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POWER RELATIONS IN THE FICTION OF SAMIT BASU: A CRITICAL STUDY
FOCUSING ON 'THE GAME WORLD TRILOGY'

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Abstract:

The difference in power among species categorizes social relationships. It has been emerged early in the development of human society and may be observed in small children's initial relations with friends and adults. Human literary history is full of both fiction and nonfiction narratives that chronicle complicated patterns of Power and its multiple representations. There are many modes through which power spreads from societies and colonization; it is one of these numerous forms that have always been common in all ages and centuries. The laws of society or social dynamics are the laws which can be known in terms of power. The power is the concept that can be easily observed in a family also, power dynamics can shape relations between parents, between children and parents and among siblings. Even in the

schools, the children are able to understand powers through the hierarchies like Principal, teachers, assistant, etc. Even in sports one can observe the power relationship like leader and followers. Power also characterizes the dynamics within a social group, including those which are based on race, gender and social status; the concepts that small children develop and use from their early stage of growth (Gulgoz IX). There are power relations in the fiction of Samit Basu. The researcher concentrates on 'The Game World Trilogy' the famous novel series runs into three parts of the same story.

Keywords: Power relation, magic, rakshas, vanar, manticores

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Introduction

The study of power has a long history straddling of perspectives. For philosophers, historians, literary theorists, natural scientists, and social scientists, power has been related to many aspects of social life the level of the individual, the level of social groups, and the level of institutions. i.e. relations between the government and the people. Social psychologists have proved that the perceptions of social power can influence cognitive and social psychological results like attention, self-regulation emotions and social cognition. Besides this, the power had been used to demonstrate processes of social discrimination which predominantly based on race, gender, and political ideology. However, there is little communication among these different fields of study, hence there is no such integrated definition of social power.

In the present situation, the study of power relations has become pertinent and challenging where people are governed by the quest for supremacy and power. The continuous disputes among nations and infringement upon other nations' land are the quest to dominate others. The powerful people always dominate the powerless people; now it is found everywhere. There is no such power relation that can devoid of counteracting power or resistance (Lison

68). *Everybody wants to become a powerful one because people know that only powerful people can acquire more resources as much as possible. If resources are unlimited then there is nothing to fight with others; but if resources are limited then people or country, to overcome on scarcity, try to acquire more and more resources. So they use all means to fulfil their desires. The powerless people are crushed under the unstoppable desires of powerful people.*

According to Foucault, it is wrong to consider the power that the institutions possess and use oppressively against individuals and groups; he tries to move analysis one step beyond that, aiming to study how it operates in day to day exchanges among people and institutions. In his *Historie de la Sexualité*, he says in the first volume that we must overcome the idea that power is oppression, because: even in their most radical form- oppressive methods are not just domination and censorship but they are also fertile, causing new behaviors to emerge.

Foucault is opposed to the most Marxist thinkers and concerned less with the oppressive aspect of power, moreover, with the resistance of those the power is exerted upon. Foucault proposes another model in which power relations dissolve through all related structures of the society. This allows him to construct a model of the



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daily and routine manners in which power is exercised and challenged; an analysis centred on the human entity as an active subject, not as a simple object for the power (Balan 56).

Origins of the formation and conceptualization of social power:

Evolutionary psychologists propose that humans have developed cognitive adaptations that permit them to form a concept of social relations. Research on non-human primates designates that the primate brain has grown and evolved for the mapping of a vibrant social world, with the tracking of grooming networks, coalitions, kinship relations and third-party relations, and quality of associations with allies and enemies. The adaptive benefit of these social mappings is to take advantage of access to limited resources and at the end help survival. Recognizing social power can allow individuals to build a coalition with powerful people. Humans have an early emerging ability to track their social network and the relationships within the social network have fundamental importance (Gulgoz 2).

Power Relations in the Game World Trilogy:

Samit Basu was born on 14 Dec. 1979 in a Bengali family. He is a famous Indian novelist and filmmaker who writes fantasy and superhero novels, graphic novels, children's storybooks and he made

a film (a romantic comedy), 'House Arrest' in 2019.

Basu wrote *The Simoqin Prophecies*, *The Manticore's Secret* and *The Unwaba Revelations*. These three books are the parts of The Game World Trilogy which is a fantasy trilogy published by Penguin Books, India. He gained worldwide presence with *Turbulence*, a superhero novel set in India, Pakistan, and England which was published by Titan Books internationally; soon after that he published its sequel, 'Resistance'. He also wrote 'Adventures of Stoop' a series of children's storybooks set in Delhi and 'Terror on the Titanic' a YA (Young Adult) novel. He currently works in Delhi and Mumbai, India (Samit Basu).

Power Relations in Simoqin Prophecies:

The *Simoqin Prophecies* (2004) is a fantasy novel in English literature written by Samit Basu, an Indian novelist. It is the first novel in the series of The Game World Trilogy; it has also been published in Swedish, Spanish and German language. The remaining two novels in the series are: *The Manticore's Secret* (2005) and *The Unwaba Revelations* (2007)

On the ground, without bearing in mind the allusions, parodies, and revisionist writing. The *Simoqin Prophecies* is a diverse mixture of eastern and western fantasy, having a feature of huge bestiary of


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creatures from mythic traditions from all around the globe, in both ancient and modern: dragons, vanars, rakshases, manticores, and several others, many a times with interesting twists (Samit Basu).

The story is about the two prophecies which had been made before a great war, two centuries before the actions in the book take place: one is the foretelling of returning of the great rakshas Danh-Gem and the other is revealing that a hero would also come to challenge the re-born rakshas. Here in this story, the deadly Danh-Gem will take rebirth, he is so powerful that only the hero of the story can defeat him. After two hundred years the hero will also take rebirth to challenge Danh-Gem (Basu *Simoqin Prophecies* 16). To make a balance in power, the hero has to be raised. In a story, if the villain is powerful and other characters are not so powerful then there would be a monopoly of the villain; as a result, he would be uncontrollable and behave as he wanted. To have some control and a victory of good over evil, there must be raising of an equally powerful person i.e. the hero of the story.

The day of raising Danh-Gem is closer at the same time, the hero is sent for a quest.

The secret brotherhood wanted to kill Asvin, the hero of the story otherwise he would have power and become a king then he would kill Danh-Gem. The secret brotherhood doesn't want him to be a king

and come in power, hence the secret brotherhood planned to execute him. Humans maintain their relations with the people who are having the same type of power and/or who would help in the future in a difficult situation. It was important for the secret brotherhood that they should kill their enemy before he attack so that they would recall the Danh-Gem peacefully without any obstacle. The duty of the guards is to protect the prince, but instead of that they turn on him and told him that he would be executed at the end of the day. The guards were in other's influence and can't be controlled by the prince; here, the prince is the master and superior authority for all the guards but, the guards don't protect him instead of that they warn and told everything which might happen with him. The prince has lost his authority over the guards as they were in somebody else's influence. The chief civilian of Kol wanted Asvin to be a prophesized hero who will challenge Danh-Gem, the deadly villain, so that the Silver Dagger and his men rescue him, on the orders of the chief civilian of Kol.

The chief civilian was worried because there were symptoms of returning of Danh-Gem the deadly villain; so he orders Silver Dagger and his men to save Asvin. There are some power relations between the chief civilian of Kol and Asvin. If he does not save Asvin then the Villain would destroy his



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empire (*Basu Simoqin Prophecies 24*). To protect his power and kingdom, the chief civilian must find out some way; he thought that if Asvin is rescued then he would definitely face the villain, Danh-Gem. Sometimes the unknown facts restrict to realize power relations that the characters have. Kirin the best friend of spellbinder was actually ravian and actually, he is two hundred years old. He was turned into stone when other ravian warriors departed from there. As Kirin is ravian, he is as powerful as the ravian warriors; the spellbinder has to solve the mystery of how Kirin was turned into stone when other ravian warriors left.

Bali is the vanar lord; he steals a book from Enki University called untranslatable as it was written by Danh-Gem himself, it cannot be understood. Bali and the other characters that, want Danh-Gem must be back, are representatives of darkness which would be responsible for the rebirth of the villain. Bali is inside of the darkness in the story and tries to find out a way to recall Danh-Gem. As these people want the villain back, hard work is needed to find out a solution to interpret the untranslatable book stolen by Bali. To become a powerful person one must have external support by other powerful persons or people; hence these people of the supporters of darkness want the villain back and support them to remain in power.

Asvin was sent to study with Mantric, who was best of Kol spellbinders. Asvin was accompanied by Maya, Spikes, Kirin, the Dagger under the name of Amloki, a centauries Red Pearl and Vaman Gaam. As the people from the dark side want to increase their power and recall the deadly Danh-Gem, the supporters of the bright side of the story, come together (*Basu Simoqin Prophecies 36*). To protect themselves and their aim, making alliances is a quite necessary thing. The quest for power can be seen in this situation.

A book in the library of Kol which, was magical, told Kirin that he has to slay Danh-Gem when rises again, but there is a problem that Kirin has to work with the followers of Danh-Gem until he arises. The book told him that he must leave the company of his friends because there is a danger for their life from the followers of the Danh-Gem. To achieve the aim of killing the villain Kirin has to sacrifice company of his fellows. Later he joined the follower of the villain and he was able to read the book which was stolen by Bali and called untranslatable. According to the book, five things must be brought together to recall the Danh-Gem. Without any knowledge of the future power relations, Kirin was doing as the followers, called secret brotherhood, told him.



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At the last, they are able to collect the entire five objects and put together and succeeded to recall the villain. As Danh-Gem wakes up, Kirin tries to kill him but he was not able to kill him because Danh-Gem is not in the material form. Unfortunately the villain Danh-Gem is the father of Kirin. He offered him to become a dark lord and put the things right in the world or let the brotherhood start war and spread fear in the minds of the people. Kirin was unaware that the villain himself was his father, and Kirin is the successor of the dark lord, he has to accept the first offer to control the things because the later one is quite heroic. He better understood the power relations, hence took the decision to become a dark lord instead of just doing heroic activities.

Power Relations in *Manticore's Secret*:

Mysterious creatures like manticores indicate the arrival of the devil which can be seen in the opening scene of the second book of The Game World Trilogy. They helped the ravians to enter into this world (*Basu Manticore's Secret 07*). The followers of the devil work for him for two reasons i.e. either they afraid of the devil because he can do anything with them or they have a personal benefit to follow him. The followers of Danh-Gem want their master to come back and rule the world. The relations based on power can be observed in these series of novels because people follow somebody if he is superior to them in power.

Kirin is facing trouble in the newly constructed dark tower, Izakar because, most of his rakshases in the council issuing foolish orders under his name, but he wanted to end the war. By dismissing expectations, ravians seem to be more dangerous than the dark lord. They want to take over the earth and rule. The council members are working under the power of Kirin but they are issuing foolish orders under the name of Kirin, but Kirin wanted to stop the war. Asvin still has faith in ravians that they still are noble heroes and work inside of humanities and Asvin was eager to battle the hordes which belong to the dark lord.

Behrim's task was to kill the dark lord but he shocked to know that actually, the dark lord is Kirin. Behrim detected by the rakshases who are followers of Kirin the dark lord, and there is a power relation between rakshases and the dark lord because they are followers of him. However, Behrim was caught by the werewolves who approximately killed him; but he was healed in dark tower and tells Kirin that it is the time for him to be the leader of the great ravians. Kirin's followers tried to kill Behrim but he was in favour of Kirin which can result in some power relations.

Peori visited Ararthogorn and reveals that there is a Simoqin prophecy that when the dark lord rose, at the same



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time the real king will also return and with his hands strike town the powers of evil which ruled Kol. If there is no resistance to the dark lord then it might be difficult to control the dark lord (*The Manticore's Secret*). The second book of the Game World Trilogy depicts: to equate the powers and results of the power relations there must be the arrival of somebody to resist the powers of the dark lord; when the hero and the dark lord arise, both the sides will be equally powerful.

5.3 Power Relations in the *Unwaba Revelations*:

The *Unwaba Revelations* is the last part of the Game World Trilogy published in 2007. The 'Unwaba' is a chameleon that is borrowed from a similar creature in the Zulu tradition, which is acting as a narrator to the story. Devangshu Datta from *Outlook* alleged that the novel leans on Tolkien and also Pratchett in terms of format, while it is liberally borrowing from the *Ramayana*, John Brunner, Lovecraft et al, and George Lucas. Parozasad Khan of *Mint* gave an optimistic response and called it a 'delicious read.' Ramya Sharma of *Daily News and Analysis* said that Basu's latest offering is value reading if only to find out how the ends left loose in the first two novels and fixed up.

The end of the world is related to the power relations that the characters with

others have in this story. The demonstrations of the power are to be shown with assembled gods, and the movement of armies. In the concluding novel of the Game World trilogy, a solution must be found to save the world and to conquer the gods in their own game. The fact is that the gods could not be defeated because there is a rule that they cannot be defeated by their own creations; hence the gods can control anyone including all the heroes (*Unwaba Revelation*). Gods kept the ultimate power with them so that no one can defeat them; this is a good strategy that even can be seen in the present politics also where some people want to keep power with them and never handover it to anybody else.

As the epic battles devastated the earth, Kirin and Maya guided only by an old and extremely untrustworthy chameleon and egged on by the normal ragtag gang, take out their secret plan. The plan was so secret that even the individuals involved don't know what they are doing (*The Unwaba Revelation*). Individuals carry power and influence others; as Foucault depicts that the power relation can be best understood by understanding the individuals carrying power with them and influencing the other people. Kirin and other people come together and carried out their plan.

Conclusion:



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The individuals are not powerful as compared to institutions, groups or the states. Foucault doesn't oppose that there is no restrictions on individuals, but power is not stagnant at one place, but distribute throughout the whole society. This distribution can be seen among the characters of the Game World Trilogy and interactions among them. Power can be seen as a more uneven and unstable element that can be always contested, so power relations must be permanently transformed and reaffirmed. In the Game World Trilogy, the individuals carry power with them and maintain power relations among them.

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