

Quest for Identity Amidst Violence in Easterine Kire's Character *Life on Hold***Aghatoli Sema**

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Abstract

Easterine Kire in her novel *Life on Hold*, have projected the spirit of Naga nationalism in pursuit of political identity from a Naga society to that of a two young lovers with a contemporary ideas. Naga nationalism enables the young lovers to construct an identity for themselves that is different from the way other people identified them in the beginning of their lives. As a stubborn Roko, refuse to accept or decline his love for Nime and choose or prefer Naga nationalism he was able to make a new finding of his real conceal desire. But it is a difficult task to explore and the process is not an easy to hold on. They like other contemporary people are able to withhold and endure their pain and continue the traits of their people and eventually engage in their way into an identity self. Thus, in the present paper an attempt has been made to project the ideas of contemporary in aspects to violence and identity creation. It also attempts to examine the distinctive traits that creates a young lovers identity. The paper also aims to study in detail the struggle and challenges of the Naga people from a contemporary perspective on violence and identity.

Keywords: *Violence, nationalism, sacrifice, contemporary, withhold, pain, identity, endurance, evolution*

Easterine Kire is an eminent literary writer of Naga Violence. Her routes and her experiences have enabled her to portray vivid violence characters that are characterized by their desire emotion to give anew their own lives in their own way. In her novel *Life on Hold*, she have projected the spirit of Naga nationalism in pursuit of political identity from a Naga society to that of a two young lovers with a contemporary ideas. It projects how "The hard edged, relentless, stubborn Roko is as tantalizing to his girlfriend, Nime, as Naga nationalism is to many Nagas". The principle characters such as Roko and Nime's life was put on hold for the cherished dream to become an independent state in the struggle for freedom. The novel recounts the lives of the Naga people in general who struggle relentlessly in

pursuit of an independent nation and how their lives were put on hold for the Naga cause. The portrayal of their sacrifices, endurance, pain, struggle and the continuous traits of the people for their 'greater future'. However they were able to make their way with a new identity. She projects the spirit of Naga nationalism in the turbulent period during the independence movement. The vivid projections of how the people's lives were put on hold for the cause of their motherland. It narrates the violence experience's that works well at the symbolic level. The novel captures the lives experiences of the ordinary people during the factional violence in the Naga society. However Naga nationalism enables the young lovers to construct an identity for themselves that is different from the way other people identified them in the beginning of their lives in the society. As a stubborn Roko, refuse to accept or decline his love for Nime and choose or prefer Naga nationalism he was able to discover again his real restless wish. But it is a difficult task to explore and the process is not an easy to hold on. However they like other contemporary people are able to hold on their struggle and endure the traits of their people which enables them to develop into an individual's identity. Their efforts to establish a new identity and also helps them to set a broader perspective and develop an endurance attitude in themselves.

Kire's novel chokes out violence elements like how the underground forces who calls themselves as National workers has the rightful as a government in the country. Further it projects the background scenario of how the shopkeepers and businessmen pay twenty five percent to the forces and who refuse to pay is shot and killed in the broad daylight that shows the warning sign to others is entail in the novel. However they hope all this things will change and look forward for bright life in their society (11). It highlights how the following years become fearful due to the fictional killings in their late 80s. Further it present the incident of how Nime and her brother Zeu saw the horrific sight of the young man with blood in his shirt lying in the wood on their way to school. It narrates the scenario of panic situation that was strike by all as they have never seen or heard anything like this before. Therefore it demonstrate how these men are different. They are ruthless and kill readily is address in the novel (19). However the young killed man was one amongst many victims in a vicious cycle of killing and counter killing is explain in the story (20). Thus, the novel portrays how the Naga people continue to live in fear and uncertainty during the conflicted period of era.

It summarizes how as though Nime's childhood was alternated by the sight of that young killed man in the wood and Roko's obsession about the national worker as he could not end discussing about them and the freedom struggle. Further it gives a detail account of how

Nime's fascination by their struggle for the land only changed into fearsome. The depiction of how Setuo would join Roko that recounts some exploits of old soldiers narratives of the journeys to China with starvation. The novella mentions how Roko have joined the national worker and Nime prayed, "God, don't let him be killed". Further it portrays how Nime and Zeu were able to go to college and receive government scholarship which enables to pay their school fees and support their education'. Thus, she is given a new identity during the age of eighteen as Nime received her college degree (21-33).

It projects the scenario and discuss about Nime's marriage. However her thought 'to get a job and earn money and help, how her mind never went by without a thought of Roko and the thought about how he would be doing'. The story further depicts show Roko's Mother hair has all turned grey all over is because Roko have left the underground group without information his parents and Nime forbid to ask Roko's mother while she mether in the market. During that period of time the narrative of how Roko's group have not been doing well and the killing that have been occurring in the faction has come to their knowledge. Roko who have not visited his family since he join the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) is address in relation to personal identity. It mention the scene of how Roko's Father shouted saying, "I have no son now, my son is dead!" However after a long time they found that Roko is in the training camp close to Dimapur has come to the light. It further describes the gossip that travel around giving a sense of two people that have being killed and the death descriptions has referred to Roko. "How it made Nime frantic and try to collect more messages. However after two days, it was confirm that Sumi tribe who was killed and it was not Roko. Therefore it describes that only if she didn't love him so, she thought. Did he even think of her at all, she wondered" (34). It gives an insight of how Nime recollect the memory of Roko and discuss to engage in the struggle for freedom for the country. Thus, all these scenario is vividly projected in the novel.

It gives a description of how before Roko became part of the underground force he mention about corruption in the government and express that "only gun can make them listen", and that thought terrifies Nime greatly. "There is no jobs for people like me, it all goes to prevelidges classes. You know that too. I may be sixteen but I am a man now", said Roko to Nime in their last meet before leaving for underground group (28). Nime never thought that they would carry a gun but Roko and others of his age group and older age has. However they have not achieve anything by doing that but with their fatigue, embittered and thwarting that continues to stay in them is projected in the novel. The national workers is

divided by the differences of ideology between the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and Naga National Council (NNC). Followed by killing and counter killing. It projects how NSCN is divided into two factions known as NSCN (K) led by the leader name Khaplang and NSCN (IM) Known as Isak and Muivah after the two leaders and the two other different leaders. Thus, the conflicts between the three groups emerge in killing the numbers of lives rapidly is vividly portrayed in the novel (35).

The narrative discusses the notion about the differences between the new generation of the soldiers then the former ones. Nime's neighbour uncle Milto elaborate and refers to all the fictional killing that have been occurring within ten years and differentiating between the new generation as he being the war veteran of the first Naga army in his 60s further mention that his stories that have happened in the olden days is different than the ones express in the contemporary period. The vivid projection of how they fought war with the Indian army but in the contemporary century they have more to fight the hostile groups of people and that is amongst their own brothers killing at each other and that have made them even more complicated is emphasize. It highlighted the fighting and shooting at each other at their own brothers make no sense is reveal by Milto. It lays emphasize of how Nime wonder what good will Roko achieve in joining the movement at present. But she knew the answer is given a detail perspective in the text (35).

It addresses the issue of unemployment and corruption in the government which creates a sense of helplessness that push the young people to join the underground movement is put forward. She writes how the factional groups adds to their frustration in carrying out extortions on business front and pose a threat to those individuals who are not able to pay them is define in the book (36).

It gives an account about Nime's marriage to Abeiu the wealthy son as Nime is caught between Roko and her Father Pusalie's debt between the two made here to marry Abeiu, which they won't be able to pay off debts if she marries Roko. However they have already said their good byes before Roko embark in the underground group and it has been a year since there is no information about Roko. Thus, it will be good if she is 'married well' and that she have done worth in her own life (61). In spite of the man who remain neither fond to her nor their daughters made her feel deserted. Her mind ravel to all the things that is not vital in their lives they live. But felt gratitude for all the lesson taught in her life. Nime thought of all the good things in her life like food to eat, clothes for summer and winter, the

place to live, her children's and her supportive mother-in-law Beinuo whom she have been fortunate in multiple ways and it has been eight years since she is settled in Dimapur. Zeu was able to eliminate by paying off his father's(debts)in the end (97).Further it points out the skirmish between the factions that has killed five young men. And how Nime wish peace to return to their land but that seems unlikely. She did not see as though peace would origin/come in the time yet to come. Neverthelessshe hope that her children's will have good lives and they will not have to go through what she have undergone in her life as she pray(97). Thus, all thescene is outline in vivid detail in the narrative.

During that century it describesthe ceasefire between the Naga army and Indian government that has reached its third years at present. It further discuss the accident by the Indian forcesbeaten to death the government officer. In 1997 how apprehensiongrip occurred in gunfire exchange between towns and villages during that era (83). Nime states that it was the same dream she has dreamed fourteen years ago about Roko's lifeless body in the wood. Terrified and awake by this dream and reflect deeplyof what had happened to him and continue to pray hard for his safety. The next morning newspaper mention about Roko's group and the leader had escaped. How her heart sank and that brings up to her husbandstating that "I think the fourth man was Roko". "I am certain! I dreamed him last night that he was death". At last her husband did not comment anything to that and seems to sie a relive and speaks that, "That was bound to happen sooner or later", he said. However this time Nime boldly told him that 'If he is dead, I'd like to go to Kohima". On reaching Kohima, Nime met Setuo, Roko's best friend was returning back fromwork in DC's office and narrated how they have not got his body back? He has been executed, angry and refusing to send his body for burial. However the Naga Mother's Association¹ pleaded to hand over the body to them. Thus, when the body was brought home, Nime was able to see the same him of how she sow in her dream. She cleans the blood on his face and prepare him for a burial as an act of deeply healing as those years of apartness melts away. And the mourners prayed for his departed soul. However before Roko's death he met Setuo in the same wrestling spot at midnight behind the wood in their school, where the familiar grass has grown taller and creeper. Suddenly Roko's figure appeared from behind the tree when Setuo though he may have come to the wrong place, calling by his nickname "*Kepethau* hey *Kepethau!*" (Teacher). They greeted at each other and hug bursting out, "Oh my God, Roko!" Later Roko said that, "I've been wrong, Setuo, I've been very wrong. The cause is dead.

¹The Naga Mother's Association is the leading women's organisation in Nagaland.

Most of us don't even remember what it was anymore. It has become a contest for power and money, you know. Such a waste...such a waste", nearing to cry. "I'm not the only one. In a few days my friends and I are going to try to take out the higher -ups in our group. I know it won't stop violence, but at least it is one thing we can do. You don't know how bad it is, Setuo, you can't comprehend it. I know I can't bring peace to Nagaland by committing more killing, but that is all I know. "Can you give this letter to Nime?" "Of course", replied Setuo. "Tell her I'm sorry", and he was gone. Nime is 33years old now with her few strands of grey hair that stood in the light and she has endure till the last and have grown firm and sure. "Hush hush, Nime, it's alright", said Setuo, "he did right in the end. You know he always loved you?" They looked at one another and she nodded yes. Their hands met and held tightly (98-104).

Therefore the novel projects the troubled years for the cause of an independent movement. The vivid projections of how the protagonists, Roko and Nime's love life was put on hold for the cause of the Nagas to struggle for their motherland and endure pain. Thus, the novel delineates the spirit of Naga nationalism in pursuit of identity from the Naga society to that of a two young lovers with a contemporary spirit. The story recounts the troubled years for the cause of an independence movement. Further the text incorporated with various characters like Roko, Nime, Pusalie, Setuo, Zeu, Abeiu, Beinuo, and others who struggle in their traditional land and endure trauma for freedom and their ability to heroically come out of it which enables them to come together anew. Roko evolve into a man of contemporary identity by facing various challenges and difficulties. Sacrifices became the driving force that helps him to move forward and engage with other fellow friends. The various frustration and corruption keep forcing through his life which he was able to find his true identity. Therefore the novel minutely reveals the elements of violence experiences of the Naga people that they have endured amidst all the horror and breakthrough. Thus, Roko and Nime's transformation shows a character who gives a new definition to themselves by employing violence as a platform to construct an identity for themselves and evolve it continuously.

Work Cited

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