

Magic Realism in Rabindra Sameer's *Mrityuko Aayu*

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Abstract

This article analyzes the novel *Mrityuko Aayu* in the light of Magic Realism. Applying magic realism is methodological approach for critical analysis of the novel in this article. It follows interpretive textual analysis. Free translation has been used while taking the citation from the novel. I have drawn the conclusion that the novel is a magic realist novel as it has introduced innovative style of narrating the story. The story begins from the death of the protagonist, but he is capable of seeing everything even after the death. It has blended mundane and supernatural, ordinary and extraordinary and real and fantastical elements in an unquestionable way. The novel's extracts are analyzed within five parameters that include fantastical elements, real world setting, incorporation of myth, meta-fiction and social/ political critique. Even after the death of the protagonist, the story moves ahead from the spirit's perspective. The spirit is capable of seeing, feeling and experiencing everything. The readers accept all such actions and happenings as normal without questioning the reliability of them and feel sorry for his painful and pathetic condition. Therefore, the writer is successful in using magic realism in the novel. It is hoped that this article will encourage researchers to study other works of fiction from the point of view of Magic Realism.

Keywords: fantasy, mundane, myth, supernatural, extraordinary

Introduction

Mrityuko Aayu by Rabindra Sameer has explored structural innovativeness in the field of Nepali fiction. The writer has weaved one hundred sixty-six short stories to make up the plot of the novel that can be read independently. It has also used black humor. Black humor is a literary technique of getting humor from something serious. It uses very sensitive subject, such as war, tragedy, disease, death as suffering of the innocent. The novel also begins from death of the protagonist. Moreover, its narrative style is also unique as the spirit of the protagonist narrates the happening even after his death. In the novel, a poor Nepali youth from a village goes to Arab with the dreams of earning and transforming the pathetic life into prosperity. However, his dreams remain unfulfilled as he meets sudden death in the foreign land. Along with his death his dreams also die. Immediately after his death, the spirit departs from the body and starts observing the things that happen with his body and around. He narrates everything that he experiences, feels, and sees. The novel has used mundane and supernatural, ordinary and extraordinary and real and unreal side by side but in an unquestionable way. Depiction of his life, dreams, problems and hardships he faces while being in the village and foreign employment is grounded on the mundane. While the existence of the spirit until the last day of the 13 days' death ritual, its omniscience, ability to interact, feel, respond, as a living are all supernatural

aspects. The blending of such elements is one of the features of magic realism through which the novel is being studied.

Various artist and writers from different parts of the world have used magic realism as a unique style in their works. Some notable works that project the diversity of magic realism include “*One Hundred Years of Solitude*” (1969) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, “*The House of the Spirit*” (1982) by Isabel Allende, “*Beloved*” (1987) by Toni Morrison, “*The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*” (1994) by Haruki Murakami and Salman Rushdie's “*Midnight's Children*” (1981) by Salman Rushdie. Blending of reality and fantasy, use of myth and folklore, and the incorporation of supernatural events into everyday life can basically be noticed in these works.

Similarly, observing the history of Nepali novels, magic realism is found to have been practiced by past and contemporary writers. Nepali novels have been classified in three ages: Primary age, Medieval age and Modern age. Medieval age (1946-1990) had several streams. Among them recreational stream was one in which magic realism was seen to be used (Baral, 2005). Later other writers also made use of this. According to Baral, the novel *Langadako Saathi* (Lame's Friend) by Lainsingh Bangdel has made use of some magic realist elements. The novel has made excessive use of dreams and dreamlike things imagined by the lame street beggar in Darjiling. Likewise, the novelist Dhruva Chandra Gautam has started writing fantasy from the novel

Daapi (1976) (Subedi, 2008). His other novels like *Agnidutta + Agnidutta* (1997), *Alikhit* (1983) can also be read as magic realist novels. In the novel *Alikhit* the writer has created an imaginary village called Birhanpur Barewa and imagines a pond. The pond is excavated but later the village itself disappears. He has also picked up myths and presented them in reliable way. 'The novelist Gautam has tried to establish the expected reality through fantastical images' (Subedi, 2008). Other contemporary novelists have also used magic realist elements in their works. Some names include Krishna Dharawasi, Narayan Dhakal, Nayanraj Pandey, Kumar Nagarkoti. They too have blended fantasy and mundane in their works. Recently Rabindra Sameer has also added his name in the list of magic realism practitioner in the field of Nepali novel through his novel *Mrityuko Aayu* (2019).

Rabindra Sameer, an established name in short story, has attempted to show the dark aspects of foreign employment in his latest novel *Mrityuko Aayu*. Although remittance has been the backbone of current economy of Nepal, it is not easy to bring in as we think it is. Apart from remittance, dead bodies along with their miscarried dreams have also been dispatched to our country in red boxes. This novel tells a poignant story of a boy whose human remains are taken to motherland in such a red box. Despite being the true reflection of such contemporary issues of foreign employment, the narrative style of the novel is unique. Unique in the sense that

the novel presents the spirit's ability to perceive, see, feel, and experience as alive. The setting and issues are of this world that is Nepali society whereas the spirit and mythical references are of another world. These two have been combined together as normal to spin the plot of the novel. Therefore, the main problematic of the study is how the author has blended supernatural and mundane. The study aims to explore and analyze the features of magic realism like mundane and supernatural, in the novel based on the following research questions:

1. What elements/ features of Magical Realism are found in the novel?
2. How are these elements used in the novel?

Having been successful in carving a niche in Nepali literature through short stories, Rabindra Sameer's *Mrityuko Aayu* has received comments from renowned writers and critics immediately after its publication. Different Nepali national dailies and weeklies have published reviews and comments on the book. While speaking in an interview by *Himalpost.com* about the book the writer advocates that *Mrityuko Aayu* is the science of death and adds that it has a number of aspects like scientific, legal, spiritual, social, and philosophical (Khanal, 2020).

Critics, writers and readers have studied this novel from different perspectives. While introducing the novel the reporter of art and literature

bureau of *The Rajdhani Daily* opines that, the novel depicts the sorrowful life of people going for foreign employment. Similarly, writer and critic Nayanraj Panday (as cited in Rabindra Sameerko Mrityuko Aayu Bazarma) finds the novel being able to connect contemporary problems related to foreign employment through powerful and emotional description (para.4). Likewise, the novelist Amar Neupane (2020) maintains that from the golf countries every year hundreds of red boxes arrive in Nepal. These red boxes not only contain the human remains but also the demised hopes and dreams of the dead. It is a representative story of such boxes (Para. 5). For Jiba Lamichhane (as cited in Rabindra Sameerko Mrityuko Aayu Bazarma) *Mrityuko Aayu* is a painful story of a youth who has met his death while being in foreign employment (Para 6). The writer himself emphasizes on the uniqueness of the novel's style as it has been made up of 166 short independent stories (para.7).

These readers and critics have reviewed the different aspects of the novel. They have found the story a true reflection of the contemporary society, the impact of foreign employment on a person, family and society and innovativeness and uniqueness of its style. No doubt, it is a painful story of a youth meeting sudden death in foreign land. In addition, mirrors the contemporary problems associated with abroad job. However, the way the story is narrated is not usual as the spirit immediately after the death starts

observing the happening with his body and around. The blending of realistic and supernatural (a highly realistic setting has been invaded by the supernatural in fact) is one of the features of the novel that has not been explored/ talked so far. This article attempts to study the novel from this perspective (Magical Realism) thereby filling the research gap.

Methodology

Magic Realism as a Method

Magic realism, a literary and artistic genre is characterized by seamless integration of magical or fantastical elements into realistic narrative framework. The term magic realism was originally applied in painting. In this regard, John Mollan says “Magical Realism was first applied to paintings rather than novels. It was given currency by the German art critic Franz Roh in his book *Nach Expressionism Magischer Realischer Realimus* (p. 118). Similarly, Alejo Carpentier (1949) coined the term “lo real maravilloso” the marvelous real to describe the fusion of magical and the real in Latin American literature. The scholar Faris (2004) has explored the political dimensions of magic realism, discussing how the genre serves as a tool for social and political commentary. Magic realism mixes and disrupts ordinary everyday reality like real world locale and events with strange, impossible and miraculous episode and power in social life. According to M.H. Abrams, “writers of magical realism weave, an ever-shifting pattern, a

sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from myth and fairy tales (p. 203)". It is a form of literary genre that takes the reader on a journey somewhere between the mundane of ordinary everyday life to the supernatural world where things are accepted without a question or reason. In magical realism, the world is still grounded in the real world, but fantastical elements are considered normal in this world. There is an amalgamation of realism and fantasy. Such texts remind us that ordinary life also has its extraordinary side with the tone of the story slightly magical. Some of the characteristics critics have reached at consensus upon of magic realism are:

- Fantastical Elements
- Real world setting
- Authorial Reticence
- Incorporation of Myth
- Hybridity
- Meta-fiction
- Heightened awareness of mystery
- Social/ Political Critique

A magic realist fiction presents the fantastical events in an otherwise realistic tone. Likewise, writers of magic realistic texts do not invent new worlds but reveal the magical in the everyday world itself. Furthermore, the information and explanation about the disconcerting fictitious world are withheld by the author

and the story proceeds with logical precision as if nothing extraordinary had taken place. Giving the sense of hybridity by mixing up of different elements is also counted as important aspect of it. Similarly, meta-fiction (here touching the process of story making) and containing an implicit criticism of politics and society are inseparable characteristics of magic realism. Overall as concluded by the critic Erik Camayd Freixas (1998) in his article Theories of Magical Realism 'Magic realism makes the extraordinary seem common place (p.13).

Since it is a qualitative research, the primary source of data of this research is the novel *Mrityuko Aayu* itself. Similarly, books on literary criticism, journal articles, literary reviews, and websites have been used as secondary sources. Extracts related to mundane, supernatural, ordinary, extraordinary, real and fantastical have been extracted from the novel. These extracts are discussed grouping under the subheadings like real world setting, fantastical elements/invasion of the supernatural, incorporation of myth, meta-fiction and social /political critique. As the study has been based on the Magic Realism, the elements of Magic Realism have been fore grounded throughout the interpretation of textual evidence.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the analysis of magic realist elements in the novel. To analyze, the above-mentioned subheadings will be used.

The Real World Setting

Subedi, 2024, Magic Realism in Rabindra Sameer.....

Not inventing new worlds for the fictitious world but bringing the magical in the existing world itself is one of the major characteristics of magic realism. The novel is also set in the real settings. The novel starts presenting the protagonist real-world locale that is in deathbed in Arab.

Sutepachhi salami aoudaha bhayo. Kila thokejhai taukoma shulbhayo. Usako dimag pilojhai tankiyo...pet dhukhne, waakwaki lagne, pisab polne, dhad dhukhne tatha hatkhuttaka jornima hataudale hane jasta pidaka karanle uu bechaina bhayo. [He felt terrible pain after he slept. He felt a terrible headache. His brain ached as furuncle. He felt stomach pain, vomiting, dysuria, backbone ache and felt restless as he felt terrible joint ache as if they were hammered] (p.1).

The above extract truly presents the dying experience of a person. When one is in deathbed, he often feels terrible pain as described in the lines. The boy too feels a terrible pain after he slept. The description of his suffering is very close to the reality as a dying person has similar experiences. Similarly, a poor boy's compulsion to suppress his even minor desires in foreign land realizing his poverty and hoping to make future a bit better is revealed in:

Khaanaako baasnaale usako mukha rasaayo. Bhabisyakaa laagi paisaa bachaunu parchha, Usale pet maaryo. Yati bhabya

saping mal pani hudorahechha. Bhitra pasera patnilai gargahanaa kinidimuparyo. ... Arabko garmimaa hidda usalaai khub tirkhaa laagyo. Usalaai chiso khaanamana laagyo tirkhaa bhandaa aghi saahuko rida samjhanaamaa aaekaale usale aanta maaryo. [His mouth became watery as he smelled the food from the restaurant. He controlled his desire for food, as he wanted to save for future. He got surprised seeing the splendid shopping mall. He thought of going in and buying his wife jewelry and beautiful clothes as butterfly for his children but controlled himself as the expenditure of festivals came in his vision. He felt terrible thirst in the scorching sun of Arab and wanted to have cold drinks but could not do so as the debt of loan shark came even before his thirst and controlled the wish] (p. 3).

It truly shows the economic condition of most of the manual foreign employees. They are not paid well and are compelled to live compromising in every steps of life. The boy wants to have something in the restaurant as the food's smell lured him but cannot do so as it is unaffordable for him. Similarly, he wishes to; go into the splendid shopping mall for shopping for his wife and children, go into the dance bar, stay with family in the village, take class of English and Computer, have cold drink, have whole body checked up. However,

he is unable to do any because these are not in his priority. These all things become a luxury for the workers like him and want to spend every penny to fulfill the basic needs like repairing the leaking roof, paying the school's fee of children, paying the loan, building a small house etc. These all are grounded in real Nepalese society and problems of foreign employment and mirror the life of such workers. The poor protagonist's pathetic life is presented here as:

*Usale jibanamaa kahilei
raamrosanga saas ferna paaena.*
[He never felt relax and calm throughout his life] (p. 23).

The above extract realistically resembles the hasty life of the protagonist. Crushed in poverty, he never felt relaxed as different responsibilities come to him at every stage of life. His life is a representative life of other poor youth too who have numbers of responsibilities to fulfill.

The pain felt by the protagonist, his economic condition, being unable to fulfill the basic wishes and trying to save with the hope of saving a little for future, his poverty-stricken life, going abroad to get rid of the debt and making the life a bit better are all grounded on the real world. Readers are very familiar with all these as they reflect the fate and life of many youth.

Fantastical Elements: Invasion of the Supernatural

In the magic realistic works, the

real world is invaded by the supernatural and ordinary events are presented with a touch of the extraordinary. The novel contains a lot of such invasion of the supernatural in the ordinary events. After his death, the boy feels this way:

*Kehi samayapachhi sirsire
haawaachalyo. Sharir changa
bhayo. Chandanra dhupako
magamaga baasnaa aayo.
Jataaheryo indreni nai indrenika
dhokaa dhekhyo. Fulka aasanma
aafna purkhaa dekhayo. Usaka
hat pakheta bhae. Pakheta
hallaudai u aafno gaugayo...
Pariwar tatha afantalai dekhayo.*
[After sometime, he felt light breeze. His body felt very relaxed. He smelled very good fragrance of sandalwood and incense. He saw the doors of rainbow everywhere. He saw his ancestors on the seat of flowers. His hands were converted into feathers. Flapping the feathers, he flew to his village... and saw his family and relatives] (p. 1).

The above lines present the invasion of supernatural in the real world. Immediately after the death, the boy's spirit experiences the extraordinary things. Though he is still in the room in Arab, he experiences heavenly pleasure. He feels freshness in the body as light breeze flows. The depiction is extraordinary because it is believed scientifically that a dead body is incapable of feeling anything. Moreover, he smells the fragrance of sandalwood

and incense and sees the doors of rainbow everywhere. His hands are converted into feathers and he flies to his village and meets his relatives. Perceiving such things from realistic perspective is labeled as impossible. How can the hands be converted into feathers and make him possible to fly? However, such things are presented as normal everyday events and unquestionable. The boy tells the story of his own death in the following lines.

*Aspataalamaa mrit ghosit
bhaepachhi usale Yamarajlaai
sunaaeko britantako sampaadit
ansa.* [The edited portion of the details narrated to *Yamaraj* (the god of death) after being declared dead in the hospital] (p. 5).

Immediately after his death, he makes a trip to *Yamalok* (the world of death) and tells *Yamaraj* (the god of death) the whole story of his arrival in that world of him. From the point of view of scientific laws, it is impossible for a person to behave as a living after one's death but it presents life even after death in a believable way. The spirit leaves him and stays hidden besides his own body:

*Kati eutai sharirma basnu?
Aatmaa usko sharirbata futta
bahira niskiyo," Aafule
chhodepachhi keke
hudorahechha, heraunata!
Aatmaa usako najikai lukera
basyo.* [How long shall I stay in one single body? His spirit came off his body. "Let's see what would happen after I left the

body" The spirit stayed hidden near by the body] (p. 7).

At this point, the extraordinary things happen because it presents the afterlife of the boy's spirit. The writer personifies the spirit as it is attributed all the qualities of a person as alive. Its conversational tone makes the happening even believable. The spirit wants to see everything that happens to the world and his body after it leaves and stays hidden nearby the body. The existence of the spirit is supernatural. However, it is presented as everyday occurring and regular world event. The boy finds self-burning romantic in the following lines.

*Usalaai aafu jalihahero shyana
romanchak lagirahoko thiyo.* [He found the moment of self-burning romantic] (p. 125).

A person should not be feeling anything else in dead state. Feeling romantic while being cremated in the electric cremating machine is extraordinary. However, here the character's spirit finds the moment of self-burning romantic. The spirit's experiences are crazy things presented as normal happening. The cremating takes place in Pashupati Aaryaghat, real-world locale. Thus, the above lines show the invasion of supernatural in the real world in the novel. Even the ash of the dead one is speaking as:

*Yas patak baigyanikko kharanile
bhanne tatha dhanadya netako
kharanile sunne polo thiyo.* [This time the turn of speaking was of

the scientist's ash and the rich man's to listen to him] (p.135).

It is believed that a person after death loses the power of acting like alive one. However, in the ghat (the place of cremation) the dead would have different talk session on science and religion. For us one's senses stop working and the corpse becomes as senseless as a stone. Challenging this belief, the above lines present the ashes of dead talking. In their talk, they include very weighty philosophical concept of life, death, wealth, suffering, happiness etc. These all are mundane but only the characters are of beyond the world that is not only dead but also cremated into ashes. The character's conversation with his wife is presented in this extract:

*Sabai sute pachhi
madyaraatamaa usale
shreematilaai fakaayo, "kati
runchyou priya? Narouu.
Bachunjel garibi tagaro banera
haamilaai sangai basna diena...
Aauu baru! Mrityu lokamaa
maranabhari sangai basaulaa.
Patnile tandramai jawaaf farkaai.*
[He tried to persuade his wife after everyone of the family slept. "How long do you cry dear?" Stop crying. The poverty remained barrier and prevented us from staying together the whole life...Rather come here. Let us stay together in the world of death the whole period of death. The wife answered in half-asleep state] (p. 140).

The boy's spirit makes a visit to his wife and tries to convince her not to cry and join him to the world of death. It expresses the bitter reality of a youth who is forced to leave family to earn a little for future. Despite having greater wishes to spend the time with his young wife, the poverty remained barrier and compelled to stay away. Now he wants to spend time with his wife in the world of death and requests her to come to the world of death. For the whole period of death, he wants to stay together and compensate the impotence of not living together during the life. The wife also answers him. This communication between the spirit and the living is magical but the context in which it is portrayed is representational of most of the family of abroad employee.

The protagonist's visit to his village immediately after his death, his briefing about his death to Yamaraj after being declared dead, the spirit's departure from the body and observing everything that happens to the body, finding his own body's incineration romantic, the conversation between the dead and his alive wife all justify the invasion of the supernatural.

Incorporation of Myth

Incorporating mythical characters and events in the fiction is another characteristic of magic realism. The novel makes use of many such mythical characters and events. The scene of Yamaraj's investigation goes like:

*Yamadutle uslai Yamarajko bisaal
baithak kakshamaa puryae.....
Hatma karmako pustak, kalam,
masi ra pani lieka Chitragupta
baithak kakshamaa prabes gare.
Yamarajko aadesh anusaar
nyayadhisko kursimaa basera
unale sesan aghi badhae.*

[Yamadut (the messengers of Yama) took him to the splendid meeting hall of Yamaraj. Chitragupta carrying the book of deeds, pen, ink and water in hand entered the meeting hall. He took the seat of the judge and started the session after Yamaraj permitted him] (p.15).

This extract shows another world where the boy is taken to after his death. Though it is another world and has not been seen, the presentation is realistic enough to evoke the readers feeling and accept as real happening. Yamaduts' presence and questioning after the boy's death is also notable:

*Usako sharirbata aatma alag
bhaepachhi shirama
bishringkhalit kapal bhaeka
sharirma kankat jasta rau bhaeka
hatma dori liee baseka darlagda
Yamadutharu aaera usalai sodhe
“Timile jibanma keke pap gareka
chhau?” [As soon as the spirit
departed from the body, fearful
Yamaduts with strange hair
carrying rope in hand came and
asked “What sin have you
committed in your life] (p. 27).*

This extract highlights the

mythical scene where Yamaduts investigate the sins committed by the boy. The detail describing images are strong enough to make the readers visualize the other world and consider it ordinary. Similarly, Devduts too make their presence and ask:

*Yamadut farkiyapachhi
pitabh bastra dharan
gareka kamal puspako
malale shushobhit bhaeka
shirma atyantai
sundarmukut ebam kanma
kundal
dharangareka.....Devduth
aru aaera usalai sodhe “
timile jivanma keke dharma
gareka chhau?” [when
Yamaduts have returned,
Devduts, adorned with
yellow holly clothes,
garland of lotus flower,
bright and beautiful crown
on the head and beautiful
ear ring in the ear came and
asked him' What good deeds
have you done?] (p. 27).*

After Yamaduts return, Devaduts come to make an investigation of the good deeds he has done. It paints the picture of the world of Devadut and their enchanting looks beautifully and evocatively.

The boy's journey to the Yamalok, the investigation of the sins committed by the boy by

Yamadut, Devduts investigation about the good deeds of the boy all are the references from the myth and have been incorporated in the story.

Meta-fiction

Authors of meta-fiction often violate narrative levels by intruding to comment on writing, directly addressing the reader, interacting with the fictional characters by the writer. Here the protagonist addresses the author as:

Ra usale bhanyo, e lekhak! Timile pani ma jibit huda merobare ek shabda lekhenau. Jaba mero mrityu bhayo, timile mero mrityubare pustak nai tayaar garyo. [The character's (Spirit) addresses to the author "hey author! You never wrote a single word about me while I was alive and you prepared a book on my death after I lost my life] (p. 198).

The character addresses to the author. He satirically tells how the author has made this book and expresses bitter reality. He is dissatisfied with the authors like him who do not find the pathetic life of such youth a subject matter to expose to the world but his death offers a good issue to write. He seems to tell that author like him should pick up the problematic life of such youth and aware the policy maker for betterment of their life in their own motherland.

Social /Political Critique

Magic realist texts points out social issues and call for debate. Through the

predicament of the protagonist, the text is raising many social issues and calling for discourse among the stakeholders. While asking help to run life on different situation, he does not get:

Usale padnaka laagi dhereisanga rid maagyo. Tara kaseile biswas garenan. Gauma pasal kholnaka laagi sapati magyo. Salami kasaile pani biswas garenan. Lahur arthata Bharat jana sahayogko yachana garyo... Arab jaanakalaagi chine jaanekaa sabaisanga ridko hat fijaayo, charko byaj tirne binti bisayo, jane bittikai paisa pathidine kabol garyo. Tara tirna sakla bhanera kasailepani biswas garenan. [He begged many for loan to study. However, no one had faith on him. He asked for sapati to run a shop in the village. No one believed him. He begged for financial aid to go to India to earn but did not get. He again begged for money to go to Arab, gave words to pay high interest, promised to pay off immediately he starts a job in Arab. Nevertheless, no one had faith on his capability of paying off] (p. 40).

The above extract reveals the social issues. As the character was having financial problem during his school time and begged for loan to study, later to run life doing something

in motherland, and even to go to Arab but was denied. These same people, however, express deep sympathy at his death. They could have helped him and made his life easier not by compelling to go abroad but did not do so. How rich behave with helpless can be observed in the following lines:

*Ghar jagga bandaki rakhera
charko byajmaa uu Arab gayo...
Chha mainama rid chuktaa
garchhu bhanera bandaki firtaa
maagyo. Tara sahule biswas
garena.* [He went to Arab mortgaging his house and land at high interest. He begged the mortgagee to return the mortgaged property saying that he would pay off within six month but he did not believe him](p. 40).

The boy, not having other options except going to strange land, finally goes taking loan at high interest. Despite his request to pay off the loan within six months, the mortgagee does not get convinced and denies. It shows that the rich are not considerate of the poor. They do not understand the difficulties of the poor. They even do not hesitate to take profit from their hardships, helplessness and problems. It very powerfully manifests the social issue and invites for a debate in the light of right conduct and humanity of people. What the capable ought to do for incapable -remain indifferent? The boy requests the government to stop sending the youth to foreign land in these lines.

*Usale aafno deshko
sarakarsanga antim mag garyo,
“sarakar! Des nikala ra
mrityudanda jastaa amaanabiya
sajaaya banda gar.”* [He demanded his country's government as the last demand. “Government! Stop the inhuman punishment like exile and death penalty immediately] (p. 60).

The above extract exhibits the powerful political criticism. Here the boy finds going abroad a kind of punishment that is exile. Many youth go abroad not as per their wishes but as per their obligation. The government lacks better policies to prevent such people from leaving their motherland just for low salary. The government seems to be satisfied with remittance they send and totally ignorant about their difficulties and suffering. He even compares going abroad for manual, risky job with death penalty, as many such workers die young in foreign land. Satirically, the boy says:

*Usale bhanyo, “Taaunkodekhi
paitaalaasammako maanchhe
kasari maanab abashess bhae?
Marepachhi hyuman rimensako
byawahar garnele bachunjhel
hyumanko byawahar kina
nagareko?”* [He asked how could he be human remains even if he has the whole body. Those who treated his body as human remains after his death, why was not he treated as human being during his life] (p. 63).

This is another powerful critique

on social issue. The protagonist's spirit expresses very deep dissatisfaction at human's treatment towards underprivileged. After placing his dead body into the red box, official wrote 'human remains' on it. He is critical at the use of the words human remains because he still has whole body from head to foot. He further says if they really want to call him human now, why not they treated him as human during his life. When he needed human treatment, he was not treated as human. He finds human devoid of humanity in materialistic world where human is not treated as human.

The protagonist's begging for loan and being denied, but getting deep sympathy from those who denied after death, comparing going abroad to exile and urging the government not to compel youth to go abroad, finding human devoid of humanity all contain a powerful social critique.

Conclusion

Mrityuko Aayu is a magic realist novel since it makes use of the characteristics of magic realism. Among many elements, critics have commonly agreed that elements like real world setting, supernaturalism, fantasy, myth, meta-fiction political critique etc to be the common characteristics of magic realism. The novel is set in the real world. Crushed in poverty, a Nepali youth goes to earn money abroad. Because of unfavorable climate of the gulf countries, overwork, not getting basic regular health service and fresh and

healthy food, the young boy meets sudden death in Arab. After his death, the process of postmortem, legal provision maintained to dispatch the body, people's response and last ritual practices are all connected to real world happening, mundane. Along with the depiction of the real world, there is invasion of supernaturalism. The boy's spirit departs from the body as soon as he dies and observes everything that goes around. The spirit's ability to feel, see, hear, respond and experience is the matter beyond the world, beyond scientific explanation. Moreover, mythical references like heaven and hell, the dead's investigation by Yamadut and Devdud for their entrance to either heaven or hell and the world of death are also used side by side. The novel makes the social and political criticism commenting on the manner of different people, their attitudes to view the poor, religious practices and death rituals and the government's policy to prioritize remittance as well. By combining these all elements, the novel presents the story as common and unquestionable. Having found such elements, it can be read as a magical realist novel.

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