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Exploring Psychological Realism in Bijay Malla's "Sunglasses" and "The Prisoner and the Dove"

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Abstract

This article explores psychological realism in Bijay Malla's two stories: "The Prisoner and the Dove" and "Sunglasses." The study addresses how the characters construct certain thoughts, emotions, and feelings in their minds after observing and experiencing real-world events and conditions. It analyzes the psyches, thoughts, and psychological intricacies of individuals in lifelike situations in Malla's stories from the viewpoint of psychological realism. The methodology involves a detailed analysis of Malla's narrative techniques and character portrayals, using the theoretical framework of psychological realism to interpret the mental and emotional states of the characters. By examining the intricacies of the characters' inner lives and their responses to their environments, the study aims to uncover the psychological depth in the stories. It reveals that Malla effectively presents photographic images of characters' minds and psyches in both stories. In "Sunglasses," Malla portrays the contradictory mental state of the narrator after observing his wife's relationship with another man. In "The Prisoner and the Dove," Malla presents the psyches and mindsets of political prisoners in jail. These two stories depict the protagonists' contradictions and complex psyches within contemporary socio-cultural and political environments.

Keywords: Nepali literature, psyche, psychological realism

Introduction

This article analyzes the human's psychological intricacies and minds shaped by the unconscious, conscious, ego, superego, Freud's reality principle and pleasure principle in complex social situations in Bijay Malla's "Sunglasses" and "The Prisoner and the Dove" from the perspective of psychological realism. Psychology and literature deal with human nature. Moghaddam argues, "Psychology and literature describe human nature that enhances the knowledge, human characters, motives and feelings" (507). Fiction portrays human conditions and the states of mind. Sarbin says, "Human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures" (8). Psychology illustrates mainly human conduct and characters, and literature such as fiction depicts human character, motive and psyche through the symbols, evidences, and verbal and non-verbal language of the characters. "Literature . . . is fundamentally intertwined with the psyche" (Surprenant 199). Psychological realism is a literary movement that became prominent during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in English literature. It explores the human minds and emotions and the interaction between individuals and environments that reflect the human psychology in literary works. "Psychological realism is an artistic method of feeling, experiencing and contemplating reality with the minds of characters" (Chen 77). The techniques of the presentation of the detailed experience and contemplation in fiction connect the character's mind and social reality. The psychological fictions focus on the character-driven and place special emphasis. This study investigates psychological realism in Mall's "Sunglasses" and "The Prisoner and the Dove".

Bijay Malla (23 June 1925 – 24 July 1999) is a prominent Nepali poet, playwright and fiction writer. The novels *Anuradha* and *Kumari Shova* and the plays like *Koi Kina Barbaad Hos*, *Baula Kaji ko Sapana* and *Dobhan* are his major works. Malla's stories are in two collections: *Ek Bato Anek Mod* (One Road, Many Turnings) and *Parewa ra Kaidi* (The Prisoner and the Dove). His poem compilation *Vijaya Malla Ka Kabita*, and criticism *Natak Eak Charcha* are also published. Mall was born in Kathmandu as a son of Riddhi Bahadur Mall who was the founder and first editor of a Nepali literary Magazine *Sarada*. Malla was imprisoned for three years (1948-50) for his ariti-Rana political activities. He worked as the secretary and the Vice Chancellor of the Royal Nepal Academy. He also served as the secretary in reorganized Nepal Writer Association in 1955 and secretary in *Kabya Pratisthan* in 1956. He was awarded the Sajha Puraskar for *Ek Bato Anek Mod* in 1970, Gariznki prize (1996), Bhupalman Singh Pragya Prize (1996) and Bed Nedhi Prize (1999). He was honored with medal *Gorkha Dakshin Bahu*. K. P. U. in 'Publisher's Note' of the novel *Kumari Shova* writes:

Malla was a modern writer recognized for his realistic and psychological approach. He was superb in his psychoanalysis of his subjects, the ordinary as well as the extraordinary. On the one hand he was the traditionalist but on the other hand he had the tendency to experiment. His writings reflected contemporary Nepalese life

as well as humanity at large. He believed in human values and humanity. (qtd. in Shivakoti 2-3)

Malla provides an intense understanding of human minds, and makes his stories thought-provoking and reflective. Malla depicts the real actions and issues in the minds of his characters. This study explores the reality and objective world through the mental and emotional conflicts of the main characters in Malla's stories. This study signifies the representations of psychological realism in Nepali short stories.

Statement of the Problem

In psychological fiction, "the characters' thoughts, motivations and feelings are of greater interest than the external action. It goes deeper into their minds. . . ." (Ahmed and Ahmed 2563). Psychological realism explores the characters' unconscious minds that include their repressed feelings, thoughts and memories in literary works. The unconscious, conscious, ego, superego, Freud's reality principle and pleasure principle influence the characters' behavior, actions and attitudes. Malla depicts the unobservable subconscious of persons through the techniques of stream of consciousness and interior monologues in his stories. The main research question is how the writer portrays the minds of the characters with psychological dimensions in Bijay Mall's stories.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to explore the psychological intricacies and psyches of the individuals encountering various complex and perverse social situations in Nepali author Bijay Malla's "Sunglasses" and "The Prisoner and the Dove" from the viewpoint of psychological realism.

Understanding Psychological Realism

Realism deals the life as it is. Realism emerged with the Realist Art Movement in 19th century in France as a reaction to Romanticism. Psychological realism originated from realism focuses on the character's psyche, inner thoughts, experiences and emotions in art and literature. "Because of its concrete, dramatic quality, literature enables us not only to observe people other than ourselves but also to enter into their mental universe, to discover what it feels like to be these people and to confront their life situations" (Paris 8). A narrative portrays a real-life human psychology through the detail description of a lived life. Henry James discussed in "The Art of Fiction" that the fiction reproduces not merely external details of real life, but also inner psychic lives of characters. The psychological realism advocates the moral and psychological forces of the characters in stories.

The artist and author utilize the techniques such as stream of consciousness, flashback, introspection, interior monologue and intricate character development to convey the inner human psychology. The characters in such literature are complicated with their visible personalities, desires, emotional complexities and fears. Stream of consciousness and internal monologue explore the character's real psyche. The techniques, introspection and interiority expose a character's inner thoughts and feelings through the detailed character sketches in the narratives, and empathize their emotions and experiences. The technique complexity of emotions depicts various emotions, such as love, desire, jealousy,

fear and hate to circumstances in a story. "Realistic novels, therefore, may potentially be not only 'real' representations of events and characters, but also of 'real' fears, limitations, prejudices and weaknesses" (Sen 3). The real happenings in the narratives are in the minds of the characters. "A realist writer investigates the social being of man. . . . Through the human type, the writer gives us an idea of the mentality of people, their moral attitudes, their ideals, and aspirations. (qtd. in Khrapchenko 11). A psychological realist writer portray the "photographic images" and "the complexities of mind and memory" (Sen 7) of a character in literature. The unconscious, conscious, ego, superego, Freud's reality principle and pleasure principle shape the human's psyche, thoughts and minds to the activities.

The realist writers integrating Freud psychology depict psychological reality in characters' minds. "Psychological realism portrays the mind, and the mind of individuals is as powerfully moved by the 'irrational' as with the 'rational'" (Sen 27). Rational and irrational aspects of individuals happen in human mind; that represent the human condition and psyche. Psychoanalysis analyzes the irrational domains of human psyche with logos. Holland says, "the key to understanding . . . psychoanalytic literary criticism is to recognize that literary criticism is about books and psychoanalysis is about minds" and "the psychoanalytic critic can only talk about the minds associated with the book" (qtd. in Sen 51). Psychoanalysis exposes the complex relations between human mind and body. Psychoanalysis "invent[s] mental process and treating neurosis and some other disorder of the mind" (Webster, 158). It investigates the state of characters' minds and personality in literary works. The unconscious states of a character's mind influence behaviors. Freud explains the structure of human personality into Id, Ego and Superego. According to Freud, Id refers to the segment of human minds that represents innate instinctive impulses and primary processes; it is a psychic energy emerged from instinctual drives and wants. Id constitutes the animalistic instincts and drives in human psyche as the unconscious. "The Id is the underground storeroom of buried thoughts, feelings, desires experiences that are repressed and prohibited to come on the surface of adult normal personality"(Freud 136). It ignores social values and ethics that ego consists. Ego means the social reality and rationality. The Ego transforms the drives of Id into socially and culturally accepted manners. Superego means the conscience or the moral principle. Superego prohibits Id and Ego to achieve instincts, but Ego balances Id and Superego and manifests Id into socially and culturally accepted manners. Freud discusses that the unconscious feelings and thoughts are exposed in dream, art and literature. They are sometimes condensed, replaced or symbolized through dream and in art and literature. Conflicts, fears, desires, love and hates can be portrayed in characters' minds of the stories.

Psychological realism portrays the descriptions of psychology of characters in fiction. The fiction reflects the reality and objective world through the psyche of characters. Psychological realism combines the inner psychology with outer reality of the world. "By using techniques like interior monologue, sensory impressions, illusion, and nightmare, the author directly represented the inner psychology of the characters, including subconscious

activities" (Wu 85). The psychological realism fiction depicts unconscious psyche of characters with the reality of the society. The study focuses on revealing psychological realism in the selected stories.

Research Methods

This study has exploited the interpretive and analytic qualitative method; it is a library research. This study has exploited psychological realism as the theoretical tool to analyze Malla's stories. The texts as the primary sources are Bijay Malla's stories "Sunglasses" and "The Prisoner and the Dove"; the secondary sources are the books, journal articles, thesis related to Bijay Malla and psychological realism. The terms and phrases such as 'psychological realism', 'psychoanalysis', and 'realism' have been used to collect the required information for this study. This study has used psychological realism as the theoretical/methodological perspective to analyze the selected stories.

One's Inner World: Psyche and Thoughts in Bijay Malla's Stories

The portrayals of the inner lives of the characters to reveal the complexities of human psyches and relationships come into sight in Nepali writer Bijay Malla's stories "Sunglasses" and "The Prisoner and the Dove". Malla depicts the inner psyches of the main characters connecting with the external real world. ". . . [U]nconscious mental activity determines, gives a form to, and participates in our conscious life" (Surprenant 199). He convolutes the characters' minds in the stories. Malla has used interior monologue and stream of consciousness as the techniques to portray the human inner psychology of the principal characters in the stories represent the characteristics of psychological realism. According to Wu, "Psychological realist regards the inner psychology as an integral part of social reality, sparing no effort to explore the hidden psychological process of their character, but their main interest is to better represent the environment and people in social reality through the vivid activities on the conscious level" (86).

Interior monologue is an objective narrative technique that exposes the conscious and unconscious thoughts and psyches of the major characters in drama and also in fiction. Psychological realist writers intertwine the human emotions and the rational thoughts as a part of real society. Interior monologue manifests inner conflicts and self-analysis of the characters' minds. Stream of consciousness as a narrative technique exposes the mental state, thoughts and emotions of a character in a realistic way. Bijay Malla has used interior monologue and stream of consciousness techniques to portray the emotional and psychological reality in his stories. Through these techniques, Malla represents not only the real surroundings, but emphasizes on the real thoughts and emotions occurred in the minds of characters in the stories; he dives into the characters' minds to narrate the characters' thoughts and feelings occurred in their minds. As psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung theorize the psychoanalysis, Mijay Malla depicts the characters' conscious ego intertwining with subconscious process in the minds.

Malla's story "Sunglasses" (*Kalo Chasma*) utilizes the first-person narrative technique to recount the events, experiences, feelings, emotions and thoughts of the narrator within the story. The first-person point of view intensely provides the character's

inner thoughts. The narrator in the story "Sunglasses" discloses the wife's relationship with his neighbor and his subjective thoughts on their relationships. Malla focuses on the detailed description of the settings and the psychological characterization in the story. In the beginning of the story, the narrator informs his wife not to return home at the night- "I told my wife that I wouldn't be back that night. But my work finished earlier than I had expected and I came home at about two in the morning" and "I went to the back door" (Malla, "Sunglasses" 236). The narrator reveals his unconscious and suppressed mindsets towards his wife's behavior, and disbelieves her character. It represents a few men and women who have the illegal relationship with others in the society. "I noticed the sound of someone breathing. I turned and looked: someone was asleep on the bed. . . . I began to doubt that it really was my wife sleeping there. . . . There was someone else there, too, with fat thighs" (237). The narrator reveals his wife's secret but dishonest sexual relation with the next man in the absence of the narrator (husband). Through the interior monologue technique, the writer Malla depicts the repressed exasperation in the narrator's mind that are previously unknown to others.

The narrator in "Sunglasses" meticulously delineates a detailed account in words of his wife's sleep with the neighbor at night at the narrator's home:

They were both fast asleep. My wife was sleeping with her head resting on our neighbor's brawny shoulder and her forehead pressed against his cheek. Her breast was partially bared. The man was sleeping with his arms around her, squeezing her tightly with his thighs. They had obviously fallen asleep in great contentment. As I looked at them, I suddenly thought of two white roses entwined and blossoming together. (237)

He describes the sleep of his wife with next man precisely which is socially abhorrent. He reveals his conscious and unconscious psyches, feelings, emotions and thoughts on his wife's wicked and illegal act.

The narrator understands the relation of his wife with the next man through the pleasure principle of Sigmund Freud. The domain of the narrator's innate instinct comes out of the unconscious level. "For a while I watched their contented faces and felt that there should be places in every life where the earth's creatures can play and enjoy themselves, and so sustain their lives. If they could live out their time in games, they would consider it an accomplishment" (237). He attempts to accept the human's satisfaction of the biological need with little or no thought whether or not his wife's sexual behavior is acceptable in the context of his 'ego'. It exposes the pleasure principle of the narrator buried at the unconscious mind:

They did not lie still, however: they both moved their arms, as if searching for something on each other's breast. The white skin shone on their plump legs. I just stood and stared. I felt as if this man and this woman were the first people of creation. I felt like a spectator. Watching this charming scene was like watching some great event. So I watched. (237)

This expresses the narrator's inner feelings that is guided by one's id pleasure principle. Here, the narrator's emotions and thoughts are superintended by the unconscious psyche. The narrator takes satisfaction by watching the sleep tight of his wife with the next man as in the movies. Then, the narrator's practical thought suddenly emerges to control his unconscious psyche, "Suddenly it occurred to me that I was watching my own wife sleeping shamelessly before me, in an immoral liaison with another man. I should be embarrassed. I should think this improper. I should feel violently angry, outraged, repugnant, and vengeful as a witness to such a reprehensible deed" (237). Here, the narrator's conscious mind wakes up and appears into the reality. The 'ego' directs the behavior to realistic and acceptable ways. The narrator takes his wife's behavior as illegal and immoral. As the reality principle of Sigmund Freud urges, the narrator thinks the situation it was not socially acceptable. He consciously takes the situation negatively.

A man and his wife enjoy in their sensual love; the narrator subconsciously describes their physical pleasing at his house. He also presumes that his wife and the man can be suffered from social and cultural norms and values. The narrator says:

The young couple who slept before me now were playing. The earth itself was their right. All they wanted to do was to enjoy a game of hide-and-seek. One day they would get caught up in the complex problems of morality and social convention. They would be frightened and even curse themselves. Questions of sacredness and defilement would pursue them. If they were unable to bear this, they might even go mad. (238)

The narrator complains to the social norms that torture the people's sensual love in the society. "So why should morality trouble them? The problem would begin as soon as they woke up and saw me. Could they put up with this question of morals? Would the sensual contentment they so recently found not disappear completely when they realized their corruption? Poor things!" (238). The narrator questions that the artificial environment, 'morality' should not disturb the natural and biological satisfaction of people. "[He] didn't want to cause them sorrow or fear. . . . [He] became obviously aloof from the forms of social, moral man". Through this story, the author and/or narrator emphasizes on the inner emotions, experiences and thoughts. "In this story, Malla describes how a man is faced with a crisis in his marriage but reacts in an unexpected and unorthodox fashion" (Hutt 184). This story depicts the complex motives and inner conflicts representing the real psychology. A man always encounters with the inner conflicts caused by the natural instinct 'id' and morals constructed by humans 'superego'. This story with the techniques of streams of consciousness portrays the real psyches occurred sometimes in couples. The narrator's turbulent minds, thoughts and psyche convey the human's conflicting thoughts caused by Freud's reality principle, pleasure principle, conscious unconscious, id, ego and superego.

Bijay Malla's next story "The Prisoner and the Dove" (*Parewa ra Kaidi*) depicts the psychology of the political prisoners who are freedom fighters during the Rana ruling period in Nepal- "We political prisoners were locked up in jail number —, also known as

the round house. It was the time when the autocratic Ranas were ruling. We were among those who had joined a movement to bring democracy to our land" (240). Malla exploits the techniques of stream of consciousness and interior monologue to portray the natural flow of character's multitudinous thoughts and feelings (family supports for food, facilities and condition in jail, means of entertainment in jail like cards, *carram*, bird dove and political insights) as they occur in the mindsets. "Bijay Malla's 'The Prisoner and the Dove' (*Pareva ra Kaidi*) recounts a disturbing incident from prison life based on Malla's own experiences" (Hutt 187). The narrator also talks about the various names to the dove/pigeon given by the prisoners- "We gave each of them a name, according to its character, color, or shape: there were Victoria, Menuka, Dushyant, Shakuntala, Lalpate, Savitri, Jurell, and so on" (241). The narrator shares the activities of the bird in the jail. He describes how they were kept and treated in the jail. Malla has expressed realistic sensory perceptions and impressions in the jail around. The writer delves into the character's real psyche, mind- "What I had witnessed was a clear glimpse into the mind of a man who had been kept away from his home for many years. Could I claim that such a thing was not latent inside me, too?" (243). Malla's story provides the realistic presentation of character's minds and thoughts. The narrator expresses the bad condition of health services to them in jail. Additionally, he exposes the condition of the wounded bird in the surrounding of the jail. Thus the narrator express the continuous unedited flow of conscious real experiences through the psyche, mind. The narrator jumps from one thought to the another- democratic spirit, jail, family, food, means of entertainments, bird, health condition of prisoners, activities of police and so on. This presentation style impresses readers of being inside the minds of the characters, prisoners. The narrator presents the prisoners, their relationship and the condition they live in. This story captures the myriad of thoughts, feelings and realistic experiences of political prisoners that pass through the mind during autocratic Rana ruling in Nepal.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has interpreted the photographic images of the human psyche, experience and thought process depicted in Bijaya Malla's stories through the viewpoint of psychological realism. Nepali story writer Bijay Malla depicts in 'Sunglasses' a man's complex psyche, minds after observing his wife being slept with a neighbor at the narrator's own house. The protagonist's wife's sexual behavior with his neighbor contradicts the narrator's mind whether he should consider it as social ethical values or individual animalistic free pleasure. Malla expresses in 'The Prisoner and the Dove' the minds, psyches and thought processes of political prisoners that were imprisoned in charge of violating the rules of Rana government and fighting for the democracy in Nepal. The writer has used the style of stream of consciousness and interior monologue to presents the narrators, characters' inner contradiction and complex mindsets, thought processes and psyches. Along with the detail sensory descriptions through the plain texts and straightforward sentence expressions, the middle class narrators of the both stories expose their real psyches that occur in their minds. The unconscious, conscious, id, ego, superego,

reality principle and pleasure principle have influenced the human's thoughts, psyche and behaviours in the stories. This study assists to interpret the character's psychology of other literary texts, and it succours, moreover, to interpret the human psychology in real world, and contributes to the area of psychological realism.

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