

**Tribhuvan University**

**Representation of Metropolitan Youths in *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Arts in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Tara Bahadur K.C. has completed his thesis entitled "Representation of Metropolitan Youths in *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from April 2015 to April 2016. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

.....

Shiva Ram Rijal

Supervisor

Date: .....

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "Representation of Metropolitan Youths in *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Tara Bahadur K.C., has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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### **Abstract**

This research centers on the issues of representation of the metropolitan youths in the lyrics of the Australian Rock and Roll Band AC/DC. How the particular signs gain the meaning and how they represent the particular culture or sub-culture have been central to the analysis of the lyrics. This research traces that the totally new sub-culture of the metropolitan youths is emerging in the cities around the world and the notion of culture as the continuation of the tradition is losing its ground rapidly. The new sub-culture of the youths is characterized in the lyrics as the journey to fall; every value is falling rapidly with the cultural conducts of the youths of the metropolitans. The new sub-cultural trend of the youths is influenced by hippie dress ups, grown up hair, obsession to music, drink and sex, rejection of the authorities and traditional profession and lifestyle and the termination of the school studies to spend carefree life. The youths have the apt realization that the world of metropolitan is cruel and cold for them, so, they appear wicked while dealing with the world. They are lonely and the sex in red-light areas is unable to reduce their loneliness. The band has, by the verbal representation of these youths and even their dreams, manipulated as well as warned the metropolitan youths in their lyrics.

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## **I. *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band* and Their Target of Cosmopolitan Youths as Audience**

This research focuses on *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band* (1973-2010) to study a diabolic representation of the metropolitan youths. It is a study representation of metropolitan youths in AC/DC Band borrowing on the ideas from Stuart Hall's cultural analysis and theories of cultural representation. The lyrics appear to be in pursuit of the youths to follow the Satan suggestive of the forthcoming destruction, an apocalypse in the society. The singer, as a messenger of Satan by the means of the lyrical voice, tries to overrule the mind of the listeners and the audiences. However, through the literary analysis of *AC/DC Band's Lyrics*, this research affirms the apparent message of Satan as the creative symbols and the formative metaphor of an urge to regenerate the youths of metropolitans.

The satanic messenger, the singer of the band, in their lyrics accentuates the listeners expecting them to drag to the hell. The psycho-libidinous, destructive, hellish character in the *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band* tries to threaten the metropolitan youths and spread the satanic fear in their mind and soul. Despite the personal and social fear of the messenger in the lyrics that AC/DC Band exploits, the cultural studies analysis gives the better cognizance of the lyrics to reveal the awareness with aid of lyrics to protest the social ills with the further aid of lyrics to protest the social ills in the metropolitan youths.

This research hypothesizes that the seemingly coercive force of satanic rule could have the opposite effect - the message of the degradation of the metropolitan youths and their lifestyle is falling to the satanic way, as the lyrics itself suggests, "I'm on the highway to hell" (6) and that they need to improve at any cost. Otherwise, there would only be a hellish world for the future generation to reside. This satanic coercive

force can be seen not as a misleading statement for the further fall of the metropolitan youths rather it can be seen as a formative warning that makes the youths aware of their current degraded condition and motivates them to improve and behave in sensible way. The study of the culture of the metropolitan youths is very helpful to point to the degradation and need of improvement in the metropolitan youths.

After the formation of the band in 1973 in Australia, *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band* has been analyzed by a number of critics. In the review of *The Lyrics of AC/DC Band*, Matt Manochio writes about the formation of the band after the meeting of the two of the band members:

Johnson's big break came in the wake of tragedy in 1980. AC/DC's former singer, Bon Scott, died accidentally after a night of heavy drinking. Johnson said he met Scott when they were on the road in the western part of the British Isles in 1974. Johnson was then a member of Geordie, and Scott was in a supporting act. (n. pag.)

Australian rock and roll band, AC/DC was thus, formed with the meeting of Johnson and Scott and it remained two-membered band ever since. It became very famous band in rock and roll music but its progress came to halt with the death of Scott in 1980 in British Isles due to over-drinking. After a long break Johnson gave break to a new singer. The new singer was Brian Johnson and the coupling of the two Johnsons helped the band to move further. Brian Johnson had been supportive to Scott and the band before Scott's death.

In *Why AC/DC Matters*, former Rolling Stone staff writer and New York Times bestselling author Anthony Boozza addresses this inequity, penning a just tribute to these monsters of rock. Brimming with fascinating stories and insights from musicians, fans, music scholars, and the author himself, *Why AC/DC Matters* is an

overdue homage to arguably the greatest rock and roll band of all time. The band became very famous in America, it sold more than the famous singer Michael Jackson but it is undervalued and unappreciated by the rock critics as Anthony Booza writes, “Australian rock giants AC/DC have sold more records in the U.S. than Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, Aerosmith, and than the Rolling Stones, yet have always been undervalued and unappreciated by mainstream rock music critics” (n.pag.).

The mainstream rock critics did not appreciate the fact that AC/DC was very famous and the major contributor in the music industry in America. The band, however, as Booza suggests, had outsold any famous individual rock singer and any band singer. It was becoming the greatest band of all the times but it is a sad fact that the mainstream of America was not ready to accept it. The popularity of the lyrics and stage performances is also seen as David Free remembers the band with praise:

Everyone knows about the youngest of the Youngs, little Agnus, AC/DC’s pale and whippet-thin lead guitarist, still decked out in his schoolboy treads at the age of 58, still sweeping and jittering around the stage as if simultaneously afflicted with malaria and attention deficit disorder. (n. pag.)

This review sheds light on the memorable stage performances of the band, its power to rule the memory of the audience and the physical information about the lead guitarist of the band’s lead guitarist Agnus young.

It is clear that various researchers and critics have discussed the various issues and many different aspects of the band, its beginning, the marginalization from the American mainstream and its memorable stage-shows. But in those researches conducted earlier, the representation of the metropolitan youths is yet to be discussed. Therefore, with the lens of cultural studies, this research makes the issue of the

representation of the metropolitan youths in the lyrics of AC/DC Band the major issue of the research.

Culture is basically regarded as the shared values and the way they are represented according to the cultural theorists. Stuart Hall presents cultural representation as primary to generate the cultural meaning and identity. He avers:

What does representation have to do with 'culture': what is the connection between them'? To put it simply, culture is about 'shared meanings'. Now, language is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged.

Meanings can only be shared through our common access to language.

So language is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. (1)

The generation of cultural meanings is through the linguistic representation for Stuart Hall. Language is the means of representation and repository of the meaning that forms one's cultural identity.

Identity has become the central concept in the social sciences and cultural studies most of the present time researches. This research examines the cultural identity of the metropolitan youths that emerges in the lyrics of AC/DC Band and the way they are represented and performed in the band's music. The dictionary definitions of identity are not sufficient to encompass the various facets of identity but we have to start from the simple definitions of identity. We have to start from the basic meaning of identity from an analysis of current usage in ordinary language and social science discourse.

Identity is presently used in two linked senses, which may be termed social and personal. In the former sense, an identity refers simply to a social category, a set

of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and characteristic features or attributes. In the second sense of personal identity, an identity is some distinguishing characteristic or characteristics that a person takes a special pride in or views as socially consequential but more-or-less unchangeable.

Thus, identity in its present form has a double sense. It refers at the same time to social/cultural categories and to the sources of an individual's self-respect or dignity. There is no necessary linkage between these things. In ordinary language, at least, one can use identity to refer to personal characteristics or attributes that cannot naturally be expressed in terms of a social category, and in some contexts certain categories can be described as identities even though no one sees them as central to their personal identity. Nonetheless, identity in its present incarnation reflects and evokes the idea that social categories are bound up with the bases of an individual's self-respect. Arguably much of the force and interest of the term derives its implicit linkage of these two things.

The project to clarify identity at greater length is contested, complicated, or unclear social science concepts with strong roots in ordinary, a careful analysis of ordinary language meanings should precede efforts to legislate a definition for particular research purposes. The inadequacy of dictionary definitions of identity and very brief traces the historical evolution of its new set of meanings is visible. We have to about the current meaning of "identity" by testing possible definitions against examples start from usage. The trail leads first to the formulation of a identity as a social category, and, to identity as distinguishing features of a person that form the basis of his or her self-respect or dignity and more.

Simon Clarke clarifies social/cultural identity in his essay "Culture and Identity" that:

Cultural identities are marked by a number of factors – ‘race’, ethnicity, gender and class to name but a few; the very real locus of these factors, however, is the notion of difference. The question of difference is emotive; we start to hear ideas about ‘us’ and ‘them’, friend and foe, belonging and not belonging, in-groups and out-groups, which define ‘us’ in relation to others, or the Other. (510)

According to Clarke, social/cultural identities are dependent on varieties of factors like race, ethnicity, gender, class and so on. Identity looks for difference, the distinctness in relation to those factors. Identity separates ‘we’ from ‘them’, own group from others’ groups and so on. Identity is always generated in the difference with others.

For Goffman identity is a dramatic effect: the self is an effect of a performance, the way in which we present ourselves in everyday life. So, if we turn to Goffman’s (1969) classic text *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, we have what has become known as the dramaturgical model. For Goffman life becomes a performance:

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the tasks that he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. (28)

Identity is therefore projected at the target audience in a theatrical performance that conveys self to others. On the one hand, the performer can be completely immersed in his own act and sincerely believe that the version of reality he is projecting is actually

correct. On the other hand, the performer may be cynical, not quite taken in by his own performance, indeed in some cases fully aware that the impression being fostered is but a mere act. It is not always the case, Goffman argues, that this is done out of self-interest, but rather in the belief that it is for the audience's own good. Politicians do this all the time, while educators often project a cynical sense of self to get over a point, and we often talk about putting on a brave face in spite of adversity. These, for Goffman, are the two poles of performativity that are little more than a simple continuum, "Each provides the individual with a position which has its own particular securities and defenses, so there will be a tendency for those who have travelled close to one of these poles to complete the voyage" (30). So we have the idea of the presentation of self and identity as a performance.

Performance is the collective term to denote the acts of living being. It is completely acting of living being as performing, doing something with the talking, walking, playing, dancing, entertaining, working, writing, an acting out of the daily life; especially human being. It generally, means acts in theatrical arts as music, drama, art, entertainment, sports, recitation, or some other forms of arts etc, which is performed by related performer. According *Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary*, "a performance involves entertaining an audience by doing something such as singing, dancing, or acting" (1066).

Performance is inherent human activities of life, communicative modes of personal and cultural life, a performative and transformative communication, embedded with the society, politics, economic, environments, business, arts and so on, repeated, intentional and unintentional, innovative and derivative thing. A critic Richard Bauman defines that performance has a broader sense of communicative behavior and action. He adds; Performance is "a mode of the communicative

behaviour and a type of commutation event. [...] performance usually, suggest an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience" (qtd. in Bell, 16).

Performance is originated from the communal society or a cultural group that represents the cultural identity. It is performed in the community. It carries the calendar life with ritual performance with the plan for the successful performances. Senior critic Prof. Dr. Abi Subedi claims that performance takes its shape through the planning in his book *Nepali Theatre as I See It*. He further writes "Performance originated from the community" (28).

Performance involves performer, actions, context, time, audience and proposes as the characteristic of performance. It has certain propose, process and progressive idea, certain aims or goals as doing, seeing, embodiment of living being, performing drama, musical, playing, rituals, daily life style etc. However, Critic and theorist Elizabeth Bell views about its main three characteristics in her book *Theories of Performance*. She further claims, "Performance is both process and product. [...] Performance is productive and purposeful. [. . . ] Performance is traditional and transformative" (16-17).

This research focuses on the performance of the identity of the cosmopolitan youths in the lyrics of AC/DC Band through the representation of their cultural behaviors and their protests upon certain negative cultural traits are clarified.

The main objective of this research is to examine the cultural representation of cosmopolitan youths and the lapses as seen by the lyrics of AC/DC Band. By doing so, this research analyzes the message inherent in the lyrics that appear as the satanic messages motivation the youths to obey the Satan by the instillation of the fear and playing with their mind. This research examines the effectiveness of the Satanic

message to divert the mind of the metropolitan youths to turn back to the better cultural conduct and to make the world heaven instead of hell. This research is a repository of the cultural analysis of the metropolitan youths through the lyrics of a musical band. So, it contributes and motivates the future researchers to turn to the lyrical analysis to examine the cultural representation. The basic limitation is that this research is not overall analysis of all of the lyrics of AC/DC band rather it is only the pinpointed analysis focusing on the metropolitan youths and their representations in the lyrics.

The present research work has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter fundamentally deals with introductory outline of the present study. It introduces critical review and the band lyrics in discussion and the role the lyrics perform for the cosmopolitan audience. Thus it presents the bird's eye view of the entire research. The second chapter aims at providing the theoretical methodological reading of the text briefly with both the textual and theoretical evidences. It attempts to examine the cultural representation and messages embedded to the lyrics of the band AC/DC. On the basis of Stuart Hall and other cultural theorists, it examines the representation of the culture of cosmopolitan youths, evils they bring to their life and the need of their sensitive conduct as the message. It will further sort out some extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the research. This part serves as the core of the present research. The third chapter concludes the ideas put forward in the earlier chapter, focusing on the outcome of the entire research.

## **II. Representation of the Sub-Culture of Metropolitan Youths in the *Lyrics of AC/DC Band***

This research is a study on the lyrics of AC/DC Band to study the shaping forces of the metropolitan youths and their sub-culture that is emerging in the metropolitans around the world. The means of the mass media and rock and roll music used to represent the sub-culture of the metropolitan youths is very important because the targeted audience of the rock and roll and AC/DC are metropolitan youths and their lyrics voice the concerns, obsessions and lifestyle and the demonic conduct of the metropolitan youths giving rise to the totally new predicament of the life to undo the own generation leading it to the uncertainty and the hell have become the major subject matter of the lyrics of AC/DC.

The means of representation plays very crucial role to determine the meaning of the represented things or the signs. Since this research focuses on the nature of representation of the metropolitan youths and their obsessions and the new sub-culture they are developing in the lyrics of AC/DC Band, it uses the notable concepts about the representations. It is the representation of that changes the meaning of the signs is the major observation of Stuart Hall in his book *Representations*. The meaning of the signs is not always straight or transparent rather when it enters through the passage of representation the meaning changes altogether:

One soon discovers that meaning is not straightforward or transparent, and does not survive intact the passage through representation. It is a slippery customer, changing and shifting with context, usage and historical circumstances. It is therefore never finally fixed. It is always putting off or 'deferring' its rendezvous with Absolute Truth. It is always being negotiated and inflected, to resonate with Dew situations.

It is often contested, and sometimes bitterly fought over. There are always different circuits of meaning circulating in any culture at the same time, overlapping discursive formations, from which we draw to create meaning or to express what we think. (9-10)

Hall terms meaning as a slippery customer that changes as the context change.

Meaning is not transparent according to Hall; it changes its form when the context of the representation change is the major observation in his statement about the slippery nature of the meaning. The circulation of the meaning changes accordance with the different circuits of cultures and sub-cultures and meaning is never the absolute truth rather it is always inflected has been emphasized. The lyrics of the Australian Rock and Roll Band AC/DC basically target the metropolitan youths and they represent the lifestyle and obsession to the music, sex and the carefree life have been the subjects of observation in this research in which this research sees how the culture of the metropolitan youths has been being shaped up and what the band tries to achieve through the demonic messages that frequently emerge in their lyrics.

The lyrics of the AC/DC are famous among the metropolitan youths because they represent the highs and lows of the cultural practices, obsessions and lifestyle of the metropolitan youths. The metropolitan youths of the modern times are emerging with the different goals and obsessions than their parents. They prefer the ways of devil over the ways of god; they hit on the rules that want to keep a person chained in some moral code or the good and virtuous ways of life and they adopt their own, carefree life without caring for the immorality associated with their conduct. They want to live easy and free without caring for the easiest way leads them towards the hell. Freedom and own way of life is far more superior to them than to be dictated by some discipline and to attain some respectable height and career. It has become the

sub-cultural practice of the metropolitan youths. It is well reflected in the lyric

“Highway to Hell”:

Living easy, living free  
 Season ticket on a one-way ride  
 Asking nothing, leave me be  
 Taking everything in my stride  
 Don't need reason, don't need rhyme  
 Ain't nothing I'd rather do  
 Going down, party time  
 My friends are gonna be there too, yeah  
 I'm on the highway to hell  
 on the highway to hell  
 highway to hell  
 I'm on the highway to hell

The rationality and its dominance has been the disgusting thing to control the metropolitan youths. They attack on rationality and want the complete freedom from any form of dominance. As the lyric says, they want to walk by their own without listening to the reason or the rationality. They want to explore the dark realm of the mind and the lows of the human soul by themselves. They claim that most of the friends to the modern youths are going to the hell along the highway to hell. The lyrics continues to advocate the freedom hailing the Satan, the lord of the evil:

No stop signs, speed limit  
 Nobody's gonna slow me down  
 Like a wheel, gonna spin it  
 Nobody's gonna mess me round

Hey satan, payed my dues  
 Playing in a rocking band  
 Hey momma, look at me  
 I'm on my way to the promised land  
 OWWW  
 I'm on the highway to hell  
 highway to hell  
 I'm on the highway to hell  
 highway to hell  
 ohhhhh  
 Don't stop me  
 yeah, yeah, owwww

Even the control exerted by the driving laws and the road traffic authorities has been rejected flatly in the quoted part of the song. The chaotic nature of the metropolitan youths has been represented and the sub-culture of the metropolitan youths has been depicted as rapidly falling into pieces and the hell reigns throughout the metropolitans. Even though, the metropolitan youths are aware about their fall they want to fall without any restrictions. The fall is pleasant to them, Father of the family is the dictator and the setter of the family codes and restrictions to the children, so, the youths do not mention father when they have to notify the family about their precious and pleasant fall rather they notify it to their mother, the momma:

I'm on the highway to hell  
 highway to hell  
 highway to hell  
 highway to hell

momma, highway to highway to hell

And I'm going down, all the way down

I'm on the highway to hell

Notifying the fall, the journey to the hell is the resistance to the family control, that is, the father. The mother is always kind and supportive to them while there is constant Oedipal tension with the father. The journey to hell has, thus, been informed to the mother and the father figure, in whatever form he is, has been revolted and has been turned upside down. The resistance of authority and the cultural authority in the metropolitan youths is one of the major cultural practices.

The representation of the sub-culture of the metropolitan youths in the lyrics pursues the countercultural trend subverting the traditional notion of culture and proclaiming the emergence of totally new, democratic sub-culture in metropolitans that rejects any form of authority. This new trend leads the youths to the carefree journey to their own obsessions, the personal hells. Primarily, the culture used to be regarded as organic unity and the collection of the best values. It is highlighted with the Arnold's definition of culture as "best that has been taught and known in the world" ("Sweetness and Light" 113). The idea of culture was monolithic and unifying in past.

Literature in past also became a political instrument to promote the unitary culture in the name of socializing of otherwise heterodox groups. It is further clarified by Gerald Graff and Bruce Robbins in their essay "Cultural Criticism" collected in *Redrawing the Boundaries*:

The preeminence accorded to literature reflected its promise as a political instrument for the socializing of otherwise heterodox groups .

. . . When late 19<sup>th</sup> century educators urged that English literature

replace the classical languages at the centre of . . . curriculum, they were animated by the belief that the literature of the native tongue . . . was a superior means of acculturating the raw, uncultivated masses . . . .The campaign to replace Greek and Latin with English literature . . . seemed the perfect instrument for socializing a threateningly heterogeneous ethnic population into the values of Anglo-Saxon culture. (422)

It is for the imposition of the unified discourse of culture, the heterogeneous, ethnic, minority cultures are subdued. The tyranny of the monolithic idea of unified culture is, then, started to be challenged by various writers who advocated the heterogeneity of plural cultures and the democratic counter culture as antidote to the unified mainstream culture. Graff and Robbins see the ambiguity in the concept of culture and trace the history of counterculture. They see the analysis of culture in Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* as the analysis that traced the monolithic discourse of culture and Williams coupled the concept of culture with a critical standpoint that gives raise to the idea of counterculture. Graff and Robbins further write:

The emergence of the idea of culture as told by Williams in *Culture and Society* is the story of the making of a counterculture. Williams explains how the word culture appeared only as the organic way of life it denotes came to be threatened during the Industrial and French revolutions and how the word later came to serve, in the elaborations of the Romantics, Matthew Arnold, [. . .] George Orwell, and their successors, as "a court of human appeal" against the divisions and fragmentations of industrial society. (XVIII)

Graff and Robbins quote the Williams' concept of the culture that is the basis for the

cultural criticism and counterculture. They agree with Williams and look out the critical development in the field of cultural criticism. It is because of such critical concept about the culture Williams has been awarded with the major cultural critic as the founder of cultural materialism. They cite the concept of culture as studied by Williams as 'made into entity a positive body of achievements and habits, precisely to express a mode of living superior . . .' and show how the traditional concept of culture demarcate the boundary between superior culture and inferior one and how the concept of culture hegemonized the other minority cultures. It is because of the discourse embodied upon the idea of the traditional culture the counter discourse or the critical concept of counterculture requires. Culture as the positive body of achievements and values is, thus, as Graff and Robbins also see is story or discourse that` locates the background in which the counter-discourse is necessary that lies in the very heart of the cultural criticism. Graff and Robbins point out; "This story, more or less as Williams tells it, has been for us the founding story of cultural criticism. At the story's center is a concept of culture that is presumed to be "critical", an antidote for a dissociated and disembodied social actuality" (422).

Thus, 'critical' concept of culture i.e. the idea of counterculture lies in the very foundation of the cultural criticism that came into prominence in English cultural studies with the publication of the book *Culture and Society* (1958) by Raymond Williams. The counterculture, thus, was bolstered by the British cultural materialists like Raymod Williams and accelerated forth with the advent of New Historicism in 1980s. Since the monolithic, unitary culture is associated with the power structures. ". . . many New Historicists and Cultural materialists have been profoundly concerned not only with situating literary texts within power-structures, but also with seeing them as crucially participating in conflicts of power between various forms of social

and political authority" (Habib 762). The very countercultural tendency and the representation of the emerging sub-culture with the subversion of the traditional notion of culture are prominently displayed in the lyrics of AC/DC Band.

Traditionally accepted cultural obsessions are left behind and the youths of the metropolitan are developing obsession to the carefree life, music, drinking, sex and dance.

The frustration to the current, degraded world of the metropolitan is also highlighted and the obsession of the youths to the rock and roll as the remedy to the frustration is highlighted. Human values are weakening day by day and one does not encounter with the morally correct person all the times, many of the people are torturers, robbers and the human world of the metropolitan has become unsafe that is seen in the lyric "Ridin' Down the Highway":

Ridin' down the highway

Goin' to a show

Stop in all the by-ways

Playin' rock 'n' roll

Gettin' robbed

Gettin' stoned

Gettin' beat up

Broken boned

Gettin' had

Gettin' took

The people are tortured when heading to the destination is obvious. People come to each other's way and pursuing the goal has not remained as an easy job. Rock and roll singer gets robbed as well as s/he robs others' heart has been emphasized in the

lyric. Rock and roll singer's career and obsession to music takes a lot of time to flourish; they have to be prepared for stoning of the audience, they are to be ready to be beaten up and robbed. The obsession of music fails most of the youths of the metropolitan because they are unable to decipher the difficulties embedded in it. The lyric warns the obsessed people that rock and roll is an easy job to pursue is a false belief:

I tell you folks  
 It's harder than it looks  
 It's a long way to the top  
 If you wanna rock 'n' roll  
 It's a long way to the top  
 If you wanna rock 'n' roll  
 If you think it's easy doin' one night stands  
 Try playin' in a rock roll band  
 It's a long way to the top  
 If you wanna rock 'n' roll

If a metropolitan youth, obsessed to rock and roll music wants to flourish as a star, s/he should be aware of its challenges. It is long and difficult journey to reach to the destination, the stardom. Even the one night performance is not easy to carry out; it needs hard labor and dedication. The world has become so materialistic and all the things that come to touch to the people are unfriendly and cruel. The hotel and motel are frustrating the persons who refuge there; they frustrate rock and roll singers thinking that they are cheap goods to buy and used to entertain their customers. The condition of a rock and roll singer is similar to a prostitute who finds it hard to sell her body because she is old and grey:

Hotel

Motel

Make you wanna cry

Lady do the hard sell

Know the reason why

Gettin' old

Gettin' grey

Gettin' ripped off

Under-paid

Gettin' sold

Second hand

That's how it goes

Playin' in a band

The world has become so materialistic, selfish and consumerist that there is no place for human emotion and sentiment. Rock and roll singers and prostitutes are paid well only when they become the things to please their customers. The sufferings of a rock and roll singer in such harsh conditions of the metropolitan surroundings have been presented. The rock and roll singer labor hard but they are under-paid and work hungry most of the time. It is the difficult predicament of the life for each and every goal seekers in the metropolitan. The sub-culture of the metropolitan youth is developing in this disillusionment of the circumstances. If one wants to pursue the career of rock and roll artist, he should regard the world as the rough and mean and one has to wrestle with it on the way to reach to its top, the stardom, the success:

It's a long way to the top

If you wanna rock 'n' roll

It's a long way to the top  
 If you wanna rock 'n' roll  
 If you wanna be a star of stage and screen  
 Look out it's rough and mean  
 It's a long way to the top  
 If you wanna rock 'n' roll

The number of youths living in illusion of the virtual truths is increasing in metropolitans, they are living in the fancy of stardom and illusion that they can easily become a rock and roll star and have followed the hippie lifestyle out of the illusion television, internet and the mass media promote. They are warned in the lyrics of AC/DC so that they could be brought to the reality. The sub-culture of the youths in metropolitans has been assessed well by the lyrics of AC/DC and it is represented in the lyrics of the band. The degradation of the modern youths has been represented in the lyrics and they are shown in the need of proper guidance otherwise, they follow the guidance of the devil and go to hell is evident.

The lyrics of AC/DC embody the symbol of devil, hell and riding having sexual connotations to appeal to the metropolitan audience. The sub-culture of the metropolitan youths has been frequently targeted. The symbolic representation of the sub-culture in those symbols let the meaning emerge in the lyrics about the metropolitan culture and its degradation as well as the sub-culture of the youths. The representation and domain of meaning has been discussed by Stuart Hall as:

The embodying of concepts, ideas and emotions in a symbolic form which can be transmitted and meaningfully interpreted is what we mean by 'the practices of representation' Meaning must enter the domain of these practices, if it is to circulate effectively within a

culture. And it cannot be considered to have completed its 'passage' around the cultural circuit until it has been 'decoded' or intelligibly received at another point in the chain. Language, then, is the property of neither the sender nor the receiver of meanings. It is the shared cultural 'space' in which the production of meaning through language - that is, representation - takes place. (10)

The lyrics of AC/DC form a symbolic set of the representation that can be interpreted by the practices of the representation and the targeted group of the representation. The meaning of the symbols mentioned in the lyrics continually appeal to the attention of the audience to the problems and nature of the metropolitan youths, their lifestyles, obsessions and the problems. The shared cultural space in which the audience generate the meaning from the lyrics are the audience familiar to the problems and culture of the metropolitan people.

The study of the representation of the particular culture is very important to generate its meaning and study the culture and its problems. The metropolitan culture represented in the lyrics of the AC/DC is thus, very important to study the culture through which the metropolitan towns of the modern times are cruising ahead. The notion of representation and its relevance to study the culture is analyzed by Stuart Hall as:

The concept of representation has come to occupy a new and important place in the study of culture. Representation connects meaning and language to culture. But what exactly do people mean by it? What does representation have to do with culture and meaning? One common-sense usage of the term is as follows: 'Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world

meaningfully, to other people.' You may well ask, 'Is that all?' Well, yes and no. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things. (15)

Basically, the language is the means of representation of the culture is agreed upon by most of the analysts and by the means of the linguistic representation, the cultural group shares the common meaning of the culturally remarkable practices. In the lyrics of AC/DC, the frequent references to the music, drinking and riding, the metropolitan youths see their cultural practices referred and there are great many cosmopolitan audience who relate them to the metropolitan culture represented in the lyrics of the AC/DC.

To put it briefly, representation is the production of meaning through language.

*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* suggests two relevant meanings for the word:

1. To represent something is to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses; as, for example, in the sentence, 'This picture represents the murder of Abel by Cain.'
2. To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen of, or to substitute for; as in the sentence, 'In Christianity, the cross represents the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. (16)

These two meanings of representations are suggested by Stuart Hall in general sense.

In the lyrics of the Band AC/DC, both the meanings of the representations appear to be fulfilled. There is certain likeness to the cultures of metropolitan and the representation of the metropolitan in the lyrics of the band. They also represent the

metropolitan cultures in symbolic ways and let the audience see the issues with the metropolitan cultures.

At the heart of the meaning process in culture, then, are two related 'systems of representation' The first enables us to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences or a chain of equivalences between things - people, objects, events, abstract ideas, etc. - and our system of concepts, our conceptual maps. The second depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts. The relation between 'things', concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we can 'representation.'

There are large numbers of issues that are responsible to shape the culture of the modern metropolitan youths. There are the problems of unemployment in the modern towns, most of the youths are affected by the mass media and the virtual world of the famous movie stars and the rock and roll stars and they are obsessed with the carefree life in which they can shape their future without the interference of their parents. The parents' wishes for their children are the hurdle for the modern youth living with the fantasy of the modern progress. The youths are revolutionary and they do not want to hear the suggestion of their parents to study and become a respectable persons like doctor or a lawyer. The tension between the parents and the modern metropolitan children has been reflected in AC/DC's lyrics "Rock 'n' Roll Singer":

My Daddy was workin' nine to five

When my Momma was havin' me

By the time I was half alive

They knew what I was gonna be

But I left school and grew my hair  
 They didn't understand  
 They wanted me to be respected as  
 A doctor or a lawyer man  
 (But I had other plans)

The voice of the metropolitan youth who is obsessed to become a rock and roll singer has been represented in the lyric that is the highlight of the sub-culture the metropolitan youths of the recent times are developing of their own. They adopt hippie lifestyle, they loss interest in schooling and education as it proves to be a jail made for their torture. They keep long hair and go against the expectation of their parents. They are aware about their parents' difficulties in the metropolitan world and breadwinning for the family and the labor of the parents is not the easy struggle. But they are obsessed with music resisting the wishes of the parents and the life they want them to follow:

Gonna be a rock 'n' roll singer  
 Gonna be a rock 'n' roll star  
 Gonna be a rock 'n' roll singer  
 I'm gonna be a rock 'n' roll,  
 A rock 'n' roll star

The youth voice of the lyrics is the representation of the voice of the youth who is adamant that he is going to be a rock and roll star. He is so determined to become the rock and roll star that he does not care the parents' suggestion to study and become a respectable person. He buys guitar working hard to save the money necessary for it to pursue his goal. The youth is aware of the sufferings one has to undergo so as to earn money and save it for purpose.

Well I worked real hard and bought

Myself

A rock 'n' roll guitar

I gotta be on top some day

I wanna be a star

I can see my name in lights

And I can see the queue

I got the devil in my blood

Tellin' me what to do

(And I'm all ears)

The youth is treading the unknown territory of the rock and roll even though there are many jobs that are traditionally safe and there are the distinct ways how they are done. Going to school, study, secure good marks and become a respectable person like a doctor or a lawyer as per the wishes of the parents is the traditional and safe way but the modern youth of the metropolitan is revolting against the traditional way of the life and the miserable living condition even after the father's hard labor whole day. The influence of the music and the focus of the modern generation to the entertainment as per the taste of the materialistic world have been represented in the lyric. Going beyond the traditional way of life and pick up the career that is not yet regarded as safe is the obsession that the youth terms as the suggestion of the devil that is in his blood. The message of the devil working through the ruin of the modern generation before the generation of the parents and other respectable people of the society has been represented in the lyric.

Gonna be a rock 'n' roll singer

Gonna be a rock 'n' roll star

Gonna be a rock 'n' roll singer  
 I'm gonna be a rock 'n' roll,  
 A rock 'n' roll star  
 (I hear it pays well)

The purpose of being a rock and roll star is to earn money and improve the lifestyle has been emphasized as the lyric goes further. But the earning money through the rock and roll is not sure because the voice of the youth says he has just heard that the job of the rock and roll singer pays well. He has not tested it because he is not a rock and roll singer who gets the payment now. He has the faith upon the unknown and untested belief that earning a lot of money and improving the living condition is possible through music. Actually, the sub-culture of the metropolitan youth is developing in illusion and there is no certainty in their belief. They form their belief just on the basis of hearing somebody talk about it and the illusion the rock and roll stars are presented on screen. The uncertain pursuit out of the illusion and fancy of the present metropolitan youths have become the defining character of the metropolitan youths that is responsible for their fall.

In his essay "What Is an Author?" Michel Foucault talks about the representation of the image of author that comes to the writing:

This usage of the notion of writing runs the risk of maintaining the author's privileges under the protection of writing's a priori status : it keeps alive, in the gray light of neutralization, the interplay of those representations that formed a particular image of the author . (105)

The image of the powerful rocker and his privileges are deciphered in the lyrics of the AC/DC where the rocker has been presented as the person that has fulfilled his dreams. It stamps the authority of the rocker over the mind of the metropolitan youths

manipulating their dream for sake of the popularity of the band. In the lyric “Rocker”, AC/DC Band represents the supremacy of the rocker or the musicians that manipulates the metropolitan youths who are obsessed with the music. The rocker is represented as all powerful:

I’m a rocker

I’m a roller

I’m a right out of controller

I’m a wheeler

I’m a dealer

I’m a wicked woman stealer

I’m a bruiser

I’m a cruiser

I’m a rockin’ rollin’ man

The rocker is depicted as the women stealer, the stealer of millions of the hearts and the love of women bruising their heart dealing with their feelings. There is no controller to the power of the rocker as he is free or the out of the controller. The freedom of expression and leading the carefree life, the basic tendency of the subculture of the metropolitan youths has been appealed in this lyric. It goes on further:

Got Slicked black hair

Skin tight jeans

Cadillac car

And a teenage dream

I’m a rocker, I’m a roller

I’m a rocker, I’m a roller

I'm a rocker, I'm a roller

I'm a rockin' rollin' man

The fantasy of the teenage audience is fulfilled only when they become the rocker. They will get the chance to lead the carefree life they envision, in tight jeans and Cadillac car. The notion of dream fulfillment makes the teenage youths of the metropolitans spellbound and their attraction to the music and hippie lifestyle grows up. So, there is not only the positive message in the lyrics rather there are also the negative message to manipulate and foster the culture the metropolitan youths have been degrading so quickly. The brands of the multinational commodities are the dreams of the cosmopolitan youths affected by consumerism. The band entices the youth audience hitting at the very weaknesses of the metropolitan youths to appeal their sense:

Got lorex socks

Blue suede shoes

V8 car

And tattoos

I'm a rocker, I'm a roller

I'm a rocker, I'm a roller

I'm a rocker, I'm a roller

I'm a rockin' rollin' man

The brands of the commodities that are the dream of the metropolitan youths are easily possessed by the rocker. It generates the meaning that rockers are the idols of the metropolitan youths and rock and roll can be trusted without hesitation manipulating the misled sub-culture of the metropolitan youths.

In the lyric of "Problem Child", the metropolitan child and the problems he

faces during his upbringing in the metropolitan world has been represented. The world is so cruel and cold for him that he grows with bad temper and coldness to the people around him:

Cop this  
 I'm hot, and when I'm not  
 I'm cold as ice  
 Get out of my way  
 Just step aside  
 Or pay the price  
 What I want I take  
 What I don't I break  
 And I don't want you  
 With a flick of my knife  
 There is nothing you can do

The metropolitan problem child is the character whose voice is represented in this lyric. He claims himself to be a problem child and threatens the people around him with the knife. It is because none of his emotional and childish necessities are fulfilled in metropolitans and he has grown dissatisfied as a child:

I'm a problem child  
 I'm a problem child, yes I am  
 I'm a problem child  
 And I am wild  
 Make my stand  
 No man's land  
 On my own

Man in blue

It's up to you

The seed is sown

The child is wild and he is threatening. He demands his own place in the world that is apathetic to the causes of the metropolitan youths. The seed of destruction has been sowed in the mind of such the metropolitan youths because of the coldness of the people in metropolitan since their childhood:

What I want I stash

What I don't I smash

And you're on my list

Dead or alive

I got a .45

And I never miss

The problem child of the metropolitan has learnt his own way of dealing with the cold metropolitan world around him. It is the representation of the problem the metropolitan youths face since their childhood and develop the nature of their own accordance with their surroundings. The traditional mode of cultural authority has been threatened by the new sub-cultural, countercultural trait in the lyrics. The dominance of the youths through the traditional cultural discourses is not accepted in the new sub-culture of the metropolitan youths is evident. Cultural discourse, identifying itself with the state, differentiates and excludes everything outside the culture; and such cultural discourse has the power to silence, to dominate anything that does not resemble the definition given by that dominant culture. Culture, for Said, is not only the "positive doctrine of the best that is thought and known" but also "a differentially negative doctrine of all that is not best" (298). This double faceted view

of culture makes one aspect of culture more powerful than other.

In the light of this line of thought, Said explored the discursive function of cultural discourse. Said, with Foucault, demonstrates how "certain attributes, certain others have been kept silent, outside, or . . . Domesticated for use inside the culture." ("The World" 12). Culture, thus, becomes a powerful means of domination and appropriation. Said writes on how culture putting itself in superior position, maintains hegemony over other culture:

The dialectic of self-fortification and self – con – formation by which culture achieves its hegemony over society and the state is based on a constantly practiced differentiation of itself from what it believes to be not itself. And this differentiation is frequently performed by setting the valorized culture over the other. (12)

Thus, we can conclude with the conclusion that discourse analyses are important to examine the power politics, knowledge, truth, body politics, ideologies of exclusions of other, constructions of subjectivity with the distorted representations of other and interpellation of the discourse of dominant ideology to silent the ideologies of the minorities. No area is free of discourses. So, there are many problem children in the emergent sub-cultures of metropolitan is not surprising; it is well reflected in the lyrics of the band.

In the lyric "Ride on", the sexual interests and the alienation of the metropolitan youths have been appealed. The young voice of the metropolitan wants to ride on, the sexual act referred, to come out of the loneliness, the alienation of the modern people in the metropolitan has been represented in the lyric:

I'm gonna ride on

Ride on

Ride on, standing on the edge of road

Ride on, thumb in the air

Ride on, one of these days I'm gonna

Ride on, change my evil ways

Till then I'll just keep riding on

The young voice pins his hope in the riding or the sexual intercourse to get rid of his evil ways. He wants to ride on and be corrected; the sexual desire and the possible power that is inherent in sex have been represented in the lyric. It goes further:

Broke another promise

And I broke another heart

But ain't too young to realize

That I ain't too young to try

Try to get back to the start

And it's another redlight street

And I ain't too young to hurry

Cause I ain't too old to die

But I sure am hard to beat

The youth goes to the redlight area to have a sexual intercourse with a prostitute. The youth keeps changing his lovers, breaking the hearts of the girls but he is indifferent to their sentiments and the causes. The cheapening nature of love in metropolitan and the lack of the fulfillment in sex has been strongly suggested in the lyric:

But I'm lonely

Lord I'm lonely

What am I gonna do

Ride on

...

Ride on, gonna change my evil ways

Ride on, one of these days

The youth wants to quell his loneliness and sexual partner is his company and there is the communication between the bodies that let's one feel he is not lonely. The communication of heart has been diminished in the modern, metropolitan love. The metropolitan love is being degraded day by day and man is more of a victim of it has been represented in this lyric.

The generation of meaning of the metropolitan culture and the subculture of the youths is the chief act the lyrics of the AC/DC Band achieve. The metropolitan culture is represented and the meaning of the metropolitan ways are generated through two processes, as Stuart Hall observes:

... there are two processes, two systems of representation, involved. First, there is the 'system' by which all sorts of objects, people and events are correlated with a set of concepts or mental representations which we carry around in our heads. Without them, we could not interpret the world meaningfully at all. In the first place, then, meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thoughts which can stand for or 'represent' the world, abling us to refer to things both inside and outside our heads. (17)

However, a shared conceptual map is not enough. We must also be able to represent or exchange meanings and concepts, and we can only do that when we also have access to a shared language. Language is therefore the second system of representation involved in the overall process of constructing meaning. Our shared conceptual map must be translated into a common language, so that we can correlate

our concepts and ideas with certain written words, spoken sounds or visual images. The general term we use for words, sounds or images which carry meaning is signs. These signs stand for or represent the concepts and the conceptual relations between them which we carry around in our heads and together they make up the meaning-systems of our culture.

Signs are organized into languages and it is the existence of common languages which enable us to translate our thoughts (concepts) into words, sounds or images, and then to use these, operating as a language, to express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people. Remember that the term 'language' is being used here in a very broad and inclusive way. The writing system or the spoken system of a particular language are both obviously 'languages' But so are visual images, whether produced by hand, mechanical, electronic, digital or some other means, when they are used to express meaning. And so are other things which aren't 'linguistic' in any ordinary sense: the 'language' of facial expressions or of gesture, for example, or the 'language' of fashion, of clothes, or of traffic lights. Even music is a 'language', with complex relations between different sounds and chords, though it is a very special case since it can't easily be used to reference actual things or objects in the world. Any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning is, from this point of view, 'a language' It is in this sense that the model of meaning which this research has been analysing here is often described as a 'linguistic' one; and that the theories of meaning which follow this basic model are described as belonging to 'the linguistic turn' in the social sciences and cultural studies.

The words of the AC/DC's lyrics represent the youth subculture and bring the metropolitan life to its meaning so that the future generation could act to avoid the

calamities the modern metropolitan culture possesses. The lyrics form the discourses about the metropolitan cultures and stamp their authority and dominance in the mind of the young audience through the representation as the Foucaultian belief discusses it. Paul Oliver clarifies Foucaultian position in *Foucault: Key Ideas*; “In his studies of the nature of knowledge, Foucault also became very interested in the contribution of discourse to the way in which we approach and understand the world . . . he defined discourse as ‘representation itself, represented by verbal signs’” (27). The verbal representation of the metropolitan youths, their emergent subculture, message to the youths and the exertion of the power of the rock and roll music have become the prominent issues in the discourse shaped by the lyrics of the band.

### **III. Representation and Manipulation of the Metropolitan Youths in the *Lyrics of***

#### ***AC/DC***

This research has analyzed the emergence of the new lifestyle in metropolitan youths and their sub-culture that is emerging in the metropolitans around the globe. The mass media has played crucial role in the verbal and audio-visual representation of the lyrics and rock and roll music that targeted audience of the metropolitans. AC/DC are keen analyst and the voice of metropolitan youths and their concerns, obsessions and lifestyle and the demonic conduct of the metropolitan youths. Thus, they declare that totally new sub-culture is emerging in metropolitan that is autonomous, that resists any form of the authority and heading to the uncertainty and the hell as per the wishes of the devil.

The means of representation plays very crucial role to determine the meaning of the signs. The verbal signs used in the lyrics represent the challenges, ups and downs and the possible courses of actions of the metropolitan youths. This research has analyzed the very nature of representation of the metropolitan youths and their obsessions and the new sub-culture they are developing in the lyrics of AC/DC Band.

Representation is not an absolute and static in itself; it is a process that changes its meaning according to the context. As the AC/DC Band targets the metropolitan youths, their emergent ways of life and the issues with them, they focus on the nature of the sub-culture of the metropolitan youths that is obsessed with Hippie lifestyle, resistance to authority, obsession to music, drinking and sex and following the demonic ways rather than leading virtuous life. They deny any form of authority that interferes in their life and want to lead carefree life. They go beyond the traditional ways of conduct and the definite lifestyle that emphasizes on the going to school to gain education, study well and secure the good marks and become a

respectable person like doctor or lawyer. The youths of the metropolitan see the education system as a jail to trap their aspiration and they resist the traditional ways their parents want them to follow.

The growing consumerism and emphasis on materiality, no guarantee of employment even after they complete the education and the hard struggle of their parents to run the families are the factors that lead the metropolitan youths to distrust upon the traditional ways of life. They form their own obsession, deal with the world around them with their cold ways, buy guitar, raise hair, drink, go to the redlight areas to have sex with prostitutes to cure the loneliness and so on that are reflected in the lyrics of the band AC/DC. Walking down the highway to hell with freedom is more joyful to the metropolitan youths. Metropolitan youths have longed for using the famous and internationally branded commodities that has been possible being a rocker has been fostered in the lyrics of AC/DC, so that they could keep their craze to the music intact and become their audience forever. The music has also become the commodity to sell to the market and the band realizes this while composing the lyrics. The lyrics have the authority and privileges of the writer; the writer uses the authority and imposes his power through the writing of the lyrics.

AC/DC has stamped the authority of the band music by forming the discourse and manipulating the mind of the youths of the metropolitans contributing and criticizing the ways of life of the emergent sub-culture followers. They have directly fostered their ambition and given the illusion that the life of rocker is hard as well as luxurious and fulfilling to the teenage ambitions and dreams. Since the lyrics address the psychological standing of the metropolitan youth with most of their problems and dreams, they are able to overpower the mind of the metropolitan youths that has

become possible with the representation of the metropolitan youths and the construction of the discourse about it.

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