Reflection of Nepali Modernity in Devkota's Poetry

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Abstract

This article reviews the researches and critical writings on Devkota's trend of creation especially in poetry; and it argues that his writings address the two stages of Nepali modernity: pre-modern and modern. Nepali modernity is the result of the growing social consciousness in the mid-twentieth century. It was observed in politics, national economy and cultural thought and products at the same time. Nepali literature of the mid-twentieth century both represents and inspires the development in all three aspects of national life. Devkota composed most of his poems in the same period and led both the depiction of and guidance to the then growing consciousness. In the decades of the 1930s and 1940s, his poetic compositions displayed the mixture of romanticism and social transformation; whereas his creations of the 1950s reflect the modern consciousness of the society along with the poet's dissatisfaction with the so-called democratic society that could not address the people's aspirations for human rights, justice and equity. As a result, Devkota's poems are filled with Nepali modernist consciousness. It is hoped that this article can give a way out for the looming confusion in the study of Devkota's creations in terms of their modernist sensibility.

*Keywords***:** Democratic society, intellectual sensibility, modernity, poetry.

Relation among Nepali Social, Political and Literary Modernity

Modernity in Nepali society, politics and literature is the mid-twentieth century phenomenon. "All modernist works are involved in some way with political programmes, in so far as they interacted with current political conflicts in communities" (Butler 96). Nepali modernist writings also reflect the same trend of the mid-twentieth century Nepal when was shifting from traditional feudal and agriculture-based village centric economy and society to city centric development projects and migration. The political shift from the totalitarian Ranarchy to inclusive democracy and the consciousness related to this shift have heralded Nepali modernity in many aspects.

This reality has the connection with human rationality as Sanjeev Upreti discusses modernity or the modern world view as "defined by its focus on human rationality rather than religious faith; and that it is secular in temper rather than shaped by mythological or religious imaginations". Upreti finds modernity related to the culture of a particular society. Such a culture has three strands: capitalist/technological modernity, politico-ethical modernity and cultural aesthetic modernity" (226). Upreti discusses the beginning of Nepali modernity in connection with socio-political consciousness. He argues that just before the advent of democracy in Nepal in 1950, that is in the 1940s, the capitalist investments started in Nepal that pushed forward the need of technology. "With the onset of modernity… ethical issues were displaced from the religious into the secular and political terrain" (227). In this context, the cultural/aesthetic aspect of modernity deals with how "the lives and experiences of common people as the subject matter" began to come into writings in place of those of the feudal lords such as kings (228). Thus, the beginning and development of Nepali modernity is a mid-twentieth century phenomenon.

Literary researchers and critics connect the socio-political and economic context with the themes of literary creations. Dayaram Shrestha and Mohanraj Sharma argue that history of literature is always connected with the history of social life. So, the transformation of socio-political condition in a nation gives way to the transformation of literary thought and practice (26). So argues Abhi Subedi with the logic that the question of modernity in literature is a popular academic subject; and the explanation of modernity is done as per the original tradition of a nation and its culture in association with global movement of thought (3). Khagendraprasad Luitel also argues that every nation has its own modernity. It is decided by the particular nation's own mores and values in the social, political, economic and educational contexts (217). These arguments create a ground to discuss Nepali modernity as a different period with original Nepali traits in comparison with other modernities in the world.

Nepali modernity, like all others in the world, goes through four phases: pre-modern, modern, high modern and postmodern. These are the continual developmental phases based on the prominence of certain traits while some traits are mixed up in all phases. In the pre-modern phase, the shifts from the agrarian myth-based social thought and practice begin to appear. In the modern phase a complete shift from an agrarian to urban life can be seen. Following the modern phase, the high modern phase observes the practice of abstraction in both thought and practice. The final or the postmodern phase is inclusive and discourse centered. All these four phases have two major aspects: thought process and their practical manifestations.

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In the development of Nepali modernity, the premodern phase observed the slow shift from the traditional thought to the modern one. The time from the early 1930s to the late 1940s observed these tendencies in Nepali society and literary creations. New thoughts were manifested in symbolic changes in opinions and ways of expression. This phase was a preparation for the big bang of 1950-51 when Nepali people ended the totalitarian Ranarchy and introduced democracy as a political system. In this phase of Nepali modernity

> the modern discourse of political equality, social justice, and democracy were popularized by the leaders of both democratic and leftist parties in this period [1940-60]. Nepali soldiers returning home after an exposure to 'modern' ideas played key roles in spreading the ideas, signs and symbols of modernity; and a similar contribution was made by Nepali people running print journalism from India. (Upreti 234)

With all these developments, the traditional mindset and life practices got shocked, whereas the change lovers were encouraged with the social shifts.

But, as usual, after the bang, confusion loomed in Nepali politics and society. Slowly and gradually, dissatisfaction with the change increased as it could not bring any substantial difference to people's everyday life. Creative artists and writers began to give expression to the same reality with their ironic satires. There grew a demand for tightened and regulated socio-political system. The decade of the 1950s observed the same condition throughout. The dichotomy of illusion and disillusion continued.

In the 1960s, the loose democratic system was tightened and finally restricted in the leadership of King Mahendra who promoted the logic of national identity and soil-oriented-appropriate democracy. Slowly and gradually both the political and literary ideas and practices began to take abstract forms. The height of abstraction and indirectness grew in arts and literature exhibiting the qualities of high modernism. In literature, the third dimensional writing and experimental paradigms grew as the representative of the time and situations. This trend continued in the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, the tight monarchial grip on politics and society began to get loosened in the early 1980s with the growing space for freedom of expression and social inclusion. After this, the inclusive patterns began to appear and that was the march towards postmodernism. The whole decade of the 1980s observed the tussle between improved monarchy and demand for complete democracy. Finally, with the restoration of democracy in 1990, the inclusive trend was re-established. The trend was further extended with the success of April Revolution 2005 that led to the overthrow of monarchy and establishment of the republican political system in 2008.

All these changes in Nepali socio-political condition ushered and expanded different phases of Nepali modernity and vice-versa. Critics and researchers of Nepali poetry put the poems composed in the 1930s and 1940s in the pre-modern phase and those of the 1950s in the modern phase. Arguing that modernity in Nepali poetry extends from the 1930s to the 2010s, Laxmanprasad Gautam and Netra Atom claim that their modernity has been reflected in their subject matter, thought, language and style of expression (9). They put progressive trend as the major feature of the modern Nepali poetry composed in the 1950s (10). They further highlight that the prominence of free verse and acceptance of western modernist philosophy and poetic styles show the distinction of modern Nepali poetry from the classical one (11). Luitel, too, has similar argument about modern Nepali poetry (238).

All these researches and critics agree on the fact that modernist Nepali poetry started with the creativity of Balakrishna Sama, Laxmiprasad Devkota, Siddhicharan Shrestha and Gopalprasad Rimal. Sama's materialist thought, Devkota and Shrestha's free interaction between nature and society, and Rimal's revolution oriented symbolic conscience along with the establishment of free-verse as a mode of poetic expression are the bases of modernist Nepali poetry (Gautam and Atom 10). This article evaluates Devkota's poetry in the same light.

Devkota as a Modern Nepali Poet

Laxmiprasad Devkota lived through the first and the second phases of Nepali modernity. He composed 644 poems, 21 sub-epics and 6 epics (Tripathi, Preface). He experienced, worked with and gave creative expressions to these phases of modernity in his creative writings. Consciousness-wise we find him writing in the modernist trend. His poetry gives expressions to human rationality unlike his predecessors who wrote with religious consciousness. The use of common people as characters and their life as subject matter shows Devkota's break from traditional feudal-hero-worship that treated the feudal lords like the kings at equal par with the God.

Tanasarma praises Devkota as the best poet of Nepali literature and highlights modernist trends in his personality and poetry. He argues that Devkota's modernist sensibility is the result of his West-oriented education. He further points out that Devkota has contributed to laying the foundation of modernist Nepali literature with the creations of poems and essays. In his poems composed mostly in the 1950s, we can find the symbolic expression of the feelings, sensibility and complexity of that crucial historical decade of Nepali modernity (78). With the mixture of the influence of Western literature and the South Asian philosophy, the more mature the Devkota the more pathetic, the more satiric and the more heart-touching modernist poems flowed

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through his pens. The best of his modernist poems, as per Tanasarma, is "The Lunatic" (1954). The other two poems of similar power are "Why Does the Tiger Eat its Own Babies?" and "To the Jhanjha" (80). Thus, Devkota's writings reflect Nepali modernity.

Similarly, Luitel argues that Devkota's writing is intellectual with an acute awareness of his time. Use of free-verse is his experimentation in Nepali poetry like that of Gopalprasad Rimal. Devkota's materialism, realism, progressivism and revolutionism also make him modern in sensibility. Luitel finally claims that Devkota made experiment even with emotion, subject matter and metre in his poems (223-44). In the same line, Upreti argues that Romanticism of Devkota is an expression of "Nepali cultural/aesthetic modernity" (235). Padma Devkota, too, argues in the same line. The poet questions against the traditional faiths, stands for the freedom of women and change in the Nepali society. It was the expression to the sensibility of the time that did not let him remain a pure Romantic without any hid to the social transformation of the time (240-41). P. Devkota argues that the unprecedented socio-political consciousness and desire for change in thought and practice saw the poet both as a mover of and the moved in the situation. Shreedhar Lohani concludes that "his later poems speak with a powerful modern voice" (242). In this light, Kumarbahadur Joshi rightly claims that Devkota represents the modernist Romantic trend in Nepali poetry (177). Thus, Devkota has a unique blend of Romanticism and the theme of transformation in modern Nepali literature.

Devkota's creative career can be divided into pre-modern and modern periods. In the first phase, from 1934 to 1950, he displayed pre-modernist sensibility in creations. As Shrestha and Sharma claim, Nepali poetry of the pre-modern period has the mixture of classical and modernist traits. This phase indicates the shifts in literary patterns as well. The major thematic trend of the pre-modern Nepali poetry is that of nationalism and an open voice against economic exploitation. The beginning of Romanticism, humanism, psychological writings and progressivism are some major traits of Nepali poetry of the period (46-47). They claim that Devkota's poetry of this period is full of emotional explosions along with the newness in poetic form, imagination, style and language (49). Actually, this was the *avant-guardist* phase of Nepali modernity to which Devkota contributed a lot.

Devkota's pre-modern sensibility goes along the line of Nepali poetic sensibility of the 1940s. The use of myth that significantly started with his lyrical play *Sabitri-Satyavan* (1934) got strengthened in the 1940s. Shrestha and Sharma opine that the play is an example of his Romantic bent mixed with pre-modern sensibility. Though "The Ocean on the Full Moon Day" and "The Poor" are Romantic poems, they are filled with social sensibility. Joshi argues that from these poems Devkota clearly shows his difference from the classical poet Lekhanath Paudyal's pure nature portraits. Devkota

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connects nature with the social reality and his desire for change (34). This blend is the unique feature of Nepali modernity that Devkota successfully practiced with.

Joshi reports that in this phase Devkota began to use Nepali local folk-tune in poetry unlike Paudyal's Sanskrit based metrical tunes (35). The maturity of such a use is seen in *Muna Madan* (1935) (36). In Joshi's observation, in this phase, Devkota seems to be influenced from *Vedanta* philosophy as well (37). In the 1940s, his poems gave expression to his growing social awareness, humanism and dissatisfaction with social discrimination (38). With *Luni* (1944) he shows his growing interest to Nepali ethnic life and Buddhism (40). His growing use of myths can be seen in his poem "The Meeting of Dushyanta and Shakuntala" (1945), and epics *Shakuntal* (1945) and *Sulochana* (1945). The last one supported love-marriage when it was restricted in the mainstream Nepali society. With this development in writing, Devkota shows his supports to and desire for new cultural formation in Nepali society (45). In his poems of late 1940s, his growing use of desire for the social change and myths from both the East and the West to highlight the value of humanity makes his poems more modern than those of the 1930s and the early 1940s. Hrishiraj Baral concludes that Devkota concentrated on nature, society and human life in this phase (15). Thus, Devkota's pre-modern writings prepared the ground for modern Nepali literature in its full bloom.

In the 1950s, increasing opportunities for freedom of expression and opinion reflected the crumbling of traditional literary, religious, philosophical, social and artistic norms. Literary creations of the period reflect the same socio-political awareness of Nepali society (Shrestha and Sharma 52). In Devkota's poems composed in the 1950s, we can find growing presence of his consciousness of aesthetics, freedom, reality, time and revolution (Joshi 54). Gradually he focuses more on free-verse poems instead of traditional metrical verse and Nepali folk tunes that he profusely used in 1930s and 1940s. This trend reaches to its height in 1954 with the composition of his poems "The Lunatic" and *Prometheus*, the first free-verse epic in the history of Nepali literature in terms of its composition (55). Devkota writes with feeling of reality instead of the desire to transfer the knowledge. This, as per Shreeprakash Mishra (38), is one of the major features of modernist writings.

Thematic Survey

Devkota's creations reflect Nepali modernity, primarily, in the depiction of modernist themes in them. The major of such themes are his addresses to social shifts, depiction of urban experiences, historical sense of the time, liberation and scientific perspective (intellectuality) and thought on social justice. Such themes are not used in the realist trend of just depicting them in the existing society, but with satirical

perspective that makes modernist writings different from the realist ones. Baral argues that satire, revolt and change are Devkota's directions of thought (21). He has great respect to the backward communities including women and ethnic people (Adhikari 41). These are both the reflections and effects of social shifts of the time.

As a cultural commander of the time, Devkota led and promoted many changes in the then Nepali society (Baral 14). Doing this, Devkota focuses on the search for the new value of life (Shrestha and Sharma 52) so that the attempt to find 'The New Man' (Mishra 25) could be achieved. As modernist poetry tries to find beauty in human nature (11), Devkota's poetry always focuses on the condition of human life and existence. His famous poem "Song of Storm" (1956) is one representative example of his address to the urgency of social change: "The lions of the peak snarl to break the bondage of the dark age / The stars rain in the form of water upon martyrs' tomb in the broad day light / I will sweep the partisan country that is the enemy of the root" (96; my trans.). Here, the roots are the people who have been mistreated and ignored by the government led by the parties. The poet thinks that it is necessary to end all these mismanagement in the nation. Thus, Baral concludes that, in totality, Devkota's thought and writings are guided by struggle, revolt, and philosophical and ideological aspects of changes (19). It is how the theme of social transformation, one of the major themes of modernist writings, makes a large space in Devkota's poetry.

Devkota's address to the theme of social changes is mostly reflected in his gradual shifts in political thought, thought on women's position, social practices and the economic relations during his pre-modern and modern phases of creativity. Baral reports that after 1946, Devkota directly involves himself in politics and takes part in anti-Rana revolution (10). In "Why Does a Tiger Eat its Own Babies?" (1946) he depicts the terror of Ranarchy and the suppressed cum oppressed life of Nepali people (Joshi 46). The growing social awareness about this reality foretells the upcoming change in Nepali politics.

It was in the late 1940s and early 1950s when Nepali people changed their political thoughts from remaining just the subjects of the Ranas to the need of being independent citizenry. Devkota involved in this process both as a citizen and a poet. In his poem "Hilly Prayer", he inspires the people to fight for freedom:

> We do not care whether we lose our life,
>
> We do not leave without acquiring our human rights
>
> Let's not live like animals as one day we are sure to die
>
> If we are humans, let's live like humans, and so let's acquire human rights. (my trans.)

These lines show how Devkota gives voice to the urgency of the time. As Nepali people had been living the life even without basic human rights under the tyrannical Rana Rule, it was the time to demand for democracy to live a life of modern humans.

Like the voice for the total transformation of the life of the people from the suppressed subjects to free citizens, Devkota strongly voices for the better life of the women in the Nepali society. Starting from the pre-modern period to the late modern time, his consciousness and the nature of the depiction of the women's need and condition becomes gradually more and more modern. In his epics *Shakuntal, Sulochana* and *Vanakusum*, the main characters are women. Though Shakuntala is the major character in the epic, she has got a very little space for expressing herself. The narrator of the story speaks on her behalf. It shows the condition of women in the then Nepali society. The next character in the epic is Gautami. She also speaks a little. Krishnaraj Adhikari comments that Devkota has not paid enough attention to construct the personality of women characters in these epics (43) because the then society did not give even that much space to women as Devkota has given in the epic *Shakuntal.*

Unlike Shakuntala, Sulochna is a well-educated lady. But she agrees to marry against her desire and lives her life in tears. But child-widow Bijuli in this epic speaks for the change in the life of women. It shows Devkota has given a back-stage space for modern and free women to give expression to the reality of the time. Adhikari opines that it is how Devkota has portrayed the then Nepali society in transition (44). The other women characters such as Pratibha in *Vanakusum* have been given the modern qualities of wisdom and imagination. With the growing social and political consciousness, Devkota's women characters are also growing. Samyogita in *Prithviraj Chauhan* is a revolutionary woman character. She offers her marriage garland to a statue when her father does not allow her lover to attend the husband-choosing ceremony.

Such a shift from suppressed and voiceless Shakuntala to courageous and revolutionary Samyogita can be found even in his sub-epics. Muna in *Muna Madan* is a traditional and weak woman who has been the victim of social mores. She is simply a traditional pain-bearing beautiful lady: "Muna wears a *Saree* blue, so does the starry sky, / Lovely eyes abode of tears, at night so soft do lie" (36). Later Kunjini has been able to marry her lover. Mhendu is ready to die for her love instead of marrying somebody she does not like. The woman character in *Mayavini Sarsi* is a powerful lady who can change the warriors into animals. Though she surrenders in front of Ulysses, her power is symbolic of addressing the Nepali women to garner strength for good life and freedom. With this transformation in the position of women in his poems, we can see the gradual shift in the women's position in the Nepali society. In conclusion,

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Devkota's women characters represent different phases of the change in the women's position in the then Nepali society that was in transition from medieval to modern mindset.

Butler observes that "search for an inspirational authority within the high culture rather than within religious institution is the prime legacy of the modernist period" (49). Devkota's poetry incorporates the same ideal in the theme. His poem "Forest" indicates such a change in the following lines:

> The God of religion spoke: Come to the temple in which you want to worship
>
> I answered: The place where the braves have devoted themselves.
>
> The yogi spoke: Come to meditation, the door of heaven will open for you
>
> I answered: I have to kindle a lamp as the world is still in darkness. (20-21; my trans.)

These lines show the transition from the religious and conservative mindset to the modern one. Unlike the previous generation that believed in the religious worship as the means of doing something good for the society, Devkota inspires the people to take the places where the martyrs have been killed as the holy space as it reminds the people who go there that it is time for raising the voice of freedom and humanity. Similarly, Devkota tries to spread the message that the preparation to go to heaven is not the duty of modern men; instead, it is our duty to make this world enlightened with education and other modern means like democracy and good rules. These are both the shifts in the thought of the then Nepali social practices and the shift that Devkota wants to see more in future.

All these shifts in the mindset and socio-political practice in the then Nepali society were related to the shifts in the economic relations in the town. Mostly the Kathmandu valley where Devkota lived most of his life, except the time he lived in India, was observing the economic shift from its agricultural base to business and industrial base. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Ranas started to establish industries. That trend grew more in the 1950s after the introduction of democracy. Devkota's characters also indicate this transition. Krishna Gautam argues that the characters Muna and Bhote in *Muna Madan* represent the pre-modern Nepali economy especially that of the Kathmendu Valley; whereas, Madan represents the modern utilitarianism and capitalism (35). Devkota has addressed the slow economic shift he observed there.

As Kathmandu was growing into an urban set up during Devkota's life, he uses his poems as serious cultural criticism. Understanding his time and its epochal consciousness, Devkota focuses on the feeling he received from the business-like human tendency in all aspects of society including politics, human relation and culture.

As modernity is connected with urbanity as well (Upreti 233) and "a great aspect of modernity" is "life in the city" (Butler 2), Devkota's portrayal of urban Kathamndu in his poetry has reflected his modernist cultural sensibility.

With the urban consciousness, Devkota possessed the historical sense as well. It simply means he accepted and helped to motivate the changes in the society and adopted the works of the past in different forms of stories and myths. Devkota's historical sense was developed by his observation and experience in the time and reading about the history of the Eastern and the Western civilizations. His poems represent his historical sense. The major poems in this connection were composed in the 1950s (Joshi 179) as it was the decade that observed great ups and downs in Nepali politics and intellectuality (Baral 15). "The Lunatic" and *Prometheus* are two powerful examples.

Prometheus (1954) is also a good example of the poet's love for liberation of the society and every man's individual self from the shackles of authoritarian tradition. Govindaraj Bhattarai discusses how Devkota has built this Promethean personality both in his life and writings. In the poem "The Lunatic", Devkota himself has affirmed this thought in the following lines:

> I am the moonbird of the beautiful,
>
> The iconoclast of ugliness!
>
> The Tenderly cruel!
>
> The bird that steals the celestial fire!
>
> The child of the tempest!
>
> I am the wild eruption of a volcano insane!
>
> Terror personified! (lines 149-56)

Here, "the bird that steals the celestial fire" is Prometheus. Like Prometheus, the poet declares himself to be beautiful and ugly, and tender and cruel at the same time. To fight against both of the totalitarian and anarchic regimes, he declares his insane form that is like the wild eruption of a volcano and the personification of terror against them.

Taking reference to this epic as a song for human emancipation and liberation, Bhattrai argues that Devkota tries to uplift Nepali humanity to the same Promethean height (97). Like Prometheus revolted against the God, provided back the fire that the God had snatched away from the human world and was ready to bear the commonly unbearable pain throughout his life, many Nepali freedom fighters devoted their lives

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for the sake of the nation and its democratic system. The epic highlights this Nepali socio-political need and reality and further imagines somebody who can really liberate the Nepali society from many chains that have not been unbound till now. So, this epic is the poet's desire for complete liberation of Nepali people.

Bhattarai further claims that *Prometheus* is reset in Nepali environment with the glow of Eastern thought and philosophy as the original story is thin with the impact of the Nepali subject matter and situation that is deep seated in it. Devkota snarls like Prometheus, the angel of consciousness (103). So, he has presented *Prometheus* as a free soul, though his body is bound, for the freedom and happiness of humanity (105). The idea of individual's independence that modernity keeps at its heart is reflected in this epic. Here, we find Devkota representing some of the modernists who "tried to reconcile an experimental and individualist tradition with their support for collective political action" (Butler 83). This epic also represents "the greater part of modernist art [that] was liberating and individualist tendency [and] progressively part of a broadly-leftist critique of society" (90). Devkota also represents the liberal modernists who are "anarchists, radical and [still] tradition-respecting" (91). Here, Devkota respects the tradition of South Asian philosophy, not the religion-based superstitious tradition of Nepali society.

As modernist poetry inspires the readers to search for their role in the society (Mishra 35), it does not inspire them to run away from the reality the way the Romantics do. Here, too, we find Devkota's role of a modernist poet. In this sense, Devkota seems to have been influenced from Marxism in his thought and writing mostly after his political affiliation and involvement in the movement for democracy in late 1940s. Mishra reiterates that as modernist poetry deals with human nature, it is connected with humanism (11). So, Devkota's humanist and revolutionary/ progressive creation are, in a larger scene, modernist aspects of his creativity. Laxmanprasad Gautam and Netra Atom have highlighted Devkota's admixture of the mystery of nature and socio-political consciousness as the basic feature of his modernist creativity. His flow of feeling based reaction to the subject matter and social utility of artistic images make his poems' grandeur with collaborative power of humanistic thought and poetic beauty (16). "The Lunatic" is the best example of this trend of his writing.

Discussing the modernist features of "The Lunatic", Lohani writes:

> Above all, this poem is at once a very modern expression of the deepest personal feelings of the poet and a surgical exposure of hollowness of the so-called intellectual aspirants of the time and maybe of any time. Ultimately, the poem philosophically reflects upon life of the thinking individual in a society swayed by unimaginative self-seeking people. Furthermore, the many allusions

to mythical and legendary persons reveal the dignity of life which can laugh at corruption and death. (242)

The following lines of the poem are the evidence of what Lohani has opined:

Look at the strumpet-tongues a dancing of shameless leadership!

At the breaking of the backbones of the people's rights!

When the sparrow-headed bold prints of black lies on the papers,

Challenge the hero in me called Reason,

With conspiracy false,

Then redden hot my cheeks, my friend,

And their colour is up. (lines 111-17)

A thinking man cannot stay silent observing the mis-management and cruelty in the society. The hero of the modernist man is the Reason that is flared up in the persona of the poem.

Joshi has the similar reading of some of Devkota's poems. He finds the epic *Maharana Pratap* (1946) as a poem composed to motivate the revolutionary fighters of both Indian independence and Nepali movement for democracy. So, the epic contains the epochal consciousness related to independence, modernist ethical and historical consciousness. So is the epic *Prometheus* (1954) that is devoted to the level of self-sacrifice for the liberation and progress of the humankind (47). Joshi records that Devkota's growing sense of revolution led liberation can be found in his poems composed in 1948 such as "Tear", "Hilly Prayer" and "Spring-Memory". These poems express his extreme love for the nation and its people, attraction towards Nepali social life, awareness of human rights, protest against injustice and exploitation, revolution against feudal exploiters, sympathy for the poor and honest people, and consciousness related to social restructuring, democracy and revolution (53). These poems reflect Devkota's desire for changes.

Conclusion

Laxmiprasad Devkota is a modern Nepali poet. He lived and created his poems in the mid-twentieth century. His poems depict the consciousness of the Nepali society in its transition from the religion-based traditional society to science-based modern human civilization. As a conscious citizen of the time, Devkota took part in the political and literary transformation of the nation. His active participation in the anti-Rana movement for democracy gave him the chance to realize and voice the need of the time,

primarily through his poems. His most creative period was 1930s to 1950s that was also the most turbulent time of Nepali socio-political and cultural history. His poems are made up of the same consciousness.

In the poems composed in the 1930s and 1940s including *Muna Madan* and *Shakultal*, we can see the pre-modern traits such as the mixture of Romantic and classical qualities of poetry as well as the depiction of the Nepali society in transition. The mixture of the rural and urban lives, women characters with little consciousness for change and a little focus on the liberation of the society make the major thematic content of his poems in this phase. With the bang of 1950s (abolition of the family-centric Ranarchy and establishment of democracy) in the nation, Devkota's poems concentrated on the need of a just society. When the poet could not see what he and the conscious revolutionaries like him wanted to see from the governments and public service providers in the society, his poems gradually began to be filled with anger and satire against the creators of the injustice. "The Lunatic" and *Prometheus* are two exemplary creations to represent the poet's sensibility in the 1950s. Thus, we can see the depiction of the Nepali modernity in Devkota's poetry: address to social shifts, urban experiences, historical sense, liberation and intellectually sensible look at the reality of the time.

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