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Realistic Representation of Contemporary Nepali Society in Bhupi Sherchan's Poems

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Naveen Nirav Poudyal has completed his thesis entitled “Realistic Representation of Contemporary Nepali Society in Bhupi Sherchan’s Poems” under my supervision. He carried out his paper from September 2016 to March 2017. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva-voce.

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled “Realistic Representation of Contemporary Nepali Society in Bhupi Sherchan’s Poems” Submitted to Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Naveen Nirav Poudyal has been approved by the under designed members of research committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Abstract

The research project on Bhupi Sherchan's (1936-1989) poems attempt to explore the realistic representation based on the historical context of Post-Rana Nepali society. The quest of human suffering through socio-cultural crisis, economic agony, injustice, crisis on the livelihood of people, hypocrite manner is the concern of Bhupi's poems. The research project aims to excavate the reformative instinct laid in the poems, implementing Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation. Sherchan has used signs, symbols, and images in the poems from orient myths and locally available subjects. Sherchan talks about social subject matters; corruption on one hand and on the other hand patriotism, justice on one hand and injustice on another hand. Likewise hypocrisy and real conviction also goes simultaneously. He focuses on the real and just society through different images, symbols and issues. He pokes the real identity of people and splits the instinct of social transformation in the core of its heart.

Keywords:

Post-Rana Nepali society, Representation, patriotism, Social transformation

Post-Rana Nepali society, both in terms of politics and poetry stood on a transitional stage. The new established democracy on one hand demarked the line from the rule of maharajas and on the other hand poetry shifted from traditional Sanskrit based verse poetry to prose poetry. Emerging writers in this respect, no longer has to restrict themselves depending upon foot, meter, and its syllable. As the system sidelined the literature sidelined and the writers sprouted with new hope. But later on as they felt system being changed not the society the writers started to represent the society and its aspects. Bhupi Sherchan both in bringing the new shift

and representing the society stood being a frontier.

In context to Nepal Bhupi's journey from high hills to the plains of terai, his seeing of peoples' harsh struggle for morning and evening meal, his bitter experience of survival in the contemporary society forced him to reveal social negativity instead of hiding them. The experience and expression of social realities is the main thing that one can feel in his poems. His depth exploration of social, cultural and human values is the main cause of his forceful expression and sharp attack against the evils that existed in the society. His way of representing social realities seems quite unique and colloquial as they can arouse emotions and stir the hearts of the readers when they go through it.

More to say, Bhupi's poems have articulated the theme of Nepalese hypocrisy concerning it as one of the greatest problems of his time. The use of images, symbols, metaphors, simile, and different use of diction which represents the contemporary social aspects makes his poems powerful and witty. "Always Always in My Dream", "Midday and the Cold Sleep", "I Think My Country's History is a Lie", "A Blind Man on a Revolving Chair", "This is a Land of Uproar and Rumor", "New year", "A Poem", "Cold Ashtray", "My Courtyard", "Ghantaghar", "The Banyan Tree Inside a Pot", "We" are some of the poems that are selected for the research project.

His writing excellence was honoured by *Sajha Prize* for the anthology "A *Blind Man on a Revolving Chair*" in 2026 BS. Most of his poems comment Nepalis' for their inferiority and for the meaningless existence of their lives. Most noticeable thing in Bhupi's poems is the use of different sorts of signs and images and language expressed, which represents different issues related to the contemporary nepali society.

Bhupi Sherchan's poems especially that published under the poetry collection entitled *A Blind Man on a Revolving Chair* is one of the artistic creation of free verse poetry that presents the vivid picture of Nepali society during 1960s objectifying the Nepali world in different ways. The periphery of 1960s was an important period in terms of various historical achievements, along with some major political, social and economic changes in the society. The anthology reflects the changes in the society and social mentality of that particular period about common people who were shedding their blood and sweat for their daily survival and about those who were completely isolated of their access to the outer world, political manipulation and their dreams of emancipation from the hegemonies.

The research paper on Bhupi Sherchan's selected poems excavates the realities found in the Nepali society through the analysis of different characters, images, analogy, allusions and symbols those presented in the poems. The paper aims to make a detail study of those words, symbols, language and images in order to find out their indicated meaning along with its historical background. Bhupi claims that there is chaos everywhere and that is due to the gaps in the society in different aspects. Those aspects reflects how the society was dazzled as it entered through darkness to light. The characters in most of his poems have been expressed with the use of first person 'I' and 'We', which though seem autobiographical, have represented the lives of Nepalese. The frustration and alienation which has started to germinate in the society were the subjects that marked the impact in contemporary Nepali society.

Literature is more or less influenced by the historical movements, cultural practices and even by social circumstances. The literature shifts itself when the system shifts from one to another, when ideology shifts and when the period shifts. The use of language, images, symbols, myth and words depicts the specific period of

the history. Literature is always granted as a mirror of the society as it has the task to reflect the particular society and pave the way being a torchbearer. In this regard the present research thus conceptualizes Stuart Hall's theory of representation. In this theory he has basically discussed about three different approaches, reflexive, intentional and the constructionist approach as a major theoretical approaches explaining on how language works through representation.

Theory of representation is a part of cultural theory developed by Stuart Hall and in this theoretical approach Hall mainly focus on i) language as a tool that represents meaning, which is associated to reflexive approach ii) author himself as a producer of meaning, associated to intentional approach and iii) language code/sign represents the meaning, associated to constructionist approach. While talking on constructionist approach it becomes essential to talk about Ferdinand De Saussure's theory of Semiotics and Roland Barthes thought of denotation and connotation. So in connection to Stuart Hall's theory these two major theorists are chosen for the analysis of the poems.

Contemporary Nepali society in this thesis refers to the decade of 1960s and 70s. The contemporary society was liberal in terms of education but was under complete control of king Mahendra's tyranny. Though the freedom of education was in everyone's access the freedom of expression against the system was restricted. In this situation Bhupi's poems appears with the minute study of the social practices instead going against the system. Though his poems are the impact of liberal system, he remains mute about the tyranny of King Mahendra focusing himself on representing the ongoing social issues. In regard to Bhupi's poem, critics have different opinions which are also a part of discussion as this research paper aims to discuss Bhupi's poems, in terms of language, context, culture and system.

Bhupi's poems are society oriented poems, as they carry the feature of criticizing commenting and representing the evils and weaknesses of the society. But somewhere critics seem to be missing on their evaluation. Nepali critic Khagendra Prasad Luitel in his book, "*Nepali Kabya Samalochana*" has stated Bhupi as a romantic poet as well as a satirical. He states: "In modern Nepali poetry, Bhupi who is well known as a progressive, romantic and satirical poet, his main concern is to pour angst satirically against the era long evils and weaknesses in an artistic way" (146).

Rarely Bhupi's poems are romantic, and a very few poems are about love and women. Most of his poems rumble around social issues, human relationship, environmental issues and economic issues. In this regard the trend of Nepali poetry and its historical development seems quite essential to be acknowledged. Nepali critic and researcher, Krishnahari Baral regards Bhupi as an unromantic poet, who mainly talks about the pains and plights of people especially in city life, and the unjust things those ongoing around it. In his book, "*Kavi Bhupi: Vislaysan ra Mulyankan*", he states: Bhupi's poems represents different aspects and situations [...] though the rustic aspects are represented place to place, the representation of city and its aspects are made comparatively more. The poet has represented the dark aspects of city life inside the allies and the injustice that happened on the edge of the streets "(51).

Language plays the vital role in representing the particular society. The context, psyche, system, words and language used in particular historical phase helps to know more about the time in a clearer sense. In this regard Stuart Hall in his book, *Representation: Cultural representation and signifying practices*, States:

Representation is a production of meaning of the concepts in our mind through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the 'real' world of objects, people or

events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events. (17)

From above mentioned definition it becomes clearer that the representation is all about producing meaning through language. And this representation is a connection between concept and language either of real or fictitious world. Bhupi's poems and his technique of inserting the words, symbols and images in the poems, reflect him as realistic poet. Whereas the classical forms of Nepali poetry were formal, standard, and figurative, based on traditional Sanskrit verse pattern and were recited in a lyrical way. Though Nepali literature has not that long history of written literature, within a short period several literary movements have appeared in the scene. Some of them resemble the influence of western trend of literature and some as an original outcome of Nepali socio-cultural and historical context. While talking about the influence of western literature in Nepali poetry it starts with the romanticism, formally introduced by Laxmi Prasad Devkota which emerged in reaction to Sanskrit based literature which were full of Sanskrit based vocabulary, mythical allusions and images of gods and goddesses. But the democracy of 2007 B.S. made a sideline itself not only in politics but also in literature. Prose style of poetry writing emerged as a totally new trend. In the scene, some appeared carrying revolutionary instinct, and some as experimentalist.

Bhupi's writing shows his shift from revolutionary poet to a realistic poet representing the socio-cultural issues of contemporary period. What Bhupi really wants to represent? This can be understood by analyzing his interview with Pradip Upadhyaya as quoted by Krishnahari Baral in his book; "*Kvi Bhupi: Vislaysan ra Mulyankan*", Where Bhupi's words goes like this: "I curse those poets who instead writing about the plight of people wrote about kisses. They have done no justice

whoever they are writing about beautiful lad and girl at this transitional stage” (16). In this respect, Bhupi has more concern to the social issues and the writers should entirely focus themselves in relevant issues. Then question arises, why should the writers have to do so? Why should they focus themselves entirely in the contemporary issues? This is the question that we are going to discuss in this research.

The cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who is the main theorist of this research project, directs different views upon language and representation. In his book “*Representation: cultural representation and signifying practices*”, he forwards his view upon language, as a means of representing culture, feelings, concept and a means of producing meaning. Hall states:

In language, we use signs and symbols - whether they are sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects - to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings. Language is one of the ‘media’ through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced. (1)

According to the above mentioned definition, language consists of signs and symbols which represent people’s concept and feelings. And this representing thus produces meaning through the help of language. For Hall, signs and symbols along with the human concept seems equally important in creating meaning from the language.

The present research on Bhupi Sherchan’s “*A Blind Man on a Revolving Chair*” depicts the realistic aspect of contemporary Nepali society. The poet has a critical view upon the society and its aspects. His very first poem in his collection,

“My Courtyard” (*MeroChowk*) reveals the pain attached in the allies of city life developed by the people and their activities themselves. This poem can be mainly observed through two different approaches i) reflexive approach, as the language are lucid to reflect meaning and ii) from the Saussure’s semiotic approach. In the topic ‘Theory of representation’, Stuart Hall tries to clarify reflexive approach. He states, “In the reflexive approach, meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions as a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exist in the world” (24). This poem mainly reflects upon the broken human relationship, psychological thrill, and common problems of contemporary period. The poem opens its lines with the environmental situation of the courtyard and goes deeper describing the human situation. While surveying this poem the language expressed and the words and images becomes the central focus on creating the meaning of the language. It becomes more evidential from the following lines:

My courtyard is in a narrow lane
 What isn’t here? Here is everything:
 Plenty of diseases,
 Infinite hunger,
 Profound sorrow,
 Only there isn’t happiness,
 On top of this there is prohibition here. (Trans. Padma Devkota 22)

This single stanza poem discloses multiple problems prevailing in the society. The signifier or the poem title "My Courtyard" represents city courtyard, and on the other hand this single stanza poem stands for a single person with diverse problems. The repetition of *what isn’t here? Here is everything* highlights owes and sorrows of human beings in the city particularly in the period 2017 B.S. The very first two lines

seem humorous but it is quite ironic. Ironic because the lines reflect the lives of people in the unplanned and unmanaged city and further it also portrays the settlement of Newar community inside Kathmandu valley on those days. As mentioned by Michael Hutt, in his book, “*Life of Bhupi Sherchan: Poetry and Politics in Post-Rana Nepal*”, “after Bhupi came to live in Kathmandu [...] lodged in the house of Chandra Nanda Newa in a quarter of an old city known as Kilagal Tol [...] It is reached through a warren of narrow streets and via two small courtyards (*chok*) surrounded by tall Newa houses. The courtyard on which the house stands has a stone stupa in the centre” (46).

Along with the use of irony the use of juxtaposition seems quite significant in the latter part of the same poem which helps to highlight the loss of moral human ethos and cultural values. The poet has highlighted two different sadness, going equally. The sadness of the creator (God) and the sadness of creation (man) at the same time. For example:

Here men are sad because they are,
 Bitten by fleas through the night,
 Bitten by rupees throughout the day;
 Here gods are sad because they are
 Neither worshipped nor revered. (Trans. Devkota 22)

The internal rhyme *fleas* and *rupees* are the only rhymes used in the poem to highlight inner human suffering of the contemporary period. The pains surrounded them has forced them to forget even some of the human ethos that as human being they have to follow.

Stuart Hall in his theory of representation further states, “It is clear that representation is neither as simple nor transparent a practice as it first appears and that, in order to unpack the idea, we need to do some work on a range of examples,

and bring to bear certain concepts and theories” (7). Stuart Hall’s argument in this respect is certain ideology, historical context, cultural shift and language shift also plays important role on creating the meaning. Here, Hall is indicating the usefulness of theoretical approaches in representation and finding the meaning of the text.

On regard to the historical context of Nepali literature western literature seems to be influencing Nepali literature since the mid nineteenth century. Ranas as they were much fascinated with the western British culture they developed a sub-culture, mainly based on orientalism to entertain themselves in the *Durbar* periphery. Michael Hutt in his book, “*Reflection of Political Change in Modern Nepali Literature*”, states: “Members of the Rana families lived in considerable pomp and splendor in their capital, Kathmandu, and despite their almost xenophobic suspicious of any foreign influence upon the subjects, they developed an elaborate sub-culture for themselves which was clearly imitative of the royal courts of Victorian Britain” (137). Later on the impact of western literature seems creating influence upon students those coming and out going from Nepal for their studies. Romanticism appeared as one of the major literary trend and almost last for twenty five years (1935-1960). And in the middle of it there appeared prose style revolutionary poems which later on changed into realistic poems and experimental poems. Bhupi’s legend poems appears only after 1960s with its core concern to socio-cultural aspects. His critical way of observing the society created a kind of sensation. It was because of the language, images and the symbols he has used and the meanings they created after all.

“Always Always in My Dream” is one of the most important poems which is full of signs, images, symbols and the language that drags out the reality in relation to the nationality. As this poem encompasses war issue, the context seems crucial in the interpretation of the contemporary society. According to Roland Barthes, “Signified

have a very close communication with culture, knowledge, history and it is through them, so to speak, that the environmental world [of the culture] invades the system [of representation] (Hall, 39). Here the concept or the understanding has been given more priority by Barthes on the basis to culture. Ferdinand de Saussure in his theory, “*Course in General Linguistics*, states that, “ Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and it is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-muter, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of all these systems” (16). According to Saussure, the system of sign and signifier is a language and these sign represent certain set of qualities as per their ideas within them.

The poem "Always Always in my Dream" is narrated using the first person possessive ‘my’ and it revolves around the nationalistic issues, human issues and social circumstances. The historical context and language of the poem seems quite important here. The poem talks about sons’ of Nepal, who are compelled to shed their blood and sweat in foreign land in the name of bravery. Mothers’ or the motherly figure unfolds the history and the condition ongoing since past till the present in the poem. Poem starts with the cry of mothers in the dream of poet:

Always always in my dream
 countless young mothers come before me
 and sing this song as if insane:
 “Now my milk is worthless,
 My motherhood has no meaning.” [...]

 Always always in my dream,
 countless young widows come before me
 and strip themselves quite naked, [...]

Always always in my dream,
 consumptive orphans come before me;
 And they beg for school fees, money for books,
 cricket bat and a father's kiss. (Trans. Michael Hutt 122, 123)

The signifiers like 'dirty piglets', 'consumptive orphans', 'Malaya', 'father's kiss' those used in the poem helps us to develop visual concept or understanding of war impacts in the contemporary Nepali society. Denotatively 'piglets' signifies to mothers breast filled and tight with milk inside, similarly 'consumptive orphans' signifies to parentless children's, suffered from psychological trauma along with physical illness, 'father's kiss' on the other hand signifies lack of father's love in the poem. More to say, the study of images only can't help in finding the actual meaning. We need to dive into the context. Foreign employment has been the basic of survival for Nepali people since ages. Nepali youths sacrificing their lives for the sake of their family, for their children's education have been developed as a part of Nepali culture.

During the decade of forties and fifties Nepali youths shed their blood in different parts of the world as soldiers of British Gurkha troops. The sign code 'Malaya' indicates present day Malaysia where many Nepali youths those associated in British Gurkha troops fought in the world war, lost their lives, made their wives widowed, their children orphan and their mothers childless. While connotatively viewing upon language it reflects the impact of war issues. Can mothers desire the death of their sons? Do wives desire to be widowed? Doesn't each and every child desire his father's warmth, love and kiss? This practice of unjust culture forces the poet even to suffer in the dream rather than feel pride of Nepali youths. According to Michael Hutt in his book, "Life of Bhupi Sherchan: Poetry and Politics in Post-Rana Nepal", "Several poems contain references to contemporary world affairs: the

use of Gorkha soldiers to quell the communist insurgency in Malaya ('Always Always in my Dream'), the Vietnam war ('Letter to Ho- Chi- Minh'), and regular references to the threat of nuclear war which would later become something of a obsession" (95).

Stuart Hall, including constructionist approach of Saussure and of Barthes in his theory of representation, tries to define how sign system and consequences in the historical context helps to drill out the meaning from language. Intentional understanding somehow helps in developing the meaning, but when we approach to the text on the basis of context we can come quite closer to the meaning of the language.

For Bhupi the society and its values are of major concern. Poet has no more made fun of social aspects but has deeply criticized and has commented against social evils, and more they have represented the socio-cultural aspect of the contemporary society. So his poems are thoughtful rather than cheerful. His poems are oriented toward critiquing and changing society; splitting whatever found as social evils and making people visualize them. While doing so the writer needs to be realistic in terms of his representation and expression. In the poem *A Blind Man on a Revolving Chair* the entitled name of the book as well as most dominant poem of the collection reflects the picture about how authorities used to act in the contemporary period.

As a sign image or signifier the word 'blind man' signifies to the man who cannot visualize well. But connotatively it has another meaning to serve and that is not about the person who is physically blind but mentally blind. Michael Hutt in his book, *"Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature"*, regards this poem as one of the strongest satire upon the authority personnel, who can physically visualize but is mentally blind. Hutt states: "*A Blind Man in a Revolving Chair*" a

cruelly satirical depiction of a man in a position of authority who is corrupt, narrow minded and insensitive (121). The title itself is symbolic: A blind man, who is not naturally but artificially blind, has become the root of many undesired suffocation for the country. The person occupying the revolving chair can't be an ordinary man, but a bureaucrat, who is running the system through his excess power. The similes, symbols, irony and metaphors which are used in the poem try to split the realities of the contemporary socio-cultural context.

Dozing and regretting all day long,
 Like a withered bamboo lamenting its hollowness,
 Opening wounds all day long,
 Like a sick dove which pecks at its breast;[...]
 when Nepal shrinks to Kathmandu
 Kathmandu squeezes itself to New Road [...]
 I am the only one unfamiliar
 With the changes around
 With the landscapes, with the joys
 Like the blind man forced to sit
 On the revolving chair in the exhibition. (Trans. Taranath Sharma
 125,126)

The sign images used in the language of the poem almost provides the visual concept in the mind of the readers. The sign images like 'withered bamboo', 'sick dove', 'revolving chair' serve denotative as well as connotative meaning on the basis of contemporary socio-cultural scenario. Connotatively the word 'Dozing' signifies to the luxuriousness of the authority, and 'withered bamboo' signifies to the lack of creativity and strength, 'sick dove which picks at its breast' further represents the self-

centeredness of the authority personnel. Further, 'New Road' as a signifier stands for one of the oldest street of Kathmandu to which most of the Nepalese are well-known but in the poem it connotatively stands to represent the colour of the whole nation as it provides the space for the people from all over the country to carry out their different business for their survival.

The poet has used the 'dry bamboo' as a symbol to represent lifeless existence and an object of low worth to support for the existence of others. The poem in fact is the comment and a question, whether such a blind state mechanism can lead the society into progress? The speaker in the poem feels that when the state is unaware with the outer changes all going around, how the citizens can move ahead in progress?

The lines in the poems like, 'The sun always rises from the kettle and sets in an empty glass' reflects poet's habit of drinking alcohol and the compulsion behind that. It also depicts the situation of unemployment due to unexpanded development as revealed by the title and it is due to the indifference of the authority personnel. When we come across poet's life he indulges himself in alcohol and dies of diabetes in 1989 AD. Krishnahari Baral in his book, "*Kavi Bhupi: Vislaysan ra Mulyankan*", states that, "Alcohol, tea and cigarette intake are the main cause of Bhupi's illness. Though, he abandoned his habit of alcohol intake after his falling in illness, he couldn't give up his habit of smoking" (4). Mainly his frustrations have been expressed in his poems, towards the politics and the authorities criticizing upon their activities and their fluctuating nature. He brings the image of his own life in the poem to give the description of his habit of alcohol intake like this:

I dive into a glass of drink

And forget my past history

Previous life and death.

This exactly is the way

How sun rises always from a tea-kettle

And the sun sets always into an empty glass of drink. (Trans. Sharma
73)

All of the Bhupi's poems were written during the Post Rana period and all of them deal with issues of social and political circumstances of that particular period. The poet had high expectation from the gained democracy, and the political reformers. But in contrast to his expectation all where he finds chaos in the society. This led him into a deep psychological frustration and hopelessness. According to Abhi Subedi in his journal published from Tribhuvan University, entitled "*Modern Nepalese Poems and paintings: Canvas and Context*", forwards his views that the contemporary writings, poems were particularly concern for awareness and for the immediate action and change. Subedi states:

The sense of urgency appears to be the dominant theme in many poems in contemporary times. The lines are conspicuous, the concerns are immediate, and the awareness is an experience that is present in unmixed fresh colours. The imageries are obvious. Communication is the goal. The living history is the impulse language does not represent the disjuncted experience, because there is no need to do so. Such is the new mode of painting in contemporary Nepali poems. (6)

Bhupi acted against the politicians not as a revolutionary but as a poet building conceptual changes and awareness among the people. Bhupi's poems thus seem carrying reformative instinct in the core of its heart. Bhupi wanted to discover for himself the purpose of human existence and the true meaning of nationality. He

extremely concerned to excavate the problems that have inflicted the whole nation and tried to find the solace from it. Most of the critics and scholars have regarded and often debated Bhupi's poems as satirical poems, but they have forgotten to talk about the purpose of satire. Are they purely satire only to talk and comment against the modern follies and hypocrisy of modern people? If not what was the purpose then? This is a basic question to consider when we come across his poems.

The poem "We" seems significant in terms of its language and representation. The poem is one of the longest and dominating poems of the collection in which the poet has expressed his deep angst against the fate of Nepali people. The poet feels that the Nepalese fate has been cursed as they are worth for nothing. The Twentieth century is the time when many historical, scientific, philosophical, technical, intellectual, financial achievements were made by the entire world. But in context to the globe, Nepal has got no any historical records in the annals of world history. This painful sorrow has been expressed in such a way that questions upon our inferiority.

However much we rise ourselves up,
 however much we run here and there,
 however loud we may roar
 however, we are merely drops of water
 impotent drops of water.(Trans, Taranath Sharma 77)

This poem consists of several symbolic images and is of strong flow with its black humour and satire. This poem consist the essence to move the people and force time and again to pause and look at the self-portrait carefully. The lines of the poems work as a mirror reflecting several aspects of the society from vertical and horizontal level. The most utter able lines for the Nepali people have become the lines included in the fourth stanza.

We are brave, but we are dumb

We are dumb, and that is why we are brave

We are never able to be brave without being dumb. (Sharma 79)

The signs from western literature as well as from orient myth are highly dominant in the poem. The signifiers like Gulliver, Lilliputian, Ekalavya, Dronacharya is more significant in representing connotative meaning. In the above lines the words like 'brave', 'dumb' as a code signifies Nepali people and their psyche of accepting any challenges even at their risk of life. These lines mainly have its root connection with the Gurkha recruitment, and their sacrifice of blood in the name of bravery. The meaning of shedding blood in the name of heroism and as good warriors for Britain and India has been indirectly questioned? Oxford Advanced learners dictionary eighth edition has defined the word Gurkha as," One of the group of people from Nepal who are known as good soldiers" (693).

The signifiers like 'Ekalavya' and 'Dronacharya' used in the poems are quite symbolic. Ekalavya and Dronacharya are student and guru respectively. As a student Ekalavya has to obey his guru and this is what culturally constructed. On the other hand, as a guru Dronacharya has the right to ask for guru offerings and student has to offer it without denying. Now we can raise the question, what politics lies behind this representation? This is something what we need to think in terms of nationality. Moreover the use of images from western literature like Gulliver and Lilliputian represents powerful nation's domination over powerless nation. Lilliputians when they are not affected by the giant Gulliver they accept him happily although he consumes their resources. Different analogies, allusions from myth and history, metaphors, anaphora are mainly predominant throughout the poem. The anaphoric expression of the word "feet" is highly significant in terms of satire.

We are just feet

And only feet.

Feet: the support on which the body stands.

Feet: on which the body walks.

Feet: relying on which the body runs.

Feet ? Which think that they are kept

as a favor by the body

being kind to them.

Here, the word 'feet' as a signifier indicates to the lower part of the body which supports body to stand firm. This is a denotative meaning to the word. But connotatively it reflects to the devalued history of Nepali people. The word feet and the whole line connected to it reveals the fact that, how Nepali history has been devalued, how their existence has been ignored, and how their lives have been sucked. The feet are symbolic satire here. The word feet, has been connected with first person "we" which represents our culture and our ways of life. As we boast for our glorious history and adventures of heroism the world outside has no longer admired us as real heroes but has provoked us as adventurous people to establish themselves as heroes.

Feet in reality are the base of our body, but symbolically here, we are 'base' to someone else. In this sense 'feet' represents the Nepali people as a whole and 'forehead' refers to foreigners to those whom we serve faithfully as our good masters. According to *Hindu Barna Ashram* system human beings have been divided into different four 'Barnas'. *Brahmin* that originated from the *mouth* of Lord Brahma, *Chhetris* from the *arms*, *Vaishyas* from the *thigh* and the *Sudras* from the *feet*. According to the myth 'Sudras' are those who are regarded as inferior, untouchable and their task is to support and serve those who are above them in the rank.

Bhupi's use of diction and the use of allusions seem highly remarkable in terms of exposing the reality existing in the society. In this sense the poem seems equally relevant to drill out socio negativity of contemporary society. The allusions, anaphora and analogies used in the poems make the poem more thoughtful and serious in its tone. The images like Dronacharya, Ekalavya, Gullivar, Lillitputian, Indian acrobat serves to excavate the meanings underlying it. People have gradually grown intellectual but they are divided in terms of their understanding, in the name of competition of being modern. This human nature has been depicted in the poem 'We'. Nepali literary critic Samal, in his article "*School of Nepali poetry*", published in The Annapurna Post states that Bhupi's poem 'We' forces us to see ourselves, in terms of our socio-cultural activities. He states:

If we regard 'The Candle's Flame' as the finest art in Bhupi's poetry career, we can credit the poem 'We' as the perfect departure point in the field of sociological studies of Nepal. This poem is such a poem which attacks upon the concept of existing norms, hypocrisy, concept of sovereignty, and forces us to see ourselves. (Annapurna post, Fursad)

According to Stuart Hall, we express our concept through the help of sign. Thus, representation stands for the relationship between thing, concept and sign. For Hall sign doesn't mean the language. Representation is not possible in the absence of signifying system. Representation is the link between mental concept and sign. And it is the code sharing of the people that help us to establish the connection between sign and the concept map. Hall states:

Since there is no law which can guarantee that things will have 'one, true meaning', or the meaning won't change over time, work in this

area is bound to be interpretative [...] The best way to ‘settle’ such contested readings is to look again at the concrete example and try to justify one’s ‘reading’ in detailed reflection to actual practices and forms of signification used, and what meanings they seem to you to be producing. (9)

The language is the unity of different signs. The signs used in the language signify or represent different understandings those related to our culture. According to our culture we develop our concept which gives signified meaning. Regarding Bhupi’s poems there are no doubt that his poems deal with hollowness of contemporary Nepalese society. The images and metaphors brought by him support the crack, inside the heart of people in city life, their ambition of uplifting themselves and the situation they bear after all. In the poem “This is a Land of Uproar and Rumor”, he has expressed his angst in a rebellious way. Different signs from different fields of the society have been brought, which signify different meanings connotatively.

This is a land of uproar and rumor,
 where deaf men wearing hearing aids
 are judges of musical contests; [...]
 where the men who presume to lead our youth on
 have faces wrinkled like roofing steel; [...]
 and mothers of freedom give birth to soldiers instead of sons; [...]
 where a guide describes to a tourist
 Nepal’s contributions to other lands,
 then departs, demanding his camera,
 where young men sing songs
 of forts and foreign conquests,

marching in parade. (Trans. Michael Hutt 127)

The signifiers like 'deaf men', 'roofing steel', 'mother of freedom', 'soldiers', 'parade' are quite symbolic to interpret the context of sixties. Though the words are simple in their meaning they are quite symbolic. While applying connotative understanding to the poem, poet seems not having any pleasure about the glory talked around him, about the winning in the competitions because he feels as if the uproars fluttering around are false. 'The deaf men wearing hearing aids as judges', stands for unfit and incapable persons at the post of their work. This is the country where 'mothers of freedom give birth to soldiers instead of son' represents Nepal as a country to bear *Lahures* (Soldiers) who sacrifice their lives in foreign land. Bhupi often attacks to the politicians in the case of national sovereignty as a patriot citizen. Bhupi wants to make clear that the geography not only privately belongs to the leaders, but it is also a common subject to all Nepali citizens those who reside here and those who love the country. After 2007 B.S the issue of nationality has been hugely debated and the poet puts challenges against the politician pouring his arrogance on this way:

Respected leaders of my people:

if you wish, you may call me a slanderer, a traitor,

but this land is mine as well as yours,

my hut will stand on a piece of this land,

my pyre will burn beside one of our rivers;

I am forced to say, made bold by my feelings,

this is the land of uproar and rumor. (Trans. Michael Hutt. 128)

The signs used in the language carry the acrimonious facts of the reserved life of the people and make it public as a mirror in front of their faces. Lack of moral faith, betrayal, hardship and anxiety of survival, bribery, lack of national pride has

been satirically presented through these lines. Moreover it talks about the political manipulation and political betrayal, and fragmented political ideologies. Prof. Dr. Bashu Dev Tripathi in his book, "*Nepali Sahitya Srinkhala*", states that, "The corruption seen in the process of development, moral disillusionment, lack of transparency in economic and social level, the hollowness of the city life, unemployment, patriotism and nationality, are the subjects touched by Bhupi" (129).

"A poem" is Bhupi's another most important poem for this research project. The language used unfolds multiple issues of contemporary period through the images of a 'street lad'. In this poem he has revealed the facts through the use of different word imageries and metaphors. The poem starts picturing the critical condition of the child living in the street. It becomes more evidential from the following lines:

For a lad who says "I am hungry"
 there is neither a meal nor a home,
 but even so he lives, he grows up,
 the beggarly youth on a New Road pavement,
 trampled beneath many feet.[...]
 he sleeps tucked into a bend on a sad, empty footpath,
 wrapped in a dirty sack, an old newspaper:
 on his breast in huge letters lies the news of Children's Day:
 a minister's official address. [...]
 Sleep, little boy,
 Sleep, wise child,
 Sleep, little king,
 Sleep, like this carefree. (Trans. Michael Hutt. 129/130)

The images like 'hungry lad', 'virgin mother', 'Jesus', 'king', 'dirty sack',

'minister' has been used in the lines of the poem. These images remind us the biblical story related to Jesus and his mother 'Marry' a virgin mother. But the use of biblical myth is quite symbolic which connotatively portrays the picture of illegitimate child birth in contemporary society. If we regard this image as a realistic image it can be taken as historical evidence which reveals the reality of contemporary Nepali society. The image reflects that there were virgin mothers in the Nepali society too, who due to the fear of orthodox society use to leave their child carelessly in the streets.

Furthermore, the image of 'street child', 'virgin lady delivering baby', 'celebration of children's day', 'minister's announcement/distribution of sweets', and the winter image of the child struggling for survival seems quite symbolic to depict the realistic picture of poverty in contemporary society. According to Stuart Hall, signs, symbols in the language represent people and its events which help to communicate in a meaningful way. Regarding his view on constructionist approach, Hall states:

Representation is the production of meaning through language. In representation, constructionist argues, we use signs, organized into languages of different kinds, to communicate meaningfully with others. Language can use signs to symbolize, stand for or reference objects, people and events in the so-called 'real' world. (28)

From the above mentioned definition we can understand that the sign and symbols of any kinds from the social-cultural background can be used by constructionist to represent people, events and objects in the process of communicating meaning.

Contemporary society in fact wanted to make an intentional new shift representing newly developed issues from the peoples, events, science and technology

rather than including the themes of gods and goddesses. Govinda Raj Bhattarai in his topic “Trends in Modern Nepali Poetry”, in the book “*Dancing Soul of Mount Everest*” states:

Moreover time has demanded great changes. Nepali poetry had shown the indication of rising above the national boundary [...] Mainly Nepali citizens that had enlisted in the army were either killed or maimed [...] The world had been narrowing down with the development of transportation and communication; fast development science and technology[...] Gradually they stop choosing themes of Rama and Krishna, of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata depicting moral lessons [...] The poetry now moved away from spiritual teaching and moralizing to reality. (pg. x)

“Cold Ashtray” is Bhupi’s another short poem for this research project. This poem seems quite symbolic in terms of its use of diction and language. The word image ‘ashtray’ denotatively resembles a direct meaning to what people are normally familiar with. But the use of signifier ‘cold’ which is an abstract noun makes it symbolic. Ashtray is an object where ashes are dumped. But here connotatively “Cold” refers to something lifeless or devastating and “Ashtray” refers to Kathmandu valley. This poem mainly deals with the issues of Kathmandu valley and moreover it satires upon the activities ongoing here. Before democracy rarely people made their movement into the valley, either foreigners or Nepalese. Along with the establishment of democracy, Kathmandu not only received the flow of people but also received aids and donations. But the valley instead of receiving prosperity received hazards which made it really suffer. The poem opens its lines indicating to the comer like this:

Those who come

Come with heart full of fire,
 With flames on their lips,
 But those who live here
 Live with hand full of ash
 And eye full of smoke. (Trans. Michael Hutt 131)

The signifiers used in the lines like 'fire' connotatively represents the destruction, 'ash' signify to the meaningless substances and 'smoke' represents a suffocating situation. Kathmandu in general people blame as a ditch with a hole underneath, where everything that pour inside goes somewhere else into the underworld and after all people living here receive nothing. The first three lines connotatively indicate that the comer here comes with the plan of destruction not with the plan of progress and prosperity. It is in fact making a sharp attack upon the foreign aids that valley received and to the activities of politician after the establishment of democracy.

In his theory of representation Stuart Hall conceptualizing semiotic approach, forwards his view that " not only words and images but objects themselves can function as signifier in the production of meaning" (37). Hall means that object or thing also has equal role in semiotics in the production of meaning like words and objects. In this respect the particular objects should be conceptualized by the individual to understand them.

The poem "New Year" mainly covers three different issues related to the contemporary society. The images like 'Postman', 'Baishakh', 'bombs', 'rockets', functions as a direct subject in the language to produces direct meanings. The very first paragraph deals with the development issue, second on the theme of environmental issue and the third about war issue. But connotatively the image of

'postman' in the very beginning of the poem serves to the meaning as a representative of the government. Postman as a government's representative has to reach everyone's house with the message. And so is the duty of the government that it has to reach to every citizen with the plans of development. But it lacks enthusiasm in its initial phase. For evidence:

Like a postman newly transferred,
 Who carries a parcel of the sun in his sack,
 Baishakh is walking on the roof,
 Moving with slow heavy steps,
 Making the walls swing like a pendulum. [...]
 Once more, sitting beneath rockets
 And airplanes bearing horrific bombs,
 I must write my dear one letters
 wishing them success,
 peace,
 long lives. (Trans. Michael Hutt 128/129)

The terrific and horrible life during the decade of sixties has been depicted in the poem. Indo-China conflict, polarization of the whole world as left wing and right wing, the fear of the bomb dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki which has shaken the psyche of people has been manifested. New-year should be filled will full of new energy and passion but the New Year is passionless as it has no better plans but only some messages to forward.

Furthermore, the images of 'vishnumati river', 'sky lying flat of diarrhea', states the chaotic environmental situation of Kathmandu valley. Thirdly the fear of nuclear threat has been manifested in the poem and the use of images like 'rocket',

'bombs', 'airplanes', and the words like 'peace', 'long lives' symbolically manifest the fear of war and bombs.

According to Stuart Hall, representation stands for the relationship between thing, concept and sign. But for him sign doesn't mean the language. Any signifying system is sign. Hall states:

Correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for [...] the relationship between 'things', concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of the meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call 'representation' (19).

The above mentioned definition indicates that for the production of meaning three different things object, concept and sign are quite essential. When these three processes are linked up then the representation functions properly. In the poem "The Banyan Tree Inside a Pot" Sherchan has expressed the pain of being a citizen of the landlocked country. The visual concepts which the poem creates are quite significant in representing the meaning and linking up the objects as Hall has stated. Poet has used signifiers like 'Banyan tree', 'pot' in the title sentence to indicate the suffocating existence of living creature.

Like a banyan tree planted

Inside a narrow pot filled with soil

I stretched my two branches wide

And withered

Finding suffocating walls all around me. (Trans. Taranath Sharma 71)

Here 'banyan tree' literally signifies to the tree that can grow taller and wider than any other trees. Banyan tree literally has its religious and environmental function.

But here in the poem this word connotatively refers to the human being and in deeper sense to the Nepalese people. Similar to it the signifier 'pot' refers to the landlocked structure of the country. Other signifiers like, 'branches', 'suffocating walls' symbolically represents human hands and the border demarcation. This further represents peoples' lack of access to the outer world in any of their activities and their inferior living. This poem in terms of its use of sign, language and word images deals with the theme of sovereignty, stating the view for not feeling sovereign within a so called sovereign country.

In his poem "Mid Day and The Cold Sleep" the poet talks about the pathetic condition of the employees, their hardship, family burden, and family relationship in terms of their wages. The prosperity of the family, country is determined by finance and in this poem finance has become the subject of major concern. Employees mainly have their fixed income allocated by the government which is responsible to determine the family life. The reality of family affair in term of wages has been represented in the poem on this way:

In the newspaper's "wanted" column,

I seek the face of my future, [...]

On the lips of new budget

I seek some reassurance, [...]

My family's age I measure

With a new pay scale; [...]

And I feel as if my wife serving satire

On the plate I eat. (Trans. Michael Hutt 123/124)

In the poem the words like 'my future', 'my family's age' has denotative as well as connotative meaning. Denotatively the poem represents the reality of time instead

connotatively it represents the value of money. More explicitly, the title itself is symbolic in the poem. The two different phrases 'Mid Day' and 'Cold Sleep' has been connected with the connective 'and'. In denotative understanding, mid-day is the time when we fully need to be active in our work than dozing in laziness. But this title reflects a connotative meaning on that. This is all about the pain that the employees carry on and their harsh struggle for their survival. To support the theme the narrator in the poem has used the words like 'newspaper', 'budget', 'reassurance', 'pay scale' and so on. The very first two lines show the narrator's search for employment and his looking for it in the newspaper's wanted column and the phrase like 'new pay scale', 'wife serving satire on the plate' further reflects that the narrator is not refreshed due to the family burden as he has multiple problems like a chain that he needs to break to free himself.

Michael Hutt in his book, *"Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature"*, states that, "Many of Sherchan's shorter poems are explicitly personal and express a profound disappointment with life, but in general he believed in poetry as a medium that should be used to convey a social or political message" (122). Bhupi's poems almost serve a message of social awakening for the people to judge the thing quite critically. In this regard the poem entitled "I Think my country's history is a lie" deals with the theme of political awakening expressing his deep dissatisfaction to Nepali history, representing the socio-cultural realities of the time.

When I pause for a few days
 To look at these squares steeped in hunger,
 These streets like withered flowers,
 I think my country's history is a lie.[...]
 When I constantly see young Sita's

In the streets, the alleys, the markets,
 In my country and in foreign lands,
 Stripped bare like eucalyptus trees,
 When I see countless Bhimsen Thapas,
 Standing still and silent [...]

I really feel like mocking my blood. (Trans. Micheal Hutt 124/125)

This poem includes multiple images from the historical background, and also from nature to prove the title, that the histories which were written/taught were actually wrong. The signifier 'sita' connotatively stands for purity of Nepalese sisters and daughters, 'Buddha' represents peace and tolerance, 'Bhimsen Thapa' and 'Amarsingh Thapa' represents bravery and patriotism, withered flowers signifies, loss of charm, streets, alleys and markets along with the use of signifier 'bare eucalyptus tree' signifies to the involvement in prostitution.

“Ghantaghar” is the symbolic image of our history. Ghantaghar denotatively means a house having a bell/clock which indicates time. But if we develop connotative meaning of Ghantaghar in the poem we have to go back to the history of aged people. It has been personified in the poem; here ‘Ghantaghar’ remains sad as human beings. ‘Ghantaghar’, that aware about the time is itself affected by the time. The comparison of ‘ghantaghar’ with ‘old pensioned vet’, ‘old modeled large watch’ with ‘round pocket watch’, ‘Ghantaghar’ standing at the bank of ‘Ranipokhari’ viewing its own reflection in sadness is quite meaningful to show the plight of old aged people, old art and culture. It reflects how excessively the changes have affected the social values and human values and how much the glory of the past has been ignored and how much priority the contemporary culture has got. People carrying round pocket watch have not seen much importance of old big clock used by their

ancestors. The poet has expressed his pain for the condition of “Ghantaghar” in his pessimistic tone.

Some having been torn

Some gnawed by rats

Some distributed among kith and kin

One by one

All the old military outfits are gone. (Trans. Padma Devkota 32)

Stuart Hall states, “The general term we use for words, sounds, or images which carry meaning is sign”(18).The images like ‘rats destroying the buildings’, ‘selling of remains of the buildings’ connotatively reflects the corruption in the contemporary society. The lines of the poem show how the corruption has crippled the Nepali society. More to say Bhupi’s poem rumble around the national ethos, issues, either minor or crucial and represents the facts in terms of language and word images. In realistic viewpoint his poems deals with the contemporary issues and the politics behind this is, to aware the people. In fact his poems are message to rethink and find out the issues related to nationalism, patriotism, politics, falsities, social injustice and so on. The theme in his poems appeals for a creative contribution for the country. He talks about lack of determination that lies among us and even suggests us to meaningful existence.

In a nutshell, Bhupi Sherchan's poems represent the true picture of the contemporary society with its relevant word images, language and through its colloquial expressions. His use of language has bona- fide representation of the problems of the people who are struggling for their livelihood. Likewise, the belief system in social hierarchy of the people is also another aspect of representation. Nepalese suffering from delusion, alienation, addiction, crisis, and conflict seems to

be the outcome of new socio-cultural context.

Furthermore, Bhupi's representation of realities gives a severe blow upon the existing dead culture and customs of the contemporary society. Representing the issues of contemporary society he seems himself trying for social changes dragging it out from its orthodox practices and dogmatism. He is forwarding his concept against the useless practices, those practices which is in fact dividing the society instead of uniting them. His way of critically examining the society seems quite relevant to analyze the contemporary society.

Bhupi gave a new trend to Nepali poetry shifting itself from traditional Sanskrit verse poetry. He raised himself up against social hypocrisy, social ill treatment and gave a new awakening in conceptual, national and moral obligation. He has openly spoken with the readers being the torchbearer on their path. In making his effort of dragging society out of moral hypocrisy he has deeply and enthusiastically excavated social realities. These mystified social realities are the things necessary to regard by a Nepali folk for the social progress quitting their feelings of inferiority.

Moreover, he questions the historical representation about Nepali people making his sad tone on them. As Stuart Hall focuses cultural representation as a practice that intervenes people's livelihood to improve it Bhupi's poems make socio-cultural representation suggesting in bringing improvements on human lives. Instead of problematizing the issues he seems trying to awaken the people conveying the messages to make their existence meaningful. He calls for the reformation on the basis of Nepali context, on the basis of Nepali mind and technology instead depending upon others. As the poems have been written using first person subjective and possessive, it is the method of representing ourselves from quite a nearer distance. The poems like 'My Courtyard', 'We', 'This is the Land of Uproar and Rumor' are

some of the typical examples of socio-cultural representation. Moreover, it helps us to know our weaknesses and strength. The politics that lies behind this representation is the acknowledgement of the self and social reformation for the smooth move ahead.

In this way, the realistic representation of socio-cultural scenario has become the major theme of Bhupi's poems through language. As Stuart Hall talks about the role of language, words and images in the production of meaning and representation, Bhupi's poems represents the relevant, realistic picture of the society through the use of language. Thus Bhupi's realistic representation of contemporary Nepali society becomes a major guiding light for the perception of reality in the context of social progress and reformation.

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