

Tribhuvan University

Remapping Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Humanities and Social Sciences, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

Sanjaya Mainali

TU Regd. No: 6-2-204-22-2007

Symbol No: 400374/2072

July 2017

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled "**Remapping Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum***" is my own original work carried out as a Master's student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis paper's design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis paper have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis paper.

.....

Sanjaya Mainali

July 2017

Tribhuvan University
Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences
Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus
Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled " Remapping Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*" submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Sanjaya Mainali, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Janak Paudel

Supervisor

External Examiner

Pradip Sharma

Head,

Department of English

Date: 17 July 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Mr. Janak Paudel, Faculty of Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, for making constant supervision and guiding me with regular inspiration, encouragement, and insightful suggestion throughout the study. His vigorous efforts made me present this research work in this form. I am also indebted to the Head of the Department of English, Mr. Pradip Sharma, for the valuable directions in conducting the research.

I would like to extend sincere acknowledgement to the entire group of faculty of English Department for their valued inspiration. I would like to express my sincere thanks to my family members, colleagues and all my well-wishers who directly and indirectly helped me to complete this work.

July 2017

Sanjaya Mainali

Abstract

The narrative representation of nationalistic awakening is the area round which this research moves. The remapping of nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* is the focal point of this research. The theory of nationalism is mobilized as the basic methodological framework. The time of dire crisis gives rise to the repressed sentiment of nationalism. This is the core finding of this research. When national integrity comes under threat, individuals are likely to forget all types of barriers and parochialisms. Personal differences are forgotten and individuals are likely to get united under the historical urgency to save nation and nation state. This issue is graphically and poignantly represented in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*.

Struggle for the integrity of China from foreign invasion and seizure are confronted by a union of opposites. These opposites range from life and death, beauty and ugliness, love and depravity. These conjoined aspects are not just coincident. They both emerge as essential for the understanding of the whole. Humans are deeply and fundamentally flawed. But they are capable of rising above petty quibbles when a dire crisis haunts them. The horrific scenario of war gives everyone a chance to prove one's heroism.

Contents

Declaration

Letter of Approval

Letter of Declaration

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I. Remapping Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*

Narrative Construction of Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* 1- 7

II. Remapping Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* 7-24

III. Mo Yan's Vision of National Esteem 24–26

Works Cited

I. Remapping Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*

Narrative Construction of Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*

Nationalism is largely understood as sentiment or impulse which drives people living within a fixed territory to the thread of unity. People living in a fixed territory often enter the bond of nationalistic pride. Various factors contribute to the emergence of nationalism. The history of nationalism differs from country to country. The historical dynamics of one country can bear certain common attributes but it does not remain just a carbon copy. Nationalism is generally used to describe the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity.

Nationalism describes the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve self-determination. It raises questions about the concept of a nation which is often defined in terms of common origin, ethnicity. In Benedict Anderson's words, it is "an imagined community" (121). It is specifically about whether an individual's membership in a nation should be regarded as non-voluntary or voluntary. While many states are nations in some sense, there are many nations which are not fully sovereign states.

Nationalism came into the focus of philosophical debate two decades ago in the nineties. Flows of nationalism tend to present a moral ambiguity. National awakening and struggles for political independence are often both heroic and cruel. The formation of a recognizably national state often responds to deep popular sentiment but sometimes yields inhuman consequences. The moral debate on nationalism reflects a deep moral tension between solidarity with oppressed national groups on the one hand and repulsion in the face of crimes committed in the name of nationalism on the other. The issue of nationalism points to a wider domain of problems related to the treatment of ethnic and cultural differences

within democratic polity, arguably among the most pressing problems of contemporary political theory.

Theoretical view of Benedict Anderson is used to build a methodological framework. In Anderson's words, "Nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (7). Nationalism is not dying awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist. A universally agreed definition of the concept of 'nation' does not exist, in large part because "the politics of nationalism is one of inclusion and exclusion. Thus, whoever sets the terms of the debate also sets the criteria for national membership and belonging – a power few nationalists are prepared to relinquish" (Mayall 7). The various academic definitions of 'nation' on offer may share certain key characteristics relating to a shared identity, territory and history. Yet the precise emphasis is given to these core 'national' ingredients shifts from one commentator to another.

The violent entry of Japanese invaders uproots and ruptures the fabric of socio-politico-cultural lives of the majority of Chinese people. Though Chinese peasants are not in a position to resist the invaders, Yu Zhan-ao, a bandit and social outcast, feels strongly driven by the idea of fighting with the invaders. Involvement of bandits in the war against Japan bears value and meaning in the face of the invasion which seemed irresistible.

Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* projects the issue of nationalism and its remapping when Chinese history suffered deadlock. In the novel *Red Sorghum*, Yu Zhan-ao is the most successful image depicted. He is the most controversial image because of its special status - bandit. Yu Zhan-ao is not bathos. He dares to love and hate. He abhors evil as a deadly foe. Yu Zhan-ao is successfully portrayed character who represents banditry in the novel. His

struggle, valor and nationalistic sentiment lie in his so interesting love with Dai Fenglian and also put down to his struggle with Japanese invaders. When Yu Zhan-ao knows that they are deceived by Leng detachment of Nationalist Party, he still launches attacks on the Japanese forces with weak power, until the last soldier remains.

National history is remapped in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*. China has a long history of culture. It also has a long history of bandits. Bandits are the result of volatile social system. They often live in a social instability, war continues, the environmental conditions of people. In the outbreak of war, patriotic sentiments and nationalistic upsurge arose. The inner dynamics of this nationalistic upsurge is exposed in this novel. During the period of Republic of China, the society was ruled in the darkness, natural disasters occurred frequently. Especially the Japanese aggressors invaded. This invasion brought about a lot of displaced people. In such a case, bandits increased. This scenario set nationalistic sentiment in motion. Only these aspects of the text are focused. The description of them can help us understand a regional or even a national real existence and lifestyles.

Long-term Confucian culture makes the national character become too elegant, even the cowardly. Bandit identity of Yu Zhan-ao coincides with the need that era called out hero. They choose the rebellion, burst the most primitive resistance. They embody our national determined energy of the inner. But because of bandit's special identity in history for a long, time it is good to regard them as the hero. It is a war of the whole nation to resist against Japan, nearly of different levels. Every group makes a contribution to it. Since it is the standard to confirm patriotism, it is fine to restore historical truth.

Chinese history of nationalism is remapped through narrative representation of war fought by three successive generations of bandits in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*. The vision of nationalism, national sovereignty and national integrity cherished by Yu Zhan ao arises

powerfully as China faces irresistible Japanese invaders. The stories narrated by Zhan ao's grandchild and prices paid by bandit warriors have patriotic purity and nationalistic fervor. *Red Sorghum* is widely believed as a social document. It chronicles the phases Chinese society had to pass in order to reach the intended level of socio-cultural transformation. In this novella, Mo Yan breathes life into socio-cultural transformation by describing the effects of larger-than-life events on the average citizen.

Shelley W. Chan', in "A Subversive Voice in China" is critically aware of Mo Yan's limitations as a novelist. She reflects on Mo Yan's literary oeuvre. She points out how Mo Yan has used lived experience in his important literary works. She reveals Mo Yan as "the most prolific writer in present-day China and as one of its most prominent avant-gardists" receiving enormous readership from throughout the world (1). As argued by Chan, Mo Yan is successful in portraying the consequences of socio-cultural transformation. Daily activities are described in a vivid and vigorous way. The real charm of Mo Yan's literary oeuvre is that he is skillful in describing the common incidents of life.

In the article, "A Literary Genealogy: Faulkner, García Márquez, and Mo Yan", M. Thomas Inge makes the remarks about the novel, *Red Sorghum* that Mo Yan has embraced the land, people, customs, myths, history, folklore, and primitive passions of the countryside, and his characters exercise their destinies against tragedies and permanent events (2).

Inge studies Mo Yan in the light of other writers who have chosen the mode of magic realism. Here, the political and social issues are presented in the subtext of the novel. Mo Yan tends to reflect upon the socio-cultural history of modern China. Communist China has come a long way since the last few decades. To achieve this purpose, it has to face countless number of obstacles. Mo Yan contemplates upon history which gives profound insight to those youths who are troubled and confused on the cross road of history.

Red Sorghum mounts frontal attack on the rigidity of China's cultural status quo. It also warns about the harms arising from the importation of western style of living. The modernization of China is both subversive and uplifting as well. The dark and the bright side of modernizing China are brought to the focal point. Mo Yan depicts the complex pull between the fresh longing of China to shape itself into the cultural mold of the west and the regressive passion of indigenous people of China to remain loyal to one party rule. In depicting the complexities, Mo Yan has succeeded in maintaining the position of neutrality.

Effect of war circulates at the heart of Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*. Through the interpenetration of heroism, war and the political dualism get the proper momentum. To some extent, Mo Yan addresses this sort of paradoxical issue in this novel. Chuanbo Huang concentrates upon this issue saying that "Mo Yan has written a large number of wars, but we cannot see his value judgment on the war. What is a just war, and what is an unjust war? Through the novel text, we cannot experience out, and only experience mother's suffering" (3).

War brings to mother innumerable health and spirit injure. Mo Yan has revealed his own anti-war position. War encourages brutish nature of people. It arouses desire that people kill. It eliminates all mercy and pity of people. The simple words have revealed Mo Yan's pure-hearted concern of the life and loving heart to mother. He put forward deep query to war. Thus he embodies more humanizing aesthetic comprehension and solicitude.

Howard Goldblatt is another critic of Mo Yan. He is critically aware of Mo Yan's limitations as a novelist. He enumerates how Mo Yan has injected his own anecdotal experience to portrayal of village. Goldblatt argues that Mo Yan has spent much of his energy on long and sensuous descriptions of butchering, cooking, eating and other bodily functions

like urinating rather than exploring the darker undercurrents of society or depths of the characters (27).

Joanne Arnett is celebrated critic and author as well. She looks Mo Yan's literary representation from the western eyes. She maintains that *Red Sorghum* is characterized more by the features of memoir and less by the striking characteristic of novel. She states that this novel is "essentially a history in the form of narration" and Yan has been successful in describing events spanning four decades in such a short volume (37).

Maureen Freely is wholly appreciative of the power of Mo Yan blending the eastern and western literary heritage. He explores the cultural and religious intersection between the east and the west. According to Freely, "the unique position of China, located on the geographical and cultural border between Europe and Asia, provides the context for Mo Yan's fictions, which draw from both Eastern and Western cultural and religious traditions" (17).

Although all these critics have mentioned different issues in their analysis and interpretations, none of them have seen how the issue of the reconstruction of nationalistic history is raised in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*. During the invasion of China by Japanese soldiers, many bandits of China fought with foreign invaders to protect their territories. When the entire country was falling into the foreign occupation, the socially excluded and unacknowledged people fought for the integrity of their nation. Not only the one generation but several generations are guided by the nationalistic sentiments. It is this nationalistic upsurge that is reconstructed in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the topic, elaboration of hypothesis, departure and chapter divisions. The second chapter is

concerned with perspective on nationalism. The third chapter concentrates on the analysis of the text, *Red Sorghum*. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending.

II. Remapping Nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*

This research probes into the layers of narrative modes in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* with which the ethos and spirit of nationalism is remapped. Mo Yan has expressed his simple war ideas through his war fictions. He writes that the bandit resists against Japan for the purpose of rewriting the standard of the hero of resisting against Japan. He praises mother and expresses his own anti-war position by mother's boring sufferings. *Red Sorghum* shows the war reality from many different aspects. Yan expands the aesthetic space of the war greatly. The war is a pointless subject for Chinese contemporary writers because of the specific social and historical reasons. They even have not experienced the ruthlessness of war, but also grow up in the reading war works. External wars have been into the creative background.

China descended into a civil war in the 1920s. While China was divided and weak, Japan invaded during the 1930s, and brutally occupied some of the eastern regions. Pillage, burning, rape, torture and murder were commonplace during this dark chapter of Chinese history. In Nanjing, hundreds of thousands of people were massacred within just a few days. Japanese forces retreated from China after the two nuclear bombs that ended the Second World War, which allowed China to focus all its energy on national re-unification. China's response to the Japanese invasion thus helped to end the civil war. It enabled people to unify China under the Communist Party. It gave China a revived impetus to rejuvenate itself as a People's Republic in 1949, which still exists today.

To probe this issue of remapping, the theory of nationalism is used as the major theoretical tool. Nationalism has various manifestations. Some brands of nationalism are genuine and natural whereas the rest are fake and deceptive. The nation-state developed fairly recently. “Prior to the 1500s, in Europe, the nation-state as we know it did not exist. Back then, most people did not consider themselves part of a nation; they rarely left their village and knew little of the larger world. If anything, people were more likely to identify themselves with their region or local lord” (Emmanuel O’Brien 131). At the same time, the rulers of states frequently had little control over their countries.

The consolidation of power also took a long time. Kings and queens worked to “bring all the people of their territories under unified rule. Not surprisingly, then, the birth of the nation-state also saw the first rumblings of nationalism, as monarchs encouraged their subjects to feel loyalty toward the newly established nations” (O’Brien 141). The modern, integrated nation-state becomes clearly established in most of Europe during the nineteenth century.

In this novel, more than half of the characters die by the end. Most of them are murdered by Japanese soldiers. Many of them are tortured before they’re killed. By means of narration, this novel dramatizes vivid descriptions of rape, of body parts being cut off, of people being skinned alive. Millions of people were mutilated by bayonets and bullets. At one point, Japanese soldiers destroy the entire village. Only six survivors remain. They pick up Japanese weapons and continue to fight to the death. The Chinese patriotism and historic realism are scattered throughout the narrative.

The further analysis is based on this theoretical insight. The history of wars from the parents’ narration provides a new interpretation for the writers. They found the possibility of creative thought to history in the evolvement of history. On the basis of comprehension and

imagination of themselves, they carry out creative expression to that history with a strong body color and artistic personality. Compulsion to perceive the harsh reality of war like loss of life gives rise to the sentiment of nationalism. The following extract reflects the harsh and unbearable reality of war:

Father saw Sun Five's knife cut the skin above the ear with a sawing motion. Uncle Arhat screeched in agony as sprays of yellow piss shot out from between his legs. Father's knees were knocking. A Japanese soldier walked up to Sun Five with a white ceramic platter, into which Sun put Uncle Arhat's large, fleshy ear. He cut off the other ear and laid it on the platter alongside the first one. Father watched the ears twitch, making thumping sounds. (35)

Bandits resist the Japanese invaders. To rewrite the standard of anti-Japanese hero, it is worthwhile to take *Red Sorghum* as an example. China has a long history of bandits who are the result of volatile social system. They often live in a social instability, war continues, the environmental conditions of people. China is an agricultural country. Its land is the lifeline of old farmers.

Newly emerging nation-states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a complex relationship with the predominant transnational power of the time, the Catholic Church. At times, partial nation-states were useful tools for the Catholic Church. On several occasions, for example, "France and Spain intervened in Italy at the invitation of the Pope. But some monarchs wanted control over their national churches in order to get absolute power. In England, the dispute over who controlled the English church led Henry VIII to break from the Pope and establish an independent Protestant church in the 1530s" (Brien 151). This break with the Catholic Church gave the English something to rally around, thus encouraging them to develop loyalty toward the English nation-state.

In what has now become a classic in studies of nationalism, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* traces the origins of the rise of national consciousness to the modern-industrial age of the Enlightenment in Western Europe. Following the demise of traditional, hierarchical forms of social organization associated with Christendom, Anderson attributes a "major role to economic factors that helped spread supposedly universal, homogenous and horizontal-secular notions of national space, territoriality, and citizenship" (37). This role and responsibility for the formation of secular state is illustrated by Anderson this this extract which is cited below:

As a secular, non-religious phenomenon, the idea of the 'nation' reached a level of mass consciousness. Nationalisms, therefore, have the unique ability to traverse millions of people in and through the interplay of capitalist relations and modes of production, the spread of communications, or print technology which resulted in the ultimate demise of human linguistic diversity prevalent in the pre-modern era. (47)

Anderson's approach emphasizes the role of creative imagery, invented traditions, representation, imagination, symbols, and traditions in nationalism, as a constructed narrative about the nation-state. As a phenomenon that is fundamentally historical in its constitution, the truth of national identity cannot be found in fixed racial categories, myths about origins, or certain primordial facts.

Because of their Bandits' status, the description of them can help us understand a regional or even a national real existence and lifestyles. The social reality came from abroad and the contest for the governance issued from interior was a change to inspect their personality. In this case, many of them have the baptism of spirit and sublimated their personality. Concerning the depiction of image, the following extract illustrates:

Northeast Gaomi Township was aswarm with bandits who operated in the sorghum fields like fish in water, forming gangs to rob, pillage, and kidnap, yet balancing their evil deeds with charitable ones. If they were hungry, they snatched two people, keeping one and sending the other into the village to demand flatbreads with eggs and green onions rolled inside. Since they stuffed the rolled flatbreads into their mouths with both fits, they were called "fistcakes". (47)

They discarded the evil factors of bandit's traditional character and enlarge the goodness, so as to realize the poetic sublimation as fleeing writer's utilitarian purpose and broader social cultural expectations. Bandits are a group of complex social images, and are the collection of contradictions. On one hand, as the negative images of violence they commit all sorts of wickedness.

Chatterjee takes issue with Anderson's conception of nationalism as one that pre-exists in modular forms, such that its basic tenets can easily be exported and appropriated in the postcolonial world. The modular nature of typical nationalism is clarified by him in this extract:

History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized. (216)

While appearing to oppose the colonial influence at one level, the problematic of anti-colonial nationalisms assert a form of inner sovereignty. Inner domain of national culture matters a lot in the process of understanding nationalism in local cultural context. Nonetheless, the very thematic of post-Enlightenment epistemologies and ethical systems provides a national-theoretical framework.

The bandits written by modern writers are always round characters. But, the bandit images have the defects of simplification and stereotype since the founding of the People's Republic. They raped, lost the human nature and were heinous. They totally become demon images. Of course, in order to establish the initial heroism, optimism and improve people's awareness, the literature of newly-built republic regime was not wrong to do so. The severity and ferocity of Japanese invasion sound callous in the psyche of Chinese.

Long war is not only an inspection of civil patience and perseverance, but also the comprehensive test of character. The reasons of winning the war are various. Chinese Communist persisted in resistance in enemy's rear area. Chinese Nationalist party checked the Japanese in open battle. Red Army supported them in Far East. Through the official texts of literature and history, we know a number of the Anti-Japanese War heroes. On account of national feelings or other reasons in the Anti-Japanese War, many bandits had had positive struggle to foreign enemy. The following extract works as a standing example of Bandit's transformation:

Granddad felt more clearheaded than ever before in his life. Five Troubles' words were a rag that had wiped his heart clean, until it shone like a mirror, finally, he could see the purpose of his struggles, and he uttered something that even Father, who was sitting in front of him, didn't hear clearly: "Heaven's will!" Alternating between a gallop and a trot, the horses arrived at the banks

of the Black Water River at noon. That afternoon they left the river behind them, and as night was about to fall, Granddad rose up in the saddle to gaze out at the Salty Water River. (284)

Yu Zhan-ao is the most successful image depicted in *Red Sorghum*, but he is the most controversial image because of its special status - bandits. Yu Zhan-ao is not bathos, dares to love and hate, abhors evil as a deadly foe, and lives very magnetically. Yu Zhan-ao's successful depiction in the novel not only lies in his so interesting love with Dai Fenglian, but also puts down to his struggle with Japanese invaders.

Nationalist thought appears to "oppose the dominating implications of post-Enlightenment European thought at one level and yet, at the same time, seems to accept that domination at another" (Chatterjee 37). Nationalism takes issue not with modernity itself but with the mode in which modernity came to the colonies. It seeks not to abolish the main instruments of colonial governmentality but to nationalize them. This explains why, in the Indian case, "state power was not seized in a single historical movement of revolution but through prolonged popular struggle on a moral, political and ideological level" (220). In her words, "the national movement was the process through which the Indian people were formed into a nation and a people...it was the existence of a common oppression by a common enemy and the struggle against it" (Chatterjee 32).

An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force is embedded in such a conception of nation. This is not to deny "the attempt by nationalist discourses persistently to produce the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress, the narcissism of self-generation, the primeval present of the Volk" (Bhabha 23). Such political ideas have been definitively superseded by those new realities of internationalism, multi-nationalism, or even late capitalism.

Large and liminal image of the nation is "a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it" (Bhabha 34). It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the 'origins' of nation as a sign of the 'modernity' of society. The cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality. Bhabha expresses the nation's ambivalent emergence with great clarity:

The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. Few things were (are) suited to this end better than the idea of nation. If nation states are widely considered to be 'new' and 'historical', the nation states to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past and ... glide into a limitless future. (47)

The nation's formation into being as a system of cultural signification emphasizes this instability of knowledge. The most interesting accounts of the national idea seem to concur on the ambivalent tension that defines the 'society' of the nation. The national space is constituted from competing dispositions of human association. The society of the nation in the modern world is that curiously hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance.

When Yu Zhan-ao knew that they were deceived by Leng detachment of Nationalist Party, he still launched attacks on the Japanese forces with weak power, until to end the last soldier. In the national calamity, the chivalrous spirit makes Yu Zhan-ao's bandits take their responsibilities to save the people and safeguard national sovereignty. In the national war his spirit is emancipated, which is the ruler of the theme of degeneration of race in Mo Yan's works. His nationalistic sense of awakening and heroic preparation to face it is described in the following extract:

He braced himself, gripped his sword, and waited until Shan Tingiu was a mere three or four paces from the door, then rushed him with such force that he buried the sword in his chest, past the hilt. The old man flew backward, his arms spread out, as if he were taking off into the air before falling on his back. His tile crock crashed to the ground and blossomed like a flower. The dogs barked listlessly a few more times and took no more notice. Yu Zhan'ao withdrew his sword, rubbed both sides of the blade on the old man's clothes, and turned to leave. But he stopped himself. (111)

Since the May 4th Movement, many writers represented with Zhou Zhuoren have discovered hominine strength of the Wild. In the 1980s, Mo Yan has inherited the tradition again. Bandit's identity of Yu Zhan-ao matches the need that era called out hero. They choose the rebellion, burst the most primitive resistance, and embody our national tenacious vitality of the inner.

Ernest Renan views nationalism as “a sense of community to those who live in liberal societies. He concludes that nationalism is fundamentally incompatible with the liberal values of individualism and tolerance, but that the argument presented in *Liberal Nationalism* provides a useful critique of liberalism's cultural and psychological deficits” (55). Graham Walker, for example, deplores “the neutral state's tendency to relativize all substantive commitments by viewing them as purely a private matter of personal choice” (113).

Nationalism and patriotism both show the relationship of an individual towards his or her nation. The two are often confused and frequently believed to mean the same thing. However, there is a vast difference between nationalism and patriotism. The subtle distinction is revealed in this extract of Christopher Lewis:

Nationalism means to give more importance to unity by way of a cultural background, including language and heritage. Patriotism pertains to the love for a nation, with more emphasis on values and beliefs. When talking about nationalism and patriotism, one cannot avoid the famous quotation by George Orwell, who said that nationalism is 'the worst enemy of peace'. According to him, nationalism is a feeling that one's country is superior to another in all respects, while patriotism is merely a feeling of admiration for a way of life. (72)

These concepts show that patriotism is passive by nature and nationalism can be a little aggressive. Patriotism is based on affection and nationalism is rooted in rivalry and resentment. One can say that nationalism is militant by nature and patriotism is based on peace.

Since it is the standard to confirm patriotism, then among the writing of literature, we should not have man-made restriction, and should restore historical truth. That is to say bandits such as Yu Zhan'ao should belong to the hero of resisting against Japan too. So long as any bandit plays the function at half of time, he should be qualified to get deserved support and protection of social bandit. The following extract makes an account of how Zhan'ao is afflicted with the need to fight for the country and the woman he loves:

Yu Zhano'ao approached her several times, but she stayed aloof as would not bestow a word on him. One night Yu Zhan'ao drank a little more than usual, and wound up getting slightly drunk. He tossed and turned on the communal kang, but could not fall asleep, as moonlight streamed in through the window in the eastern wall. Two hired hands sat beneath a bean-oil lantern mending their clothes. (141)

Only those who always aim the weapon at the person without protective capacities, can be thought forever as the birds of a feather with the oppressor. In such an environment, the person perfect in every way does not exist, and even bandit only fights once for the people, can join hero temporarily at least.

Grandfather, father and son jointly prepare and participate in the war against Japanese invaders. Japanese cavalries are humbled to dust by the surprise assault from the side of Chinese bandits. Father stood beside the seated figure of Granddad, and strained to get a fix on the hoof beats of the horses. This citation reveals the heroic sense of the novel:

Father had nearly died of fright when a huge fiery red beast bore down on him until all he could see was a hoof as big as a plate coming straight at his head, the arc of the horsehoe flashing like lightning. He screamed for his dad, then covered his head and hunkered down among the sorghum stalks. A muddle of foul smelling sweat and urine splashed down as the horse passed over him.

(170)

The function of activating history through the strength of narration is justified in the above-cited extract. That the bandit resists against Japan is only a trace that real history is covered by the textbook. We believe the exploration of this kind of resource will make more persons seek the truth of history. The image of Yu Zhan-ao is successfully described.

Ernest Gellner's writings aimed to explain why patriotism has become the key principle of political legitimacy of our times. Gellner provides lucid and persuasive accounts of why patriotism is a necessary component of modernity and why it is the most salient principle of political legitimacy. Gellner's arguments disturbed both conservatives and

secular rationalists. The reasons are not hard to find. The following extract throws light on this aspect of Gellner's view:

Nationalism relegates religion to a secondary, and even inessential, principle of a stable and legitimate political order and thus challenges traditionalist conservatism. Nationalism also suggests that law, reason, utility, material prosperity and social justice are secondary principles in establishing a stable and legitimate political order, therefore provoking persistent condemnation from rationalist liberals and socialists for some two hundred years. (109)

The negative social foundations of patriotism are thus explained by the erosion of rigid social structures. A shared culture is now much more important in creating and sustaining social cohesion than it was. The positive social foundations are explained by economies of scale in the production of literate citizens by state-sponsored educational systems. The relevant educational system must operate in some medium, some language.

In a very realistic tone and touch, Zhang Rulou the Elder demonstrates his superb sense of mobilizing forces and cadres. He selects able-bodied youths and makes them well-equipped with every available means. He utilizes all faculties of intelligence and asserts that that no love is greater than the love for country. He highlights the rhetoric of unification and insists that the only way to reclaim freedom and national integrity is to stand on the forefront of foreign with whatever force and blood one is endowed with.

The narrator succeeds in linking them together through the rearrangement as well as disarrangement of the time schemes, allowing direct contacts and dialogues between the members from the three generations. The valorous deed of grandfather who directs the battle is depicted as follows:

They are firing mortars. Grandfather announced. Beauty, you are fifteen now, so you will have to take care of your brother down in the well. I will come back for you after the Japs are gone. As another mortar shell exploded in the village, he cranked the windlass and lowered Mother into the well. When her feet touched the broken bricks and crumbling clay at the bottom, she looked up at the ray of light far above her, barely able to make out Grandfather's face. (185)

The Grandmother bade farewell at the entrance of the village to the Father and the Grandfather Yu Zhan'ao, the commander-in-chief of the local anti-Japanese guerrilla forces. The heavy moist fog and ripe red sorghum crops with slightly sweet yet pungent odor created a mysteriously solemn atmosphere.

According to Gellner, "nationalism is still seen as distinctive to modernity, but it is now part of a philosophy of history that distinguishes three phases in human progress, the pre-agrarian, the agrarian, and the industrial. In a considerably re-worked and non-teleological form of historical materialism" (114). Gellner maintains that each of the three key phases is associated with characteristic modes of production, coercion, culture and cognition. Nationalism is distinctive to industrial society. Gellner claims that this dilemma is false and that reconciliation is possible. Concerning nationalism, he opines:

As the pursuits of our personal goals and commitments are limited by distributive justice, so must the pursuits of nationalism and patriotism be limited by global distributive justice? It is only within the boundaries set by global distributive principles that nation-states have the right to self-determination. From this, it follows that liberal nationalists should be

international egalitarians, promoting political and economic equality among states. (112)

It is hard to see the difference with nationalism, as this also promotes the solidarity and mutual commitment towards compatriots. For nationalists, patriotism is a nation-building strategy. Patriots however are not necessarily nationalists.

The Grandfather at this point stands out high as an epic hero who is to orchestrate the great battle and becomes a history maker for the land of red sorghum. The Father, as only a companion to the Grandfather, is very much overshadowed by the Grandfather's immense image. Even the vagabonds are endowed with nationalistic sense of heroism and sacrifice. The following extract is crystalizes this fervor:

Months of vagabond lives and feasting on rotting meat had awakened primal memories anesthetized over eons of domestication. A hatred of humans- those two-legged creatures that walked erect- seethed in their hearts, and eating human flesh held greater significance than just filling their growling bellies, more important was the vague sensation that they were exacting terrible revenge upon those rulers. (213)

When the Grandfather's grandeur and the villagers' bravery are no longer cherished, what is left for him from that past is nothing but a weed-covered grave with an inscribed tombstone. Through the immediate contrast, there is a visible regression from the Grandfather's generation to the Father's, and further from the Father's to the present generation impersonated by the first person narrator.

Nationalists worry that national loyalty implies indifference or hostility to people of other nations. The language of patriotism and loyalty seems to force them into a difficult

choice. To say that one is not patriotic suggests that one lacks the loyalty that is appropriate to citizens. Those who have nationalist pursuit shun the word patriot. At the same time, such people do not want to be considered disloyal. They may attach great value to many of their country's political practices and traditions. They may even carry out the duties of citizenship conscientiously. They do not see themselves as unpatriotic and certainly do not want to be seen as traitors. Ernest Renan makes the following observation regarding what nationalism is and what a nationalist does:

It is not surprising, then, that the ideas of non-patriotic citizens are often viewed with suspicion, for their lack of patriotism seems to imply that they possess neither loyalty nor a basic concern for the well-being of the nation. Hence, their views on national conduct and policy are suspect. It appears, then, that one must either accept patriotism in spite of its undesirable features, or place oneself in the role of an outsider, whose claims about the national welfare have an uncertain status. (45)

It is no surprise that the established authorities of all nations encourage patriotism and support the view that it is a virtue. Spokesmen for a nation want to encourage devotion to it so that they can appeal to patriotic motives in bringing about compliance with the law and encouraging citizen support for government policies. Patriotism is evocative of a chronic form of discomfort and a hope that the subject of patriotism can be kept out of political discussions.

He finds a survived voice of the past from a wizened old woman of ninety-two years old whose head is as bald as a clay pot and whose “protruding tendons on her chapped hands are like strips of melon rind”. Her narration of the events and the characters are “choppy and confused, like a shower of leaves at the mercy of wind” (13). In her folkloric account of the

Grandfather, the Grandmother and their anecdotes, history is mixed with fabrication whereas the facts are compounded by the legends. The lines below suggest this bravery of

Grandfather:

Father heard a sudden crack of gunfire from the sorghum field north of the tracks and saw a tall Jap soldier on one of the flatcars sways momentarily, and then tumble headlong to the ground. The howl of a wolf sounded from one of the blockhouses, and the people, those disembarking and those waiting to board the train, scattered. The police dogs barked furiously, the machine guns on top of the blockhouses began spraying the area to the north. (229)

Potential and power are generated by the act of story-telling. In order to have the story told, he first of all credits the Father as the first-hand witness of that past grandeur and gives him a voice to tell about the glory of the Grandfather.

Thus it is logical to deduce a conclusion that national culture in Chinese modernity arises out of the complex maelstrom of dynamism underlying beneath China's indigenous culture and the aggressive western cultural influence. However invincible the forces of Japan might be, it is completely subdued and sabotaged. The fate of Chinese culture gets expanded and venerated more in the public gains rapid momentum.

III. Mo Yan's Vision of National Esteem

The conclusive finding of this study is that the process and strategy of remapping nationalism in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* has the political purpose. This narrative account remaps nationalistic ethos when fact and discursive construct about nationalism are miles apart. The view that western grand narratives boost and uplift the non-western countries is just a myth. It rather generates dystopia and disillusionment. This bitter but ground reality as

the east west encounter is tested and probed in Mo Yan's memorable *Red Sorghum*. The transformation produced by the western culture is on no account acceptable. Each reader reads western culture and rewrites this whole journey through personal viewpoint and it shows Mo Yan's writing strength. *Red Sorghum* is a self-referential work that continually underscores itself. The anxiety, charm, and passion activated by the western culture transports at a frightened speed, often leaving the readers confused with turn of events, leaving the reader with unanswered questions by baffling spaces of truth and imaginary merge, which makes the work complex.

The five-chapter novel spans forty years in rural China through flashbacks and foreshadowing. It begins with the Japanese invasion in the 1930s. Sorghum, used as food and as an ingredient of a potent wine, had been the focus and metaphor of peasant life during peacetime. In wartime, it becomes intertwined with the struggle for life. Death pervades this novel. Death is brutally dealt by Japanese troops. The strength and love of the narrator's grandmother and her lover insure the continuation of their line against all odds. This narrative layers, if analyzed with keenness of attention, yields plenty of nationalistic components which are remapped with delicate sense of nuance.

After a Japanese massacre when dead bodies are piled up on the outskirts of the Northeast Gaomi Township, dogs feast on the corpses. The narrator's family goes out of the way to chase the dogs away, using up most of their precious ammunition. The dogs on their part go back to their primitive traits and form gangs to eat the corpses and attack those trying to chase them away. The fighting is fierce and deadly and some humans die. The narrator's father, Douguan, loses one of his balls. Toward the end when the Jiao Gao are desperately looking for a way to fight off hunger, cold and the Japanese, Pocky Chen suggests a way out.

The narrator's anxiety is not just restricted to the isolation he thinks he might face. The novel is less about finding the object than it is about the journey and what articulates is a search for intangible things that everyone seeks or expects to find from life, and why they feel bitter disappointment, when they believe that their lives are worthless and invalid. At a more general level, similar observations and a similar sensation are deliberating about the change in Chinese society over the past several decades. The first person narrator painfully realizes that his world is depending on mistaken signs and haphazard habits while life is located somewhere in another facet. It seems he is seeking Chinese future. He wants to meet the starting point of life. When he is able to reach this stage of transition, he happens to discover restlessly.

To sum up, the Chinese society moved into the phase of turmoil and instability. Whatever pragmatic and practical western principles and values might be, if these norms are imposed on the culture of third world country, bloodshed and violence takes place. It deals with how and why the native and orthodox cultural environment of the modern China has categorically rendered the western values, viewpoints injurious.

Works Cited

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Community*. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 2001. Print.

Arnott, Joanne. *Disillusionment as a Trope*. New York: Penguin, 20012. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. *Nation and Narration*. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.

Brien, Emmanuel O. *Patriotism and Nation*. New York: Norton, 2002. Print.

Chan, Shelley W. *Subversive Voice in China*. London: Vintage Books, 1996. Print.

Chatterjee, Parth. *Limits of Modular Nationalism*. New Delhi: Vivian, 2006. Print.

Lewis, Christopher. *Narration, History and Nation*. New York: Norton, 2003. Print.

Freely, Maureen. *Survey of Mo Yan's Fiction*. New York: Free Press, 1999. Print.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nationalism and Representation*. London: Seagull, 2004. Print.

Goldblatt, Howard. *Evolution of Sinic Ideals*. London: Macmillan, 2010. Print.

Huang, Chuanbo. "On Mo Yan's War Ideas based on Red Sorghum." *Asian Social Science*.
6.5. May (2010). Print.

Inge, M. Thomas. *A Literary Genealogy*. New York: Norton, 2003. Print.

Mayall, J. B. L and J. Jackson-Preece. *Nationalism and International Relations*. London:
University of London, 2011. Print.

Renan, Ernest. *Religion and Nation*. New Delhi: Pilgrim, 2004. Print.

Walker, Graham. *Nationalism without Nation*. New Delhi: Rupa, 2003. Print.

Yan, Mo. *Red Sorghum*. New York: Penguin, 2001. Print.