

Sanjeev Upreti's *Hansa*: An Ecocritical Quest

Dadhi Ram Panthi

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Abstract

This article explores the idea of symbiosis; the notion of survival and letting nature and other organisms survive. The idea of 'back to nature' has been explored in the novel through the role of Anuj Pandey who makes a journey from East to West at first and from West to East in the end. Prem represents local citizen whereas Anuj Pandey attempts to look cosmopolitan. However, Anuj Pandey's mission fails. The novelist assumes a person cannot be a true transcendentalist unless he/she experiences materialism through senses. In order to make a true flight, a person needs to move from the world of human to the world of nature. This all is possible through the activation of the sixth sense. The novel depicts the problems of both local and global homes. The locals desire to fly in the global and again the globalized ones desire to fly somewhere else. The novel shows that they intend to fly beyond anthropocentric world which is neither local nor global, but it is the world that is ruled or governed by the presence of nature. A person may feel as a complete man only in the vastness of nature. The article brings theoretical insights from romanticism, transcendentalism, narrative epistemology, anthropocentrism, ecocriticism and biocentrism as the tool or method of analysis.

Keywords: anthropocentrism, ecocriticism, transcendentalism, narrative epistemology, romanticism

Introduction

The novel *Hansa* (2019), written by Sanjeev Upreti, depicts the scenario of Nepali migrant workers working and struggling in New York. However, the novel draws the picture of the problems of both the home and globe. Presenting Anuj Pandey as one of the protagonists of the novel, the novelist has been able to show the pains, sufferings and struggles of migrant workers in the global home. Anuj Pandey is the husband of two wives – Sima who elopes with Anuj Pandey betraying her husband Prem after winning EDV lottery and works in America while Anuj Pandey is there as a recent Green card holder although he had been working there as illegal immigrant before he takes Sima in America. He marries her through the court and lives in an apartment with other friends. His wife Maya from village dreams to go to America with Anuj. Luckily, she also wins EDV lottery and has been able to visit and meet Anuj. Anuj goes to receive Maya at the airport. The surprising thing is that his both wives meet each other and start to live together. But later, Anuj Pandey is unable to tolerate the quarrel and conflict of his wives and decides to return to Nepal. Prem, who takes Anuj Pandey as his paramour, wants to kill him with the help of Bhojpure Khukuri as revenge. Finally, when Prem knows the reality that Anuj Pandey has left both of his wives- Sima and

Maya in America forever, he is surprised and his perspective towards Anuj Pandey changes. Anuj Pandey looks frustrated with the life of New York. For him, the city has been so bad where only mice or mice like people can fit and adjust. He decides not to go back in New York after he returns in Nepal. Instead, he intends to be enlightened by observing the vastness of nature like Buddha meditating in the jungle of Halkhoria in Bara. In that sense, his quest is the quest for the over-soul or the Sixth sense. The protagonist's desire for transcendentalism emerges only after his return in Nepal. The frustrating experiences of the major characters- Prem and Anuj in the novel through their observation- of the West by Anuj and the East by Prem quite clearly proves that the western civilization has been uncanny and unhome for the foreign immigrants, mainly those from South Asia. Their final move from the West to the East implies their quest for hospitality. Anuj and Prem both believe such quest to be fulfilled in the lap of nature. The ongoing pandemic or impending post-Covid world also suggests that mere scientific experiment may not be enough to understand the world. The Pandemic is the challenge even for the scientists. For instance, Albert Einstein in *A Brief History of Time* (1988) explores the idea of the superiority of science and scientific inventions or equations over politics. His twentieth century ideas are quite relevant in the twenty first century, mainly in the ongoing era of Covid Pandemic. In 1953, he said, "Equations are more important to me, because politics is for the present, but an equation is something for eternity" (Hawkins, p. 188). It clearly proves that science is not all in all and it is not the solution of every problem. The fictional representation of the novel indicates so because the western world developed based on science and capitalism has been failure in providing hospitality. The impending Post-Pandemic Era predicts the same scenario. The interesting thing is that even the powerful leader like Donald Trump moved to the church to feel the peace of soul during COVID-19. It shows the materialistic world led by science may betray people anytime and the peace of soul is possible not in isolation; rather it is possible with the embrace of nature and spiritualism. Therefore, the ultimate peace of mind and soul can be achieved only through the embrace of the nature and the spiritual way of living. The article follows qualitative approach in order to achieve novelistic quest. To fulfill this approach- the theoretical insights are drawn from Narrative Epistemology, Eco-criticism, Anthropocentrism, Romanticism and Transcendentalism as the tools of analysis.

The novel has received a little review made so far as it has been recently published. The research articles and reviews are yet to come from the scholars in larger scales. The reviews made on it and posted through social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter prove that they are focusing on love story of humans, birds and also its tragic ending. Even the novelist himself in social media interview claims that the novel talks about the narratives of those who dare to fly and about those who dare to fly but cannot. In that sense, the novel has been interpreted so far as the tragedy of the immigrants and non-immigrants, of the local and global citizens. For me, the novel is the critique of modernity, multiculturalism and globalism. Its ultimate quest is for symbiotic relationship between humans and nonhumans, western and nonwestern, powerful and powerless ones. In that light, it deconstructs anthropocentrism; as imagined by the West in order to open the spaces for transcultural living.

Theoretical Stands and Methodology

The paper uses the following approaches as the tool or method of analysis: Narrative Epistemology, Ecocriticism, Anthropocentrism and Ecocentrism, Romanticism, Transcendentalism

First, Narrative epistemology is used as one of the methodological approaches under the umbrella of qualitative approach. Narrative epistemology refers to the process of getting knowledge through the narration of experiences. Freeman (2015, pp. 21-37) claims that narrative should be taken as-mode of understanding, Narrative Mania (man is essentially a story-telling animal), Narrative Excess (human experience of time), Narrative Illusion (living in falsifying narrative), Narrative as Method (reading for meaning), Narrative as Theory (the hermeneutics of human understanding), and Narrative as Praxis (From Big Stories to small). He states that all of us engage in making narrative. In this way, narrative epistemology focuses on the narratives or story telling as the means of acquiring knowledge.

Next, Ecocriticism deals with the relation between physical environment and literature. The word "ecocriticism" was coined in the late 1970s (as cited in Buell, 2005, p.13). Ecocriticism has been defined broadly as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty, p. XVIII). It affirms commitment to environmental praxis. By nature, it is interdisciplinary but the focus remains on eco-poetics. Ecocritics investigate such things as the underlying ecological values and examine human perception of wilderness. The critical spotlight falls on anthropocentrism which interrogates.

There are four waves of ecocriticism. The first wave tends to take a celebration of wilderness and nature writing. Its major focus goes on representing non-human world in literature- for instance, the romantic trend of representing nature both by American and British writers. The first wave of ecocriticism concerns with deep ecology. Connecting deep ecology with religion, Chapple (2001) claims, "the wild enriches the human spirit and sacralizes the process of survival" (p. 59). Devall and Sessions (1985) write "Deep ecology goes beyond the so-called factual scientific level to the level of self and Earth wisdom" (p. 65). In that sense, deep ecology challenges materialistic world view. For Arne Naess, deep ecological consciousness can be achieved through the embrace of "Self-Realization" and "Biocentric Equality" (as cited in Devall & Sessions, 1985, pp. 66-68). In the understanding of Arne Naess, for deep ecological consciousness people should start "Moving to the philosophical and religious level of wisdom" from "the methodology of modern science based on its usual mechanistic assumptions and its very narrow definition of data" (Devall & Session, p. 66). The second wave of ecocriticism deconstructs human-centered scholarship to examine agency for animals and plants. Here, the key phrase to describe the wave is "Debating Nature". This wave of ecocriticism is "a more reflective approach that provided the scope to address the complex intertwining of [...] 'Nature', and social and sexual politics" highlighting "post-pastoral", 'new nature writing' and 'ecopoetry' (Marland, p. 851). The third wave advocates for global understanding of ecocritical practice through issues like global warming. The key phrase used to describe the wave here is -"Eco-cosmopolitics" (Marland, p. 854). In this wave, the human activities increase more than in the second phase challenging the entire course of nature which leads a complex life. According to the fourth wave, the world has been changed into "Material Ecocriticism: Post-Human and Post-Nature" (Marland, p. 855). This wave presents nature and human beings in the form of hybridization. In this regard, Outka (2011) argues, "We're [...] approaching nature and the human through the binary paradigm produced

by the Romantic sublime rather than the collapse of the human, the artificial, and the natural in the organic sublime” (as cited in LeMenager, et al. 2011, p. 45). A huge literary production has been made focusing on the fourth wave of ecocriticism with the theme that science created by human beings has been monstrous and killer for the human beings themselves. For instance, Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* draws such theme. The ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic quite clearly illustrates that science is a monster. In this phase, human activities look uncanny and unusual in dealing with nature.

The third methodological tool applied here is the notion of anthropocentrism that helps to observe nature and to examine whether human beings have done justice upon nature or not through their practices. Distinguishing anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, Waugh (2006) writes, “Anthropocentrism is the placing of humanity at the center of everything” and “Anthropocentrism’s opposite is ecocentrism” (p. 537). Ecocentrism, for her is “to place the ecosystem, rather than humanity, at the Centre. An ecosystem has no center, though, except in the purely spatial sense and hierarchical distinction between Centre and margin, or foreground and background, should collapse” (p. 537). By making a close survey on western thinking from pre-Socratic to postmodern era regarding the status of Animals, Steiner (2005) finds, “Philosophers in the west conceptualize the human condition as a middle station between animality and divinity and maintain that of all earthly beings stand alone among earthly beings, human beings are closest to the gods” (p. 1). Stressing the need of rethinking in western thought regarding the status of animals, Steiner (2005) concludes his argument stating:

The biocentric outlook [...] would impose limits on the exercise of individual human freedom as regards the natural environment, in the interest of respecting and protecting non-human beings and establishing a sense of harmony with nature. At the same time, liberal ideals would be maintained in the interest of regulating relations between human beings. Such an integration of liberal individualism into cosmic holism is difficult to envision today because the needed cosmological framework remains undeveloped. It is in this connection that a reflection on the history of western thinking about animals will prove to be decisive. That history not only set the terms for the subjugation of animals, but it also contains clues to the establishment of a cosmology that would assert the essential dignity of animals without losing sight of what is uniquely human. (p. 251)

The fourth methodological approach under qualitative approach applied here is romanticism and transcendentalism. Romanticism and transcendentalism both have been used in analyzing the novel because they both stress upon the sixth sense. The novel also focuses on the need of the activation of the sixth sense through meditating upon nature. Regarding romanticism and transcendentalism Earle & Ferrara (1989) explains the background about New England Renaissance as the period in which:

The rapid growth and expansion of the United States helped bring about scientific advances that established the United States as one of the most technologically advanced nations in the world. New agricultural machines were invented, new roads, canals, and railroads were built, and telegraph lines were put into place. These developments brought about an overwhelming sense of optimism about the country’s future. (p. 258)

Although the United States was rapidly being advanced with overwhelming sense of optimism, but it irritated the transcendentalists because they thought that the inner soul of the Americans was not experiencing peace. Earle & Ferrara (1989) define “transcendentalism” as an intellectual movement and write:

The transcendentalists were [...] interested in the natural world and its relationship to humanity. They felt that if they explored nature thoroughly, they would come to know themselves and the universal truths better. Through this exploration, they discovered that the human spirit is reflected in nature. This led them to the conclusion that formed the heart of their beliefs: all forms of being-God, nature, and humanity-are spiritually united through a shared universal soul, or over-soul. (p. 267)

It shows transcendentalist movement came against the mere depiction of physical reality as experienced by our senses. In that sense, its major spotlight goes on the quest for the sixth sense or intuition. American transcendentalists were in fact the true American romanticists or New England transcendentalists. Earle & Ferrara (1989) further elaborate:

Romanticism was a literary and artistic movement of the nineteenth century, one that arose in reaction against eighteenth century Neoclassicism and that placed a premium on fancy, imagination, emotion, nature, individuality, and exotica. Romantic elements can be found in the works of American writers as diverse as Cooper, Poe, Thoreau, Emerson, Dickinson, Hawthorne, and Melville. Romanticism is particularly evident in the works of the New England Transcendentalists. (p. 1350)

Based on these theoretical insights, the novel seems to strengthen the tie of symbiotic relation between nature and human beings.

Textual Analysis and Interpretation

Every pandemic has brought catastrophe in the world and has made people rethink upon human actions and thoughts. In this regard, the novel *Hansa* can be taken as the true testimony to prove that the globe is facing the problems of different crisis such as Covid-19 and various other problems due to destructive practices of human beings. As a result, global home has been inhospitable place where binary logic of “us” versus “them” frequently takes place and all living beings are not positively embraced in it. The subversion of anthropocentric thought has been shown from the very beginning of the novel as the novelist has addressed stating “To the birds” in preface. This is the major evidence that the novelist has attempted to present which has not been presented so far. The novelist himself claims that the novel, to some extent ; attempts to displace human-centric world view that incorporates immigrant experience, ecological crisis, language limit, masculine and feminine issues, love, tragedy, jealousy and experiences and also the effects of the Maoist insurgency. The novel also addresses the narratives of birds and snakes through the technique of personification. This sort of technique helps in giving agency to birds and animals and it can be taken as groundbreaking thought of the writer. In most of the books and novels written so far, human-centric thought has primarily been used in order to show human supremacy. Representation of birds and animals is always in the margin. The novel has subverted and challenged that tendency. In that

light, the novel moves towards biocentrism rather than anthropocentrism. Another surprising depiction of the novel is that it captures readers' attention by presenting the funeral procession of birds and presenting other birds of different kinds as mourners. The sense of community and responsibility, they express and the sense of sympathy and empathy they express in the loss of their family member and friend is quite vivid. The novel has proved that birds look more magnanimous than humans. The novelist's attempt is to give agency to the wilderness as it narrates the stories more of birds and less of human beings. The novel not only mentions the plot of Anuj Pandey, Prem, Sima, Maya and others but also of male duck, female duck, Nagraja, Nagrani and varieties of other birds. The essence of the novel is that some people fly from one country to another whereas others do not fly. The final destination of all is "Mansarobar" as represented by "Taudaha" to refer to the ocean of heart. In other words, Taudaha refers to the vastness of nature. The Transcendentalist's quest of "over-Soul" is activated only in "Mansarobar" and "Taudaha". When "Mansarobar" or "great soul" and "Taudaha" are amalgamated, then only humans get salvation rather than just flying in the world of materialism.

In the content of *Zaar Ko Ghanti* (The Throat of Paramour) introduces two enemies Prem and Anuj Pandey. In this section, one of the protagonists Prem remembers his childhood and narrates how he would spend those days in Taudaha. He makes the journey of the same place recalling the past. The description of the journey of Prem proves that he is making the trip to feel the pleasure of the bliss of nature and to forget his pain of missing Sima. His description of wilderness seems prominent because he has given less priority for human activities and nature becomes major point of focus. Sima visits America as EDV winner betraying Prem. Prem seems to be hopeful in the beginning. But later on, he has been frustrated as Sima marries Anuj Pandey betraying Prem. Here, Prem reveals his misconception that Sima's boyfriend was not that bank's officer where Sima would work before she wins EDV lottery for America. Taudaha was the place where Prem fell in love with Sima in the past and it is the same place where he frequently visits to get peace for his soul as tragic hero.

With the topic of *Taudahako Kathaa* (The story of Taudaha) the writer tells the story of Taudaha, a mythical pond in the novel. Taudaha is such a mythical pond where male duck and female duck used to live a romantic life. Later on, they took birth as Nagraja and Nagrani. Similarly, this chapter is about Taudaha where Prem's love began and grew with Sima in the past. His story makes connection with the story of Nagraja and Nagrani or the story of male duck and female duck. The story of Taudaha begins when pet duck saw flying duck. Some claim Nagraja and Nagrani of Taudaha were male duck and female duck in their previous birth. According to an old woman, the flying duck and pet duck were reunited. It was the same place where the romantic love of Prem and Sima was blooming.

Similarly, *Simsarma Jhaggioko Mayaan* (Rooted Love in wetland) explores the philosophical conversation or talk of the ducks. Nyakka, the leader of the pets states:

Sansar rachne kramma hansadhoutale sabai bhanda pahile manchhelai banaya. Tyaspachhi hanslai. Tyaspachhi matra bakulla, kag, gandyaula, phatyangra, chil, khole dhobi, rupi, bhangera aadi jiblai. Tyasaile sansarma hansaharuko uchcha sthan chha. Manchhepachhi haami sristika sabaibhanda kwank prani haun...Fistehansle pratikar garyo, "Manchhe kasari hansbhanda

uchcha huna sakchha? Haminai sansarka sabaibhanda sundar ra kwank prani haun. Hansdhoutale sabaibhanda pahile manchhelai banaya bhanne kura manchheharuko jhuto katha ho. Hamle tyasto kathama bishwas garnu hundaina. Sanchokura arkai chha. (pp. 19-20)

[While creating the world, the God of ducks made man first. Then he made duck. Then only he created heron, crow, earthworm, grasshopper, eagle, river wagtail, Rupi bird, sparrow and other creatures. Thus ducks have higher position in the world. We are second excellent creatures in the world of creation after human beings...Fiste Duck opposed and said- "how can be man in higher position than ducks? Only we are the most beautiful and excellent creatures of the world. The assumption that God of ducks made man first is untrue tale of men. We should not believe in such untrue tale. The matter of truth is different.]

Here, some of the ducks claim that they have greater position in the world although they are in the second position in the creation after human beings. They agree that human should possess the first position according to the creation of the world. In contrast, some radical ducks like Fiste Duck argue that ducks should be the first and they should not believe in human stories. The Fiste Duck makes a counter claim that the gods of ducks made ducks first and then humans. So ducks should be the first in the world. He asserts:

Sabaibhanda pahile hansdhoutale hanslai banaya ani manchhelai. Tyasaile ta dhoutako anuhar pani hanskai jasto chha. Pwankh, khutta ra chuchcho sabai thyakkai hanskai jasto. Uni pani ta akashapariko dahama paudane, tyahanko ramailo simsarma bihargarne alaukik hans nai ta hun. Tyasaile ta unle sabaibhanda pahile aphno rupko hanslai banaya. Tyaspachhi matra manchhelai ra nikkaipachi gayara matra bakulla, sarpa, bhyaguta, lokharke, machha adi jibjantulai. (p. 20)

[At first, the God of ducks made ducks then men. Therefore, God's face is just like of ducks. Feathers, legs and beak all look like of ducks. He is also supernatural duck that swims across the sky and roams the beautiful wetlands. That's why he first made a duck of his own beauty. Only then to humans and only later to animals and other creatures such as heron, snakes, frogs, squirrel, fish, etc.] In order to make his counter claim stronger, the leader Duck further claims:

Hami ahankari hunu hundaina. Manchhele nai hamro aharko byawastha garchhan. Gedagudiko jogadgarchhan. Aru ta aru hamrai nimti bhanera yo tanda samet banayaka chhan. Tyasaile hamile manchheka katha patyaejaso garnuparchha. Uniharulai sristika pahila kwank pranini bhanera manda kehi bigrandaina. (p. 20)

[We should not be egoistic or arrogant. Men manage food for us. They collect cereals and grains. They have also made "Tand" (a resting space) for us. Therefore we need to pretend as if we believe in their stories. Nothing happens if we treat them the first excellent creatures of the creation]

The Fiste Duck does not like compromising nature of the leader Duck with human beings and argues that ducks should believe in facts rather than stories. Regarding it, he speaks:

Hamle kathama hoina, tathyama bishwas garnu parchha. Tathyaharulai kelayara heraun na! Yi manchheharu bihana dekhi belukasamma kam garira hunchhan. Dinbhara mihinet garera hamra lagi chamal, makai ra gedagudi lyaunchhan. Yo sabko karan ke? Kinamanchheharu sadhain kamma jyoteerahanchhan?... Manchheharu kamma jotieerahanuko eutai karan chha...Hansdhouta

chahanuhunchha hansharu aram garera basun. (p. 20)

[We must believe in facts, not in stories. Let's examine the facts. These people work from morning to evening. Working all day, they bring us rice, maize and nuts. What is the reason of this all? Why do men ever engage themselves in works? ... There is only one reason why men ever engage in works or jobs...It is because the God of ducks wants the ducks to have rest and men to be busy in works.]

The Fiste Duck further states, "*Hansdhoutale manchhelai hanskai sewa nimti banayaka hun*" (p. 21) [The God of ducks have made man for the service of ducks]. The Fiste Duck looks logical in his claim that the gods of ducks have created man for the service of ducks although humans may not agree in it. Mrs. Kyakka or female duck adds, "*Gharpaluwaharulai pani udna man lagdo rahechha ta*" (p. 22) Mrs. Kyakka or female duck adds, "Local ducks also want to fly!". Uncle Mr. Kyakka (uncle duck) said, "*Thito hunda sabailai udna man lagchha*" (p. 23) Uncle Mr. Kyakka (uncle duck) said, "All want to fly when they are young". It shows when ducks are young they desire to fly just like human beings. Mr. Kyakka becomes sentimental and further expresses:

Hamile yas dadama dubna sikhnaparchha. Yasko pindhama raheka itihasharulai bujhne kosis garnu parchha...Yo daha asadharan chha. Yasma itihash dubeko chha. Yasko pindhama harayako itihashlai khojnuchha. Tyas itihashlai bujhepachhi matra hamile aphulai bujhna sakchhaun. Hansjatiko sthiti ra niyatilai bujhna sakchhaun. Tyasaile timi udante raharlai panchhau. Baru ma sangasangai tala dubdai harayaka itihasharuko khoji gara. (p. 23)

[We must learn to sink into this lake. We need to attempt to understand the histories rooted at the bottom of the lake...This lake is extraordinary. History has sunk in it. We have to search lost history at the bottom of it. We can understand who we are only after understanding that history. Then only we can understand the status or position and luck of the ducks. So you need to avoid flying desires. Instead of desiring to fly, let's sink down with me and search the lost history.]

The above transliteration clearly proves that people suffer as they develop uncanny desire of flying. Such flying indicates the flight of immigrants in abroad. The uncanny flight has made people superficial. First, Peoples' global movement in the surface and second peoples' lack of the use of wisdom and meditation in understanding ground reality have been the two major problems that the world is facing now. The novelist might have indicated that Nepalese have forgotten their essence of being after they started the flight of abroad mainly after the end of Monarchy in post-Maoist Insurgency Era. Although the country experienced radical transformation from monarchy to Peoples' Republic; the country could not stop the flow of brain drain indicating darker future of Nepal. In their conversation, the ducks also discuss that like human beings animals and birds also need stories. The novelist claims that the birds and animals speak little from throat and more from their heart. Even the ducks like Mr. Kyakka in the novel discuss that it is more difficult to dive than to fly (p.30). Ironically, the novelist makes satire upon human beings because it is very easy for humans to fly rather than to dive in meditation and study focusing the ground reality. In their talk, the ducks draw the conclusion that there are wells at the bottom of the lake. The wells are countless layer by layer. They need to study each layer rather than flying in the surface. The descriptive details prove that the novel embraces narrative epistemology as the novel's major focus is on narration of personal narratives

rather than just telling the history. The uncle of the ducks states that all of them engage in making narrative. He expresses:

Tyo katha ho itihashoina. Yasta dherai kathaharu chhan. Kasaile bhanchhan hans jatiko utpati samudra chheun ma bhayako thiyo. Arule bhanchhan, marubhumi chheu. Kasaikasaile ta hansko suruwat taudahakai pokharima bhayako ho bhanera samet bhanchhan. (p. 31)

[He expresses, "That is story not history. There are so many such stories. Some say the species of ducks evolved at the shore of the oceans. Others say they evolved at the edge of desert. Some even claim ducks evolved in Taudaha Pokhari itself"]

The above account clearly proves that not only the humans have their stories of evolution. Even the birds have their narratives that help them live happily. In that sense, Taudaha is not just the Centre of human narratives but also the Centre of the narratives of birds and animals as well.

In the matter of *Yudhdha Ko Rahasya* (Mystery of War), the novel implicitly explores the meaninglessness of war in Nepal as led by the Maoists rebels. In this chapter, the novelist depicts the scenario of the flight of common Nepalese to abroad being disoriented from the Maoist conflict during and after the civil war. Before the war, people were living together in harmony and the war encroached domestic bliss of the Nepalese and made the Nepalese plan and prepare for the flight of abroad leaving the motherland deserted. The novel presents Prem's brother Bijaya who was involved in the Maoist conflict with a great hope and flew towards Qatar for the bright future after Maoists came into the mainstream of the national politics (p. 40). He went there in the profession of "grazing the camel in desert" (p. 44). In contrast, Prem decides to be writer after he passed MA. Not only his brother was alienated after the end of Maoist conflict, but Prem's wife Sima also became indifferent. Sima was a good girl. She passed B.Com. from Shankar Dev Campus. She started a job in a bank. She also passed M.Com. from Private College. Before the Maoist conflict, she used to read novels and would enjoy the world of novels forgetting the ground reality of human life. After the war, Sima entered the world of wilderness, the world of animals and birds. She preferred reciting poems in different programs and started reading the books of famous writers like Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea" (p. 50). In this way, Prem and Sima had lived a romantic conjugal life. Their romantic married life ended after Anuj Pandey came from America, Anuj called her in Taudaha and kissed her there. This meeting became the turning point of family fragmentation in the lives of both Prem and Anuj and also Sima and Maya. For Prem, the pond of Taudaha has been the true testimony or proof of love and hatred both in his life (p. 58). It is because his love began from this Taudaha as Sima and Prem promised and kissed each other. It is also the same place in which Anuj Pandey kissed Sima and Sima kissed Prem deserting the loving bond of Prem with Sima. Sima is so sentimental at that moment and tells to Prem that "*Bhabanalai bhasama samatna sakindaina. Premlai sabdama samatna khojnu chara udeko bato khojnujastai ho*" (p. 52) [Feelings cannot be presented in language. Attempting to catch love in words is just attempting to follow the route of flying bird]. It shows Sima is changed after Anuj Pandey kissed her. It indicates she was probably diverting towards flying like a bird, flying towards materialism may be dreaming for America. Finally, she filled the firm of EDV for America, one of the easiest ways of flying to America.

The Kitchan Bhitra Sentral Park (The Central Park in the Kitchen) draws the picture of American Kitchen as Open Park where everyone is free to enjoy. Anuj Pandey, Sher Singh, Sima and other friends are staying with both pain and pleasure in American Kitchen. The problem is that Sher Singh has caught and caressed Sima's hands in the kitchen in New York in the absence of Anuj Pandey. Sher Singh is proud of being Green Card holder and dominates others who have illegal status (p. 67). Likewise, *Samudrama Budho Manchhe* (An Old Man in the Sea) explores the idea that Prem feels just like an old man in the sea because his romantic moments of the past with Sima haunts him frequently. A storm occurs in his imagination as he imagines that his wife Sima might have enjoyed in America in the embrace of Anuj being erotic (p. 89). Prem energizes himself and intends to kill his *Zaar* (paramour) Anuj Pandey taking the form of Bhisma.

Moreover, *Jibanko Latari* (The Lottery of Life in the novel) explores how a person needs to play the role of betrayal in America even unintentionally. Anuj tells Prem that he is experiencing cyclotron in his life because of indecisiveness in life as he has been in problem. He feels as if he is trapped in the ocean (p. 116). Further, in *Nyuyorka Musaa* (The Mice of New York), Upreti's mind has been rebellious as he imagines that the beauty of New York is plundered due to the presence of 'mice' everywhere. In the literal sense, New York is always filled with mice. The novelist's experience of the US visit proves it to be true. In deeper level, mice refers to illegal immigrants and their miserable status of living. In that sense, New York has been polluted mostly by such mice (immigrants) who stay there longer with illegal status. For Upreti, the conflict among legal and illegal immigrants in New York looks like the battle of Pandava brothers and Kaurava brothers in *Mahabharata*, a Hindu epic. Prem feels as if he may have to fight with Anuj Pandey just like the mythical war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. And it would also feel as if Draupadi was going to be abducted and raped and it would also feel as if the situation was quite critical that of Abhimanyu (p. 118). As Prem knows the reality, Anuj's story haunts him too. His rage comes down. The story of *Zaar* (paramour) was full of fear for him. Prem does not want to stay any longer in the world of bitter reality and diverts himself towards the world of imagination (p. 144).

Entering in the *Hansko Kathaa* (The story of duck), the novelist imagines the change in global social structure. The novelist writes:

Ek din arkai samaya aaune chha. Ahileka pahadaharu nasta bhayara pheri baluwaka daha banne chhan. Ahile jahan himal chha, tyahan samudra hunechha. Jahan samundra chha, tyahan thula thula pahad thadine chhan. Himalko hiun paglane chha...jiban kathin hundai janechha. Ahile hamile chitaunai nasakine mausama aune chha. Pokhari ra dahaharu suk dai janechhan. Machha, sarpa, kakakul sabai marna thalne chhan... Tyasbela udnuko mahatwa jhan badhnechha. Udneharule aphulai jogaune chhan. Udnanasakneharu rittindai gayakaa dahasangasangai suk daijanechhan. (p. 154)

[One day another time will come. The present mountains will become sand dunes again. Where there is a mountain now, there will be an ocean. Where there is an ocean, there will be big mountains. The snow of the mountains will melt...life will be getting harder. Weather will be unpredictable. Ponds and lakes will be drying up. Fish, snakes, Spilornis Cheela (Kakakul) all will start dying

through suffering and pain...The importance of flying will be peaking in future. Abled ones to fly will protect themselves and unable ones to fly will be emptying themselves and shrinking along with the shrinking lakes and ponds.]

The indented transliteration part quite clearly shows all people should fly for their protection when earth itself desires to change her shape or position. In catastrophe or some sort of natural disaster, it is sensible to fly if possible for self-protection. In other cases, desiring to fly becomes uncanny. The novelist's attempt quite clearly suggests that humans are born to dive or study in the depth rather than making uncanny flight. The global home lacks hospitality because of the excessive flight of human beings from one destination to another. The novel clearly indicates and predicts the changing scenario of the world in post Covid-19 era. Although the corona virus looks natural, it has compelled people to make a rethinking upon anthropocentric world mainly led by the globalized west. The female duck remarks, "*Udnalai pakheta bhayara matra hundaina. Kati pakhetaa bhayakaharu udna sakdainan. Ani pakheta nabhayakaharu pani akash chhuna khojchhan. Tyasaile udnekura mansanga jodiyakochha*" (p. 154) [The female duck remarks, "Feathers are not merely the essentials for making a flight. Many cannot fly even if they have feathers. Even the featherless attempt to touch the sky. So the matter of flight is the concern and connection with heart"] . The novelist finds the gap between those who fly in the surface and those who fly in the depth. He desires to see imaginative flight in all that arises from in-depth study and meditation. However, such flight lacks in the majority of the people and they suffer a lot in life. The desire to fly just for material gain has made people suffer a lot in life. The novel raises very serious issue that when people attempt to adopt new profession and this trend creates further confusion in life. Rejection existing profession and adopting new one means we attempt to go against nature, and it's a crime (p. 158). Although people who do not fly also face the problems; but majority is that of those who frequently fly and are facing challenges. This is the case of physical flight. But those who fly in imagination are far better than those who stay idle. The writer's main focus is on imaginative flight rather than the mere mobility in the globe. The novelist assumes narratives or stories make people alive (p. 163). In *Pokhariko Pindha* (Bottom of Pond), one of the characters, Prem becomes nostalgic after he listens the narrative of Anuj Pandey. Anuj Pandey confesses that he decided to leave America being confused. He could neither embrace both Sima and Maya nor reject them (p. 176). Anuj Pandey claims that he himself is responsible for what is happening to him now. Anuj Pandey realizes that his decision of visiting America was wrong. He also argues that dreaming of visiting America is just running after huge, fearful and invisible well that destroys peoples' harmony (p. 185). By highlighting the importance of the law of nature and condemning man made rules and laws, the novel depicts:

Sansarka niyama-kanunaharu bichitraka chhan. Kasle kahan udna paune, kasle napaune, kasaiko kagaj nune, kasaiko nahune - prem ra samagamabareka niyama, visa ra lalpurjabareka kanun... niyama-kanunka simalai bhatkaudai baikalpik sansaarko kalpana garna khojen. Desh, pariwar, nagrikta , paasport, visa, lalpurja binako sansar kasto hundo ho? Pratibandhita simaharulai chhicholna sakne maya prem kasto hundo ho? Tara kehi kalpana pani akalpaniya hundo rahe chhan. (pp. 185-186)

[The rules and laws of the world are bizarre. Who can fly where, who cannot, someone has paper, others do not- in the rules about love and intercourse, the laws of visa and land ownership paper... Breaking the boundaries of law and order, I started imagining an alternative world. What is the world like without country, family, citizenship, passport, visa, Land ownership paper? What is it like to be the love able to transgress restricted boundaries? But some fantasies are also unimaginable.]

Here, the novelist imagines borderless world and the world which is totally free to travel without making any artificial documents and cards – like visa, passport, and landowner’s paper and so on. In the novel, Prem intends to fly in America and wants to kill his paramour with Bhojpure Khukuri but it is not possible for him to get visa of America. By abandoning human centric world, Anuj Pandey wants to assimilate and merge himself in nature. He thinks that the rule of nature is far better than human-centric laws as he writes:

Jibanle aphno bato aphain banaunchha. Chara hawama udda euta bato banchha. Pachhi tyo bato aphain haraunchha. Kholaharu kahile missiera bagchhan, kahile chhuttiera a-aphnai batama. Aaphno sath dine ta kathaharu nai hun. Sayada tyasaile manisharulai katha chahinchhan ,hansharulai jastai. (p. 187)

[Life makes its own way. The bird becomes a path when it flies in the air. Then that path loses itself. Rivers sometimes flow mixing each other, sometimes in their own way separating from others. Only stories accompany in life. Maybe that's why people need stories, like ducks.]

It shows that humans need to live just following the course of nature just like the flowing river chanting own narratives or stories. The novelist argues that humans cannot live together forever with their loved ones but they can live with the stories or narratives they have.

Lugaa Nalauneka Katha (The Stories of Those who Do not wear Clothes) explores the idea that the novel moves towards transcendental quest because the novel presents non-human language superior than human language (p. 192). The novel presents anthropocentrism as problematic because when people wear clothes they imagine and think one thing in the heart and brain but speak just the opposite. Such people are called ‘pakhandi’. This rule is not applied in biocentrism or ecocriticism or in deep ecology. Even a bird crane has understood who the Buddha was. The crane has made a conclusion that there was only one good man on earth. He was Gautam Buddha because he never wore clothes and walked naked. Human beings may not agree with such claim of the birds (p. 197).

The novel concludes with *Antim Udaan* (The Final Flight) where the author draws the theme that human beings were born for providing service of the ducks. Therefore, ducks should love human beings forever. The crane suggests to fly in the sky of heart because in such flight the human beings, animals and birds neither feel the pain of feathers nor they suffer from the impending old age (p. 210). The crane is wounded but his outer pain disappears as he has entered the world of heart. The duck starts the pleasure of his imaginative flight in an interesting way. Upreti writes:

Jangal ra phantaharulai naghyo. Chuchuraharulai samet chhicholdai parapara uddai gayo. Manko sansarma pida thiyana ,na andhyaro thiyoy, na tras. Sara sansar ghamako ujjaloma jagamagayako thiyoy. Jatijati udyoy, kshitiz tyati nai parapara dekhiyoy. (p. 217)

[Exceeded forests and cracks. It flew away even by crossing the peaks. There was no pain in the world of the heart, neither darkness, nor terror. The whole world shone in the sunlight. The farther it flew, the farther the horizon looked]

It implies that *Hansa* not only refers to the ducks but it refers to the soul or heart or spirit of human beings as well. In essence, it indicates that a man should have richness of heart to live a successful life. Such flight of imagination through the activation of heart clearly proves that the novelist is in the quest of spiritualism because he thinks capitalism may betray people at any time. Finally, the novelist quite interestingly draws the attention of the readers by presenting the death of a duck. The farmers looked at him to express condolence without being indifferent. Different kinds of birds assemble as mourners of the duck for the funeral procession and to express condolences to the demised duck that passed away (p. 219). It looks a kind of satire on anthropocentric world because in it, humanity and sense of community both have disappeared. People have been alienated in the modern world. But still the birds have not forgotten their community, friends, relatives and families.

The aforementioned accounts exhibit that novel *Hansa* explores a conflict between materialism vs. spiritualism, global vs. local, anthropocentrism vs. ecocentrism/ecocriticism, West vs. Non-west, history vs. narratives, human narratives vs. non-human narratives, human language vs. non-human language, five senses vs. sixth sense, male vs. female, physical flight vs. inner ilight/ flight of imagination/ ilight of creativity/ flight of meditation /flight of ultimate destination.

Conclusion and Implications

Hansa, the title of the novel, refers to our life force or spirit. Our life becomes longer, meaningful and purposeful if attempt is made to fly less in material gain and more in transcending the vastness of nature. The novel highlights the Spiritual flight that is always greater than making flight for gaining material luxuries. The American dream of Anuj Pandey makes him feel greater at first, but he regrets later and feels he will get salvation in Nepal by meditating like Buddha in the lap of nature. Prem minimizes his rage only after he listens about the painful life of Anuj Pandey in America although Prem was taking Anuj Pandey as his paramour and villain before. The desire of Sima and Maya to stay longer in America proves that they still focus on materialistic living and are unable to feel the pleasure of nature. In this way, the novel depicts the picture of tragedy of the immigrants, both legal and illegal, both documented and undocumented, both EDV winners and losers and it also depicts the picture of the tragedy of those who fly and also those who do not fly. Sima, in the novel represents boundaries and limitations and she also represents about how such boundaries need to be deconstructed at present. Sima leaves job in bank as she becomes EDV winner in legal sense and she elopes with Anuj Pandey and leaves for America. She lives with Anuj Pandey as his wife although his status is illegal immigrant. As the result, Sima becomes the victim of Sher Singh. Sher Singh dominates Anuj Pandey and others because he feels proud in being Green Card holder. After getting the Green Card, Anuj Pandey comes in Nepal for three months and meets his family and beautiful wife, Maya. She requests Anuj Pandey not to return in America. She also challenges him that she may commit suicide by jumping from the cliff of Chobhar (a cliff of Kathmandu which is

believed to have been cut by Manjushree to make a way for passing water and to make Kathmandu valley a suitable place for shelter) if he leaves her alone in Nepal. However, he returns promising to meet Maya soon in America after her visa processing has been completed. In his stay, in Nepal, Anuj meets another beautiful girl, Sima, who has recently been EDV winner and is married to Prem. Sima elopes with Anuj Pandey. They both fly in America. Anuj Pandey keeps it secret to his wife Maya. Sima becomes pregnant from Anuj Pandey in America. A child is born to them. At the same time, Maya's visa process has been completed. She flies for New York dreaming to live with Anuj Pandey. Now, Anuj Pandey suffers as he has to keep both his wives Maya and Sima with him. For some time, they live together. And finally, Anuj Pandey leaves America for Nepal and decides not to return there anymore. After he returns in Nepal, Anuj Pandey moves towards his home Sokedhara, Kathmandu. However, his father does not allow him to enter accusing him of betraying beautiful daughter-in-law Maya. Anuj Pandey is from Sokedhara, Kathmandu, Maya from Sallaghari, Bhaktapur and Sima from Lagankhel, Lalitpur. Now, all of them are not in love triangle but in tragedy triangle. Then, Anuj Pandey heads towards Halkhorja jungle of Bara to live the life of Buddha just like Ramkumar Bomjan as Baba-Ji or whatever he does not know himself.

The implication of the novel looks great in the present context of Nepal because American dream has alienated them by bringing family fragmentation. It also depicts the scenario of the struggle of South Asian immigrants living in America at large. Beyond that, the novel interrogates upon modernity, globalization and multiculturalism. Therefore, it stresses on transcultural living in order to subvert the existing boundaries of the world. Transcultural living not just maintains harmony among people but it also maintains reciprocity between the world of humans and non-humans. The concern of the farmers upon the death of duck along with other birds and animals at the ending part explores this message.

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Dadhi Ram Panthi is a lecturer of English literature and English Education at Pashupati Multiple Campus and Mahendra Ratna Campus under Humanities and Social Sciences, Education and Management for various levels. Academically, he has the qualifications of M.A and Mphil in English. Currently he is pursuing his PhD from Tribhuvan University of Nepal. Additionally, he is certified with TESOL Diploma. He has presented a paper in third ELT conference at TU. He has published several journal articles both in national and international journals that are available at academia.edu. He is life member of NELTA. His participation and presentation looks active in seminars, meetings, orientation and conferences regarding academic tasks.