (33). They did not find any of these to be useful for gaining insight. Social class had an influence on mountaineering as well. Despite the squalor and primitive living of mountaineering, it was and remains true that the educated middle class have been the dominant social group in Himalayan mountaineering.

Sherpa and their environment have been exploited by both their government and Westerners who climb and adventure in their mountains and research indigenous Sherpa culture. Hunt maintains that Sherpa, “---- had had few excitements: the visits of a partner to their camp night; a fight with kukris’ --local knives between Sherpa and collie” (65). This shifted aspects of the Sherpa's relationship with the land, economic incentives, and spirituality regarding their mountains. The Sherpa’s participation in mountaineering expeditions is reflective of socioeconomic pressures faced by them but it is also related to the perceived name and fame that comes with successful mountain summits. In this sense Hunt maintains that, “Tenzing’s reputation among the Sherpa’s stood immensely high, if any persuasion were needed

to support that of our chosen leader in the south col 'Carries' he was the one best qualified to give it" (148). Additionally, the Sherpa's stories of death provide a space to critique tourism development.

The Sherpas and their communities use these moments of uncertainty to take stock of the purpose of their lives, often considering new trajectories. Sherpa's navigate their own experiences of, death, power relations shift and they demonstrate individual freedom and collective agency through their responses to the pressures and demands of Nepal's commercial mountaineering industry. Hunt thus regards Sherpas as, "several of the Sherpas all looking fresh and strong and with the same question trembling on their lips" (189). Rather than being seen as static and always vulnerable, Sherpa's harness inherent systems and power, which at times is vital to sustaining their lives.

The paper focuses upon the subaltern perspective of subaltern hero with social, cultural and political condition that bring the hero into being and bring ideas and legacies of the heroic that have emerged through attempts to conquer Everest, as a heightened symbolic site for the continued generation of British imperial aspirations and heroic masculinities. And it represents with an examination of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa's ascend of the Everest in 1953. But his case is illustrative of the powerful associations suggested by the subaltern approach, "the physical performance represents through body and politics on the audience or tale of deeds recollected through stories share with stunning victory" (57). However, Tenzing uses relationship and associations between the hero and society. Subaltern scholars focus on the subaltern myths, cults and ideology to revolt against colonialist and nationalist attitude, so subaltern hero Tenzing creates a legendary figure. His physical body is full of cultural connection with sporting totemic. Totemic is mainly focusing on

modernist cultural and political relationship that has established the body in this case the sporting and athletic body as an identity and differences. Tenzing's physical body is suitable for ascending Everest his stamina and his spread of courage help to achieve victory of mountaineering. It documents, "Tenzing's figure stands upright and slim; he has the dignity, courtesy, and charm of the elder of his attractive race" (57).

Totemism provides a cognitive map for Tenzing to embody locality as well as to locate his body in socially and spatially defined communities, national to international. It uses the metaphorical expression of Tenzing relationship with his body.

In the age of Simulacra and Simulation, Baudrillard, and an era of visual overproduction of the celebrity, the victorious photograph of Tenzing on the top of Everest retains a magical aura - distinctive atmosphere. They were subject to various re-circulations and reproductions the image is iconic and captures an authentic moment "testimony to the history which it has experienced" (32). The photography communicates a symbol of conquest. The memoir documents, "Tenzing stands of the North East Ridge of Everest his right arm is held up into the air and his movements of gesture represent both victory and pleasure" (91). His pose is, dynamic; he has just reached on the top of mountain with full of motion as well as he is ready to plant his ice axe into snow-covered peak. This splendid victorious picture evokes symbol of man's trump over the nature.

Miller Maggie demonstrates in his article *An Exploration of Sherpas Narrative*, Tenzing seems to be a faithful servant of British ambition. He is adapted to western nation of victory. The raising and planting of flags are as gesturing victory and news Sherpa of national or imperial influence. Furthermore, the clothing he wears and the equipment he carries, manufactured in Britain under a scientific

investment by the British state. He accepts British leadership, planning, technological advancement and enlightened rationality. Tenzing had been enduring vision of British Empire with benevolent humanist manner. Tenzing's success, achievement in reaching to top of the Everest with Hillary demonstrates the progress with glorious and striking way which way of Hillary's celebration symbolized in silent acquiescence to the energizing and modernist advance of the British.

The image is one that celebrates the British prestige. Hunt and the British climbers return home with the patriotic conquering. Everest secures the purposeful history of the empire as a moral necessity.

David Robbins writes under the British Raj in South Asia the term 'Sahib' was used as a polite term to denote the white master "the term "sahibs," both in the title and throughout the paper. The term is meant to cover all the climbers who have come to the Himalayas and employed Sherpas to help them climb the peaks" (5). The Sherpas are an ethnic group originally from Tibet but they reside in the most mountainous region of Nepal, high in the Himalaya the modern usage of the term 'Sahib- Sherpa relationship'- is to depict operations of power and hierarchy between the colonialist/ white man and the native other. The heroic qualities demonstrated by the Sherpa's reveals the extension of the cultural aspects of the British hero. The Sherpa had internalized a sporting hero that is feature of cultural spirit.

The Sherpas are remarkably fit and well strong with physically and mentally. They are courageous, unspoiled, laborious, virtuous and grace, kind hearted, benevolent, hospitable, and generous in spirit, sacrificial within nature, brimming with modesty and humility astonishing in strength and stamina. They eagerly devote on work with the selflessness manner. Hunt asserts, "We knew that our Sherpas were gregarious and found no discomfort in sleeping on the sardine-tin principle" (40).



The entire Sherpa's are emotionally and intellectually inferior to the western climbers. The western climbers are leading up ascend of the Everest. Their virtue, generosity, benevolent heart and sacrificial behavior mark them as moral spirituality and physical ascend of the mountain

The problem was generated when Tenzing reached at the top of the mountain. Tenzing was the greatest mountaineer of his generation as elaborated by Sarah Lyal, "Indeed, he was given full credit as the man behind the extraordinary logistical planning needed to carry out the expedition" (web). John Hunt draws upon a range of element implicitly and explicitly to highlight Tenzing's social differences and dependence with the British. Hunt focuses on all expedition account leading by Britishers where he has emphasized logistic equipment, technology, training and testing leadership and other what types of equipment are needed all are managed by British. It is great contribution by Hunt's perception. Hunt deploys architecture that link the climb to a continuous narrative of British influence trump and heroic. Heroic leaderships go to Tenzing, however each and every achievement during expedition is under the white heroic leadership.

Tenzing himself expresses this sentiment in his autobiography *The Tiger of Snow*, "Our victory was not only for ourselves not only for our own nation- but for all men everywhere" (23). By contrast Hillary's achievement was not deconstructed in this term it was accepted that he could be a world leading mountaineer and white. When they return in Kathmandu Tenzing was greeted by local people like a God. Banners posted every walls and pool inside of Kathmandu and they shouted proclaimed ,Tenzing Jindabad, long live Tenzing, Hail Tenzing, he is star of the world and he was linked to Nepal's other divine hero. Tenzing was carried through street in a state coach and decorated with flowers garlands and set high and exalted at

the front with Hunt and Hillary pit lower down behind him. In that time Hillary and Hunt felt less inferior and less status in front of Tenzing. All were decorated with full of red prouder and flowers garlands there is befitting status as heroes.

Referring to Tenzing's heroic deed, his effort to save life Hillary who falls with whole mass of ice, John Hunt writes, "that no harm came of it was due to the foresight and skill of Tenzing, who was strongly placed against a slip on the part of his companion and held him brilliantly on the rope" (100). This representation of Tenzing as a man of quality and worth celebrates his existence. This seems quite unconventional that a European white gaze sees a porter as a brilliant. Here, Tenzing has been admired consciously. Hunt expresses:

First employed by the British expedition to Everest in 1921, they have taken part in every subsequent expedition to the mountain. Cheerful, loyal and courageous, posed of exceptional hardihood, a few of them have now reached a good standard of proficiency as snow and ice climbers, and this has been recognized by the award of a "Tiger" badge by the Himalayan Club. They are wonderful companions on a mountain. (189)

This explicitly appreciates the indigenous people and their power in the process of ascending the Everest. As Spivak argues that subaltern can speak but only in the presence of certain medium, Hunts acts as a vehicle for carrying the voice that certifies the being of a porter, the history of Tenzing. In opposite to this, Hunt falls in a trap of European supremacy when he observes courage and loyalty of Sherpa. In this regard, Foucault's concept of power seems relevant. According to him, power functions not vertically but horizontally. The idea of power is rooted not only in specific group and institution but it is also omnipresent as Foucault's text, *The Order of Things*, provides the strength even to the marginal people in order to critique the

state. Regarding discourse and power, the book explores, “this power is not foreign to him; it does not reside outside him in the serenity of eternal and ceaselessly recommenced origins, for then the origin would be effectively posited; this power is that of his own being” (365). This statement clarifies the Foucauldian notion of omnipotent power. Power is also a contextual and relative phenomenon. The British Team has knowledge, money, maps and other required theoretical ideas of mountaineering. But they lack the practical knowledge of it. But without Sherpa’s practical knowledge and skill, it would not have been possible to reach the destination.

But when he finds Sherpa employed by British are very loyal, there lies a problem. There must have been stereotyped image of the native people inside his unconscious. According to his invisible drive, Hunt is a symbol of authority and the Sharps represented by Tenzing symbolize the loyalty. Hunt writes, “Tenzing had been moving rather slowly but he was climbing safely” (186). He assumes that he has power of ordering and the Sherpa’s should dance according to the desire and will of his white friends. Hunt views them, the natives as ruled. This echoes his colonial supremacist psychology. This condition almost suits with subaltern which refers to the groups in the society who are continuously being the subject of hegemony of the authority groups. Here, Tenzing by representing the Sherpa’s groups in the society becomes continuously the subject of hegemony of the authority.

In this memoir, there is a press conference in Kathmandu where the British expedition leader asserts that Tenzing was but an ‘aide’ on the mountain, that Hillary did all the lead climbing, that in fact Tenzing wasn’t technically even a very good climber. Tenzing plays the crucial role to reach the top of the Everest but his remarkable contribution and struggle are always hidden under the colonial history.

His role becomes meaningless he is only 'aide' of mountain. According to Guha, one clear demonstration of the different between the elites and subaltern lies in the nature of political mobilization: elite mobilization was achieved vertically through adoption of British power. Here, Hillary is representative British Colonial leader of mountaineering exploration. His status is bourgeois. So he adopts power over the indigenous Sherpa like Tenzing.

Hunt focuses that Hillary led everything but he ignores Tenzing's role. Tenzing is marginalized and made voiceless. The problem is he cannot speak himself. He is guided and spoken by elites. So his real identity may not be achieved easily. His identity is discursive. Under the British hegemony he is existential subaltern hero as the memoir expresses:

I cramponed backwards up the crack -----as Tenzing paid out the rope.

Finally I reached over the top of the rock and dragged myself . . . onto a wide ledge . . . I took a firm stance and signalled to Tenzing to come on up. As I heaved hard on the rope Tenzing wriggled his way up the crack and finally collapsed exhausted at the top like a giant fish when it has just been hauled from the sea after a terrible struggle. (204)

When near the top of Mt Everest Hillary shows up his colonial power. He claims that, he took first step in the top. Spivak in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Using the military term for lower ranks who cannot figure in the victor's account of history declared that 'the subaltern cannot speak'. Tenzing is representative of subaltern; his role is not inferior to Hillary. While the writing history of Everest John Hunt declared the victor's account of Tenzing, he only emphasized victor account of Hillary. Hillary said that "I reached over the top of the rock and dragged myself . . . onto a wide ledge----I took a firm stance and signaled to Tenzing to come on up"

(207). *The Ascend of Everest* has pictured the experiences and worldviews of subaltern characters but the voices and real representation of the powerless people does not come forth to be heard. The plight and grief of marginalized or the subaltern people and their experiences are only seen but not heard.

Tenzing cannot speak for himself. John Hunt's attempts to represent history of Tenzing but there occurs the problem in representation of the subaltern. An elite John Hunt's voice for subaltern Tenzing comes filtered through his elite ideology but there remain traces of elite ideology. So, it becomes nothing more than misrepresentation. Tenzing is pivotal character in *The Ascend of Everest*. In John Hunt's memoir Tenzing is predominant and voiceless. Hunt tries to misrepresent about Tenzing and his precious role.

However, representation of subaltern Tenzing as such becomes not more than misrepresentation. Tenzing is presented selfless and ordinary character in this book. He remains silent under the limitation of colonial upbringings. The more he cannot represent himself and remain silent because he doesn't know how John Hunt could be represented. Subaltern voice be heard but it seems leaning toward elite historiography. Tenzing and his role represent under the elite ideology but he becomes success to create his identity of subaltern hero. He exists as an extraordinary subaltern hero from ordinary people.

Hunt represents Tenzing as a supplementary hero in his memoir *The Ascend of Everest* but he exists as an indispensable subaltern hero. While Hunt presenting Tenzing in discursive way, it helps to create heroic space of Tenzing. Hunt does not speak on the behalf of subaltern as Tenzing and his voice does not represent the real voice of Tenzing. But under the representation of elite ideology with misrepresentation of Tenzing creates distinct position and heroic status.

The growth of Tenzing from one step to another, where the latter is always progressive than the former, there has been a shift of character exemplified by Tenzing, who has been a very famous, rich and intelligent in the last section of the memoir. By being close with the Britishers, Tenzing has been a rich from rags. In this sense, this paper argues that there has been change of Tenzing because of his intimacy with the Britishers.

Finally, subalterns are in a sense dominated and at the same time they are also assisted by the colonial ideology as Tenzing has been transformed into an extraordinary person at last. Along with the subaltern they cannot raise their voice due to absence of power, access and agencies in history, they need and seek some intellectuals that could represent them so that they could be heard and spoken. Furthermore, such intellectual position has been danger for what the intellectuals represent is nothing than their own voice and vision being filtered through the elite ideology. While representing, Hunt creates the stereotypical image of Tenzing and at the same time he has been depicted as brave hero. Therefore, the text reengineers colonial legacy in new form, presents the change of the protagonist Tenzing from low level to an indispensable hero.

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