



Examining Cambodian Literal Structuralisms, Ideologies and Social Moralities: A Case Study of Tom Teav Novel

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Abstract

This study was geared to explore the Khmer novel and folktale structuralisms and investigate the implicit ideological inferences, and social moralities by qualitative elaborations. One Khmer folktale and two novels from the national curriculum syllabi of grade 10 were opted for this study. As a result, the characteristics of the Khmer folktale framework of literature consisted of three distinguishing main parts: introduction, body, and ending sections while the implied ideologies were found differently from one to another and abreast with time shifts. What we can learn from those social moralities were thriving or deteriorating. Upon the systematically archival method, “Tum and Teav” is a poignant exploration of the conflict between personal desires and societal expectations set against a backdrop of love, duty, and deception. The narrative centers on Tum, a monk who falls in love with Teav, a woman constrained by familial and social obligations. Their relationship, marked by genuine affection, contrasts sharply with the manipulative actions of Teav’s mother and Or Chun, who represent societal pressure and deceit. The story delves into themes of freedom versus confinement, individual desires versus societal norms, and the ethical dilemmas of honesty versus deception.

Through its rich cultural symbols—such as the pagoda and the royal palace—the narrative illustrates the struggles of navigating personal happiness within the rigid frameworks of authority and tradition. The underlying ideology advocates for personal fulfillment and authenticity, challenging the constraints imposed by societal and familial duties.

1. Background of study

Literature can be defined differently both in a narrow and a broad sense. The broad sense refers to everything that has been written down in any form which leaves next scholars skeptical and is problematic in distinguishing between literary texts from non-literature work. With these concepts, the criteria scholars demarcate them with the criteria namely fictionality, specialized language, lack of pragmatic function, and ambiguity.¹ Some said that it is about life or a reflection of life, while Lotman, a modern semiotician, depending on his work: *The analyses of the Poetic Text* (1976), believes that literary work has more value because they have a higher information load than non-literary text.

¹ <http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/Basic01.htm> last visited: 1/11/2016

Evolution has occurred in any field by scholars, researchers, scientists, and so on; therefore, new ideas often provoke baffled and anti-intellectual reactions (Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker:2005,62). This is why innovative concepts for every changing time, so does literature like Formalism, Marxism, Feminism, Structuralism, etc.

However, "Tum and Teav" presents a compelling exploration of the conflict between personal desires and societal expectations, a problem that is deeply embedded in the interplay between love, duty, and deception. The narrative centers on Tum, a monk who falls in love with Teav, a woman constrained by familial and societal obligations. Their relationship, characterized by genuine affection, stands in stark contrast to the deceitful actions of Teav's mother and Or Chun, who embody societal pressure and manipulation (Kumar, 2018; Smith, 2021). The core issue lies in the tension between the characters' personal aspirations—such as the pursuit of romantic love and self-fulfillment—and the rigid frameworks of authority and tradition that enforce conformity (Jones, 2020). This conflict raises significant questions about the impact of societal and familial duties on individual desires, particularly regarding whether personal authenticity can be maintained when confronted with oppressive social structures (Lee, 2019). The story challenges readers to examine the legitimacy of societal constraints and their effects on individual freedom, advocating for a nuanced understanding of how personal happiness and societal responsibilities intersect. The underlying problem addresses the broader ideological debate about the balance between self-fulfillment and societal expectations, highlighting the complexities and consequences of navigating these competing forces.

2.Literature Review

2.1. General Perspectives of Literature

The early structuralism of literature is grounded in the works of Saussure and Formalists in the early twentieth century (Ali Taghixadeh: 2013, 285). The formalist defined literature as a functional system, as a set of devices whose value was determined by other devices that were played off against them (those of other genres, past styles, etc.) and Saussure is one of the distinguished figures who contributed profoundly to modern literary theory. In his book, Course in General Linguistics (1915) provides brilliant ideas to answer the questions of what the object of the linguistic investigation is and what the relationship between words and things is by differentiating between langue and parole (qtd in Raman Selden, Peter, Widdowson and Perter Brooker:2005,63). His model is the following:

$$\text{SIGN} = \frac{\text{Signifier}}{\text{Signified}} ; (\text{Symbols} = \text{things})$$

For example, of the sign system of traffic light, when it is red (signifier), it means "stop"(signifier); while the other light symbols have different meanings.

$$\frac{\text{Signifier (red)}}{\text{Signified (stop)}}$$

Another aspect of literature is the relationship between literature and language. This refers to structuralism which brings literature together with language (Ali Taghixadeh: 2013, 288). Abrahams asserts that "As applied in literature studies, structuralist criticism views literature as a second-order system that uses the first-order structural system of language as its medium and is itself to be analyzed primarily on the model of linguistic theory (qtd in Raman Selden: 2005,). Ali adds that the structuralists analyze literature as being strategic to investigate all the literary productions of a certain author or even a whole period and they demystify literature scientifically from their capabilities by denying any

superpower that has been imposed; they claim that they can delve deep into the grammars of language, and narrative and unravel the secrets of literary texts.

Centering on structuralism, there are several structures or continuums to study---structuralism narratology, metaphor, metonymy, and poetics. Structuralist narrative theory develops the meaning of a story by its overall structure (its language) rather than from the isolated themes of individual stories and the syntactic frame is the smallest of literarily narrative grammar rules. Tzvetan Todorov, advocates, in concordance with other structuralists, a new form of poetics that will establish a general grammar of literature capturing the concentration of the basic nature and specific properties of language and also the division of the sentence components (subject and predicate). But Vladimir Propp further the theory by comparing between the sentence structure and narrative and between the "subject" of the sentence with a typical character (a hero, villain, etc.) and the " predicate " with typical actions in such stories; he also creates the whole corpus of tales upon the same basic set of thirty-one functions which are present not just in Russian fairy tales or even non-Russian tales, but also in comedies, myths, epics, romances and indeed stories in general because those functions have a certain archetypal simplicity which requires elaboration when applied to more complex texts.(qtd in Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker:2005,68). But Claude Levi-Strauss, a structuralist anthropologist, calls the units of myths as 'mythemes'. They are grouped in binary oppositions (see above p.65); for instance, male is opposite to female, overvaluation to undervaluation, etc. He believes that this linguistic model will reveal the fundamental nets of people's minds. In another theory of narratology, A.J.Greimas offers a finery streamline of Propp's theory(*Semantique Structurale*:1996) postulating three pairs of binary oppositions occupying six roles: Subject/Object, Sender/ Receiver, Helper/Opponent instead of Propp's seven 'Spheres'.(qtd in Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker:2005,69).

Metaphor and metonymy have been put forward: a metaphor is a rhetorical figure of speech that compares two subjects without the use of "like" or "as." It refers to another thing or person, while metonymy is a figure of speech in which something is called by a new name that is related in meaning to the original thing or concept. For example, it is common practice to refer to celebrity life and culture in the United States as "Hollywood," as in "Hollywood is obsessed with this new diet." The meaning of this statement is not that the place itself has any obsession, of course, but instead refers to the celebrities and wannabe celebrities who reside there.² Roman Jakobson calls them speech defects 'aphasia' and distinguishes between horizontal and vertical dimensions of language; and David Lodge, in *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977), applied the theory to modern literature, adding future stages to a cyclical process: modernism and symbolism are essentially metaphoric, while anti-modernism is realistic and metonymic (qtd in Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker: 2005, 75).

Poetics coming from Johnathan Culler, the first French structuralist assimilating from French structuralism to Anglo-American critical perspectives (Jonathan Culler:1975) emerges out the essence of this perspective: ' the real object is not the work of itself but its intelligibility...' and affirms that 'in order to read texts as literature we must possess a literature competence, just as we need a more general linguistic competence to make sense of the ordinary linguistic utterances we encounter' and notices that from the bizarre texts, the structures are not in the system underlying the text but in the system underlying the reader's act of interpretation', conveyed by his many colleagues (qtd in Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker:2005,75-76).

2.2. Brief background of Khmer literature

Khmer literature was born a long time ago. As evidence, people have known about day-to-day livings, governance, and other social events by the scriptures on the stone walls, temples, or various

² <http://www.literarydevices.com/metaphor/>

writing materials (Treung Ngea: 100, part 1). Literature in Khmer society has been viewed as a particular mirror reflecting the social realities, issues, events, and changes through the social phenomena and eras, which put it forward or backward. Khmer literature is divided into 3 main stages ---ancient literature, medieval literature, and modern literature (Treung Ngea: 100, part 1). Through her studies, ancient literature manifests over two eras, the pre-Angkorean era (the 1st to 8th century), in which the literary works talked about the kindness or generosity of the ruling kings for the next kings' following. In the Angkorean era (9th to 15th century), the literary masterpieces were about the ways of living of people in general, officials, or about the admiration of a keynote figure; medieval literature (from 15th to 19th century) concentrates on merit and demerit theories (Treh sdey kam phal), abolishment of superstitions, the story ending with the struggles of protagonists and the emergence of educational values; the last phase is modern or present literature (from the late second of 19th century up to now) which stepped forward to special characters and tendencies to nationalism, socialism, democracy and populism that have brought up a variety of literary works.

2.3. Structuralism of Cambodian novelized literature

Having been studied, modern Khmer literature also has a lot of structures complying with the specific kinds of literature works. Leang Hab An, a professor of Khmer literature, in his book "*The Studies of Texts*", separated the literature into several kinds: narrative literature, romantic literature, theatrical literature, etc. Whereas folktales and fiction are of romantic literature, the structuralism of folktales or fiction has three parts:

- *Introductory section*: the writers always use some phrases like, "a long time ago, once upon the time ...etc." in order to start to the plot of the story.
- *Body section*: it is shortly describing the story, but not the beautiful scenery, with the plainest words and sentences, which let readers easily understand and get familiar with it.
- *Ending section*: the author gives the solution and generally leaves educational proverbs, slogans, and mottos for readers as the lights for thinking, considering, and educating their minds.

2.4. Brief Summary of Tum Teav story

Tum was the son of a widow in Baphnom District, Prey Veng Province. He became a novice monk alongside his friend Pich at Vihear Thom Pagoda. Both were knowledgeable in magic, skilled in chanting, playing the harmonica, and basket weaving. Tum was notably handsome and had a beautiful voice. One day, Tum and Pich sought permission from their master to sell baskets. They traveled to Tbong Kmom District, where Tum's enchanting chants drew villagers to listen. Nor, a waitress of a woman named Teav, was captivated by Tum's appearance and voice, and she immediately fell in love with him. Though just a waitress, Nor hurried home to inform Teav of Tum's talents.

Intrigued, Teav asked her mother to invite Tum to chant at their house. Tum's performance enchanted Teav, who fell in love with him and prepared gifts, including clothes and cigarettes, to be sent to him through Nor. Tum reciprocated Teav's feelings. Back at the pagoda, Tum sought permission from his master to disrobe, but his request was denied. He even brought his mother to plead on his behalf, but the master remained firm. Determined, Tum disrobed himself and rushed to Tbong Kmom with Pich. While Teav's mother was away, Tum visited Teav and they consummated their relationship.

Meanwhile, Or Chun, the governor of Tbong Kmom, arranged for Teav to marry his son, Mourn Ngoun. Concurrently, Tum and Pich were summoned to the Royal Palace in Lung Vek by King Rama due to Tum's exceptional chanting. King Rama desired a wife, and Teav was selected for him, making her mother very happy. When Tum and Teav reunited at the palace, Tum expressed their love before the king, who then married them. Teav's mother, unhappy with this union, hurried home and devised a plan. She sent a fake letter to Teav, claiming to be ill. Teav, concerned, returned home only to be forced into marrying Mourn Ngoun.

Desperate, Teav sent a letter to Tum explaining the situation. The king granted Tum and Pich permission to intervene. Upon arrival at Teav's home, Tum, inebriated with wine, embraced and kissed Teav in front of many guests, inciting Teav's mother's anger. She instructed Or Chun to capture and kill Tum beneath Por Cheung Khal. Distraught by her husband's death, Teav, along with Nor, searched for Tum. In their grief, they took their own lives. Pich conveyed this tragic news to the king, who ordered Or Chun, Mourn Ngoun, and Teav's mother to be buried up to their necks and struck on the head with a rake as punishment. The villagers were also made to serve as waiters.

Research Question:

1. What is the Structuralism, Ideology and Morality of Tum Teav Story?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is belonged to the qualitative design which completely relies on the secondary data or existing archival. This design was chosen for the literary study, depending on its centrality and suitability because this study foci were about the explanations of the Structuralism in which the novelist used in the novels in that period, the search for the Ideology, whose such a novel work embraced, also the Morality that is useful and the people of the time being has been unforgotten.

3.2. Data collection

This study used the qualitative design with archival and thematical analysis method; therefore, Collecting the relevant documents from all sources are the main processing stream. Documents gathering was the first step and then organizing and sorting out those selected documents properly came after, while the transcribing and translating them from the Khmer language into English and vice versus were carried out for the readiness of analytical step.

3.3. Data analysis

The data collected from archival sources was analyzed to extract meaningful information. This may involve identifying structuralism, ideology, and morality in the story and made connections between different sources. Interpreting the previous findings of the analysis in relation to the research question was conducted intensively. Beyond, this as well involved critically evaluating the data and drawing conclusions based on the evidence from the archived materials.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Result

4.1.1 Structuralism

As a theoretical discipline, Structuralism seeks "coherence; system; structure underpinning the text or discourse." The underlying structure of a narrative can shape the text or discourse and its ideological or political viewpoint. In the story of Tum and Teav, certain structural traits and binary oppositions are observed, which offers some insight into the narrative and its culture.

A. Binary Oppositions

-Love and Duty toward the Family

The issue was that obligations and relationships born of feelings were all muddled back then; exacerbated discord between people aged ever so consistently because parents insisted that a cake can never be made with more than a cup. This belief became so influential and remained in the psyche that children's future was entirely dependent on their parents' decision making, not allowing them even to take the decision for their lifelong partners. Thus, the transformed world views of Tum and Teav, who had bravely sacrificed their lives for love according to the standards of truth, respect, loyalty, and bravery, had shown that stubborn dichotomies would not bring about the betterment of living conditions and it would lead to the fatal end.

In Tum and Teav's story Tum's love brings him into conflict with his destiny, which is on a spiritual path; and Teav, separating her feelings from her mother's insistence on a marriage that benefits the family. The story shows how their individual drives and ambitions come into direct conflict with their proscribed functions in society. Tum's quest to balance romantic love and religious faith, and Teav's fight to satisfy her heart while complying with her mother reflect a larger thematic tension between personal wishes and social obligations. And in the end, this showdown ends in heartbreak, a testament to how relentless expectations can break even the truest of love.

-Independency and Restriction

The issue of freedom and restriction is echoed in the travels of Tum and Teav. Tum's desire to forsake the monastic life is his longing for personal freedom – he longs to be free of religious commitments preventing him from the woman he loves. On the other hand, Teav wants to decide on her partner by herself, but her dream is always obstructed by her family and especially her strict mother. Both characters yearn for independence, only to be ensnared by the rules and demands that guide their lives. Tum is forced to let go of his spiritual duty in order to embrace his own desires, while Teav struggles to voice her own will against her mother's authority and the weight of tradition. Their stories intertwined, too, show the degree to which societal and familial expectations can cripple a person, sometimes getting in the way of true freedom and joy.

-Loyalty and Crookedness

The story of Tum and Teav makes it explicitly clear what was real love between the two main protagonists and what was manipulation by everyone else around them. The pair's relationship is based on genuine, unsophisticated feelings for one another: They are in love with each other, openly and unselfconsciously. On one hand, we have people like Teav's mother and Or Chun, who act based on their own self-interest, and will lie or deceive to get what they want. Teav's mother is conniving and manipulative, forcing her daughter to marry for social or financial gains, without caring about Teav's happiness. Or Chun makes matters worse by fuelling the mother's plots and using deceit to destroy the relationship. This contrast—and the contrast between the couple's sincere love and the deceitful conduct of others—serves to emphasize a central point about the story: that power and dominion can be easily abused, leading to a compromise of justice and truth.

-The Preference of One and the norm of Many

Teav is also locked in a battle between what she wants for herself and what is expected of her by others. Her mother, motivated by social status and family reputation, would pick a husband for her, with disregard to Teav's own feelings and desires. Teav's refusal to comply with this imposed circumstance is a small act of resistance. She is not a passive character in the story: She wants to have agency in shaping her own life, particularly when it comes to something so fundamentally personal as love. But all of the forces of society work against her —personified by her mother, tradition, and that sense of community obligation. Her emotions are swept off to the side, dealt with through custom and obedience, with not a lot of room to be heard.

The more they love each other, the more they are isolated from their social milieu. Their relationship becomes more than just a romance — it becomes a symbol of rebellion, of choosing love over all the ways society says we ought to be. But in a society where personal freedom often is regarded with suspicion or characterized as self-centered, this choice has enormous consequences. Their story doesn't turn tragic just because of their personal choices, or mere bad luck — it has a tragic end not in spite of but because of a social context that punishes difference, and stifles individual volition. The pain of Na's sisters will force you to confront an uncomfortable fact: in many cultures and times, individual wants are sacrificed to custom.

By focusing on the emotional and psychological toll this has on both characters, Tum and Teav's tale becomes more than just a simple narrative of doomed love—it stands as a meditation on the cost of conformity and the power of love to attempt to, if not always successfully, overthrow the systems that box us in. Their fate remains an opposite warning of what happens when a society places controlling mechanisms and tradition before the basic human rights of freedom, choice and genuine emotional connections.

B. Cultural Symbolization

-Sanctuary (Pagoda)

In Tum and Teav, the pagoda is not merely a religious backdrop; it is a potent symbol of the tension between spiritual responsibility and personal desire. In a place of prayer and meditation and without worldly desires, the pagoda is what the bishop expects Tum to be as a monk: of the same sort of discipline and moral duty. But it is in this holy place that Tum first experiences the tug of romantic love, a struggle eventually surrendering his monastic vows. That contrast invests the pagoda with two levels of meaning: It symbolizes the life Tum is intended to live, but it is also the scene for his emotional awakening. The institution that should supposedly give clarity and spiritual direction is where this inner dissonance takes place, a testament both to the clash and to the power of religious systems to shape individual choice.

-Monarchic Palace

The palatial is both an image of the order and power that govern society, and an emblem of it. It is more than simply a building; it's also an emblem of the hierarchy of who commands, and who will follow, within it. Power, status, tradition and rules made and broken; these are the walls that govern people's lives within the palace. For figures such as Tum and Teav the palace is at once remote and dangerously near: This is where fate is ultimately determined, whatever their emotions or intentions. The palace is the embodiment of the larger machine that forces people to fit in, stifling their personal emotions in the guise of duty, honor, and control. It reminds that love and personal will are too often no match for institutions designed to preserve power and order.

-Presents (courtesy gestures)

On the surface quite ordinary tokens such as clothes and tobacco become pregnant with significance in the narrative as a whole - as are also the very symbols of love and genuineness. To Tum's giving of these gifts to Teav, they are not simply material things; they are emotionally weighted objects that represent his love for her and the closeness between them. These are gifts based on trust and affection, and they couldn't be further removed from the scheming and deceit practised by other characters. In a world where things are not what they seem and motives are cloaked, this little exchange betrays the truth about the relationships between Tum and Teav. The gifts are a reminder of the ways in which love can be expressed in small, human ways — even when faced with impossibly huge opposition.

C. Story Structure

-Exposition

The story of Tum and Teav first plunges into the social and personal circumstances of the two protagonists. Young Tum, a young man in the monastic garb, grows up amidst the tranquility of religious life whereas Teav, born to a rich family, grows up under the close supervision of her mother. This first context lets us understand how each character is being shaped by its environment — and sets the stage for the emotional connection that will form between them.

-Rising Action

As Tum and Teav's lives come together and their bond grows, the story gains more emotional depth. Under the cloak of secrecy, their romance blossoms before being put to the test by the crushing weight of well-meaning social and familial expectations. Aside from his desire to Teav, Tum is also bound by his monastic vows, which he finds difficult to break even though she is conflicted between her own romantic and personal satisfaction and her mother's efforts to find her a marriage that would benefit society. As the tension builds, they eventually reach the point where they are two lovers attempting to be together in a world that seems to do all in its power to keep them away.

-Climax

The pivotal moment is when Tum can no longer contain his feelings and openly declares his love for Teav. It's revolutionary, and not only in a romantic sense. It pushes the boundaries of his religious allegiances and the oppressive expectations of a culture that values conformity above individual truth. The powder trail is ignited by this moment of genuine honesty, drawing the attention (and ire) of the ruling class.

-Falling Action

After Tum's courageous declaration, the repercussions are swift and severe. A sequence of events that swiftly spirals out of control is started by the lovers' momentary gesture of bravery. But in the end, Tum and Teav are scrutinized by their leaders, their society, and their families, and the narrative ends tragically. To those who dare to mock it, their optimistic love is greeted with cruelty and punishment, illustrating how cruel society can be.

-Resolution

The story concludes with the ultimate reckoning, or punishment. Then the monarch intervenes and renders a morally sweeping verdict. Too slowly, the wheels of justice spin, preventing Tum and Teav from being saved. The cost of defying long-standing societal standards is sadly illustrated by their demise. A powerful reminder of the conflict between individual freedom and societal obligations—and the suffering that results when they collide—is the story's main lesson.

4.1.2. Implied Ideology

A. Personal and Social Pressure

Intricately representing an outlook in favoritisms of satisfying oneself and in the hunt for self-interest over the harsh trammels of societal expectations and responsibilities, the main characters deserve for super quintessential figures and stand out for capturing the whole audiences' propositions and juveniles' tendencies to change. Tum's perseverance with the impasse of his strong personal emotions in the confrontation of promises in monkhood resonates a wider theme of the human desire, regardless breaking the values and convention to please himself. This leads to a wider discussion on the skirmish between individual craving and the society-expression, either Teav's situation that also augments this battle, where she's trying to chase her desires and obey societal expectations that her family and traditional barriers impose on her.

This is a fight that endures and if there is a profounder message here, it is about the importance of being true to oneself and the right to pursue happiness, even if it comes into conflict with received wisdom. The story condemns the social systems that confine personal liberty and calls for a more subtle judgment of the extent to which a person's wants should be subjected to the criteria of society. It raises the issue of the oppressive standards to which society holds people, subtly suggesting a world that appreciates and nurtures individual choice and satisfaction.

B. Ethical Issues

Even the story of Tum and Teav modestly encourages truth and naturalness as principle, giving them weight as morals of the tale. Tum and Teav's love is presented as selfless, sincere, and sincere, differing greatly from the dubious ploys used by Or Chun and Teav's mother. By contrast, their duplicity

highlights the sincerity of the main couple's emotional bond, which is painted as a form of "real" love that transcends the need for disguise: true love, they imply, which is hamstrung by the first principles of trust, openness and naturalness, is more "moral", if one wills.

This ideological view is based on the belief that having integrity and being real is more honorable than manipulative, conniving, disingenuous, and superficial followers of external influences. The story was saying that, even though what society expects of us can sometimes force us into being dishonest, it is more noble to be true to yourself and build relationships that are true and honest. In focusing on this dynamic, the narrative stresses the enduring value of truthfulness—in the intimate sphere, as well as in the larger social world—insisting that authenticity leads to more satisfactory relationships, and a clearer sense of good and evil.

C. Resistance and Authority

Social norms are sustained by the king and the monk master who are believed to manipulate and police individual conducts. Raising their powers, duties and roles, the story meanderingly stigmatizes the obstinacy and often exploitive attributes of these emissaries. The way Tum and Teav rebel against these substantially powerful hotshots pinpoints that a person should be privileged to enquiries or even revolutionizing against outmoded and undue system. Their rebelliousness presents that uprising against tyrannical authority is not justified but also gallant in term of fighting for pure love and happiness inheriting in their personal beliefs.

This idea forms the foundation for a shift in perspective, one that prioritizes individual freedom and self-exploration as goals, instead of unquestioning compliance with authority. It suggests that individuals ought to pursue what brings them joy and confront authority when it hinders their genuine aspirations. Furthermore, the story implies that this act of defiance offers benefits that extend beyond mere personal satisfaction and can result in a fairer and more compassionate society.

D. The Love-Duty Connection

Tum and Teav tunnels deeply the workings of the interaction between personal wishes and social culpabilities as so-called the tug-of-war between love and duty. From the story, they are not everything, for it is important to lie on traditional ones, strongly based on the social order, weights and errands, it had better not be obsessive, which forestalls the attainment of genuine sentiments and private satisfaction. The narrative of Tum and Teav flaunts love has the power to defy custom, even surpass duties. This angle calls for a "bargain" where love and individual relationships are appreciated correspondingly with society's compressions, rather than being pushed aside as second place.

Essentially, Tum and Teav's narrative is a call for individual freedom, honesty, and love over oppression, order, deceit, and authoritarianism in society. It promotes a more adaptable and forgiving conception of relationships and the responsibilities that accompany them, as well as some reflection on how societal standards and personal fulfillment might coexist. According to the story, genuine and pure love has the power to question and alter our perceptions of our obligations to one another and to ourselves.

4.1.3. Social Morality

Tum and Teav concerns the tumultuous and complex world of love, duty, and betrayal and aims to dissect core moral principles that echo across the ages. At the core of the story is an epic love that knows no boundaries of place, age, sex, or origin. Tum and Teav love each other in their purest form, giving a sense of romantic ideal in a society bound by custom and social norms. Their rebellion against the ways of society, and the fact that they are prepared to throw everything away for each other, is the most prominent moral lesson of the story. Tum, bound by his vow as a monk, and Teav, oppressed by her mother's demands, are the epitome of choice of self versus duty to society. But their commitment is costly as real. The sacrifices they make – Tum giving up his monastic destiny, Teav going against her

mother's wishes – also serve as a harsh reminder of real love that always requires sacrifices, sometimes with tragic consequences.

Tum's internal struggle about being a monk is a major part of this ethical battle. And, as a religious man, Tum is also expected to put his faith above his own interests, especially those of a romantic nature. However, his deep love for Teav complicates things, making him struggle between his faith and the society that surrounds him. Teav is faced with her own moral dilemma, too. Her heart leads her to Tum, but custom requires her to marry into social advantage, to tradition, and to her mother's dreams for her family. It is the long accumulation of obedience, moulded by long-standing tradition and filial propriety, that transforms into a mental struggle in her that is caught between personal happiness and social responsibility. Together, they are everything that makes up the tension between heart and world, between moral and appetite.

Along with Tum and Teav's perfect love, the story shows how lies and intrigue lead to betrayal and are destructive in relationships. A motivated mother, Teav's mother uses some dishonest means to get her daughter back in the family fold. She writes a letter, in an attempt to dissolve the connection of Tum and Teav, causing Teav to think that Tum has left her. These lies are major barriers in a relationship, and leads to two guys doomed for disaster. Tum falls into despair when he thinks Teav no longer loves him, while Teav (influenced by her mother's lies) returns to the family, setting off horrific consequences. Tum, Teav, and Nau's deaths underscore the ethical message that lies, whether to preserve oneself or gain an advantage, can do irreparable harm. When the truth is twisted, particularly in relation to interactions with others, lives can be shattered and love lost.

The moral structure of the story is also based on the themes of justice and retribution. After the tragic deaths of its heroes, the king (who happens to be the boss of that world, which is reason enough to think he is God) judges the guilty parties. His mother, Or Chun, and Mourn Ngoun, a man whose perversion of the truth ensured that the worst would come to the worst, have received harsh sentences — punishment in the certainty of justice. The vengeful act of the king is a mute warning to sinners high and low that sooner or later they will have to eat the bitter fruit of their doings. This ethical commitment affirms that justice is an essential part of the social fabric and a commitment to accountability for actions. The tale seems to say that the characters will pay for their mistakes... and that in the end, justice will never be denied.

Collectively, these moral motifs stand as synecdoche for a profound contemplation of the dichotomy of self-fulfillment and societal dictates. The tale of Tum and Teav is one of the moral stories – to demonstrate of what can happen by disproportionate to the mixture of love, duty, and truth. Their love — explosive and transformative as it is, Tum and Teav's love isn't enough to save them in this world of lies and conservative social standards. Their history has been a powerful testimony to the need for honesty and character in our relationships, the cost of true love, and the inevitable day of just desserts. The tragedy of the characters serves to highlight the need for knowing and maintaining moral values amidst the murky water of human emotions and the view of the society.

4.2. Discussion

The unrequited, loveless recipient and oppressed or punished love object can be found in thousands of stories from Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Christian mythologies, and native European folklore. By comparing Tum and Teav with other stories, we can examine the shared themes -- and regional specifics -- in each tale. Tum and Teav and Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet both enroll as cautionary tales about the ill fates of lovers whose love is thwarted by the contrary winds of parental prerogative and social pressure. In both stories, an infatuated boy and girl are prevented from staying together by the strong traditions and duties binding their clans, and it ends in disaster. For example, the play written by William Shakespeare (1597) – Romeo and Juliet, deals with such a kind of a theme and

tragedy. The depiction of pure and transcendent love in Tum and Teav can be compared to the novel of Nizami Date Ganjavi(1192) whose leading characters, Layla and Majnun, promise each other an endless love.

Then there is another story, as in (1697), whose heroine (Cinderella) goes through hardship to finish with a happy ending, but the Tum — Teav story has a bitter end. However, they are both focusing on the basic ideas of independence of love and its aftermath. Unrequited love has a central place in both Tum and Teav, and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. If the love in Tum and Teav is based on reciprocal affection, *Gatsby*'s feelings toward Daisy are built instead on idealized obsession. However, each of the stories end in tragedy, brought on by social conditions and individual shortcomings (Fitzgerald, 1925).

The themes of love and political duty are common to both Tum and Teav and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. In both, the deep personal love between the protagonists stands in direct contradiction to their larger social and political responsibilities and is the cause of their doom. Tum's loyalty to Teav clashes with his monk's vows, and Cleopatra and Antony's all-consuming relationship gets in the way of Antony being a stoic, detached Roman leader. Their struggles in attempting to align their personal wants with their societal obligations illustrate the ruin the prioritization of love over the obligations that society requires them to maintain. Both stories revolve around the conflict between personal satisfaction and authoritarian command, and dramatize how their choices finally lead to their ruin, for love challenges the existing social and political system (Shakespeare 1606; Brontë 1847).

Social oppression and the fateful consequences of forbidden love in Tum and Teav mirror the struggles encountered in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. In either case, the relentless intensity of the search for happiness in love is frustrated by the uncompromising demands of society. Anna's affair, just like Tum and Teav's love, cuts against the grain of her time, and the cost of challenging those constraints is her death. Both stories challenge the limitations placed by society on personal feelings, particularly those of love that are incompatible with social norms (Tolstoj, 1877).

Similarly, the themes of love and duty in Tum and Teav echo Genji's romances in *The Tale of Genji*. Women as Genji addresses them, with love and longing, are limited by the social expectations of his age. Like Tum and Teav, Genji's private desires regularly clash with what is expected of him, highlighting the relationship between the heart and social forces. The characters in each of these and the other tales negotiate the complexities of their desires within the limits of their societies (Murasaki Shikibu,2006).

Unreachable dreams and negative effects of resisting the social norms can also be observed in *Madame Bovary*. Like Tum and Teav, Emma Bovary longs for more than constrained circumstances allow, but instead of finding her romantic passion to be a liberation, she becomes its victim. The figures' bids to escape the restrictions of society result in tragedy in both works. Flaubert's depiction of the battle between Emma and her life seems very similar to the struggles of Tum and Teav to overcome the social conventions which govern their love. Both narratives highlight the futility of seeking aspirations that can never be realized within the limits imposed by social conventions, and show how grievous the consequences of transgressing those norms can be (Flaubert, 1857).

Likewise, the suffocating social norms and the search for love and freedom in Tum and Teav can be found in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as experienced by Mariam and Laila. Both stories display the day-to-day cruelty that people directly face in constrained societies where we have little autonomy over our own lives, especially the lives of women. Just as Tum and Teav struggle to assert their affection within the constraints of society, the relationships of Mariam and Laila from *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are woven to paint a portrait of the all-too complicated nature of love, sacrifice,

and survival in a society that affords few freedoms and desires. The story Hosseini writes, much like Tum and Teav's tale, serves to exemplify the consequences of living in a society that does not allow personal happiness and self-determination (Hosseini, 2007).

Related to Tum and Teav are the Chinese folk story *The Butterfly Lovers*, which also ends in the deaths of two lovers, due to society's pressures, thus again reflecting the theme whose premise is the axiom that, "love is at odds with society". The romance in Tum and Teav, described with erotic intensity and filled with social conflict, is comparable to what occurs in *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell. In both stories, individual existences are transient through war and unrest (Mitchell, 1936). Love, jealousy, and societal demands in Tum and Teav can also be read as closely related to Shakespeare's *Othello*, though it is the indirect manipulation of the plot and characters by others, and his own insecurity which led to the undoing of the title character (Shakespeare, 1603).

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the social difficulties experienced by Elizabeth and Darcy are similar to those found in Tum and Teav albeit more resolved by the end of the story (Austen, 1813). Also, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, the way Jane fights for her independence and her conflicting emotions for Mr. Rochester can be compared to Teav's battle against the societal rules for love, although *Jane Eyre* finally has a happy ending (Brontë, 1847). *Quasimodo and unrequited love: love as a grotesque trope of ugliness and beauty*; the decrepit in Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre-Dame* God has in store yet another punishment dating back to Tum and Teav (and her love affair subject to a social-type of judgment) which underlines the theme of love between ugly and beauty (Hugo, 1831). The suffering of Hester Prynne, in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the fruit of being ostracized by society and shamed in the face of an unforgiving world, bears a similar literary inheritance with Tum and Teav in terms of the extremes of both love and punishment (Hawthorne, 1850).

The tension between personal desires and public demands in the Tum and Teav love story is similarly present in the relationship between Yuri Zhivago and Lara who met during the Russian Revolution in the historical romance *Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak (Pasternak, 1957). The deep unrequited love and hopelessness in Tum and Teav can be seen as analogous to overturns of emotions and society in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (Goethe, 1774).

5. Conclusion and Implication

Tum and Teav beautifully depicts the tensions between individual desires and social norms. It is a tale that illustrates how love and happiness often take a back seat to a sense of duty to family and community. The bitter ending of Tum and Teav reflects the consequences of suppressing true feelings and the dangers of the power of suggestion as well as the importance of honesty and compassion in relationships. Research could further analyze how love and duty clash in different cultures and time periods. It should also explore the repercussions of lying on relationships and the impact of social norms on personal happiness – yielding a more incisive insight into the balance between self-fulfillment and conventions of civilization.

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