The Production and Dissemination of Knowledge in Mahesh Bikram Shah's Short Story "*Chapamarko Chhoro*"

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Abstract

This article focuses on analyzing cultural representation within Mahesh Bikram Shah's short story collection, specifically the titular story "*Chapamarko Chhoro*". Employing a qualitative research methodology, text-centric analysis, and a critical and analytical framework, this study draws upon materials collected from various libraries. The theoretical foundation of this article rests on cultural studies, particularly the concept of representation. Cultural representation has emerged as a distinct and evolving methodology in literary studies, examining the interplay between cultural forms presented in literary texts and prevailing cultural values within society. As an interdisciplinary field, cultural studies integrates theoretical bases, concepts, and methodologies from diverse academic domains. While acknowledging the multifaceted nature of cultural studies, this article primarily analyzes the story's depiction of class and gender representation, authorial ideology, and hegemony. Reflecting the class structure of Nepali society, the narrative presents a struggle against state power and a revolutionary class leadership. It portrays the state, through its oppressive apparatus of the police administration, controlling and arresting family members, particularly women. The story powerfully depicts both class and gender representation, with strong roles for both the ruling and the ruled classes. Observing the actions of the guerrilla's son, which initially sought to establish hegemony through coercion and later through consensual means, the narrator's evolving perspective on the guerrilla contributes to knowledge production, suggesting that the author's viewpoint is not entirely neutral.

Keywords: Cultural Representation, Hegemony, Resistance, Ideology, Conflict Narrative, Social Structure, Marginality

Introduction

This article presents an in-depth analysis of cultural representation in Mahesh Bikram Shah's short story "*Chapamarko Chhoro*" (The Guerrilla's Son), published in 2022. Shah, who entered Nepali short story writing in 2037 B.S. with "*Aama*", including *Sataha* (2053 B.S.), "*Sipahi ki Swasni*" (2059 B.S.), African Amigo (2060 B.S.), "*Chapamarko Chhoro*" (2063 B.S.), "*Kathmandu ma Comrade*" (2065 B.S.), Jackson Height (2069 B.S.), and "*Bhuinkhat*" (2074 B.S.). His collection *Chapamarko Chhoro* earned him the prestigious Madan Puraskar in 2063 B.S., and it is from this acclaimed collection that the titular story is drawn.

Shah's professional life as a civil servant granted him the unique opportunity to intimately observe the devastating effects of conflict in war-affected regions, allowing him to articulate contemporary consciousness in his narratives. Chapamarko Chhoro is widely regarded as a war-story collection (Shah, 2063 B.S., p. x). In the majority of stories within this collection, Shah vividly portrays the realities he witnessed, experienced, heard, and understood during Nepal's decade-long Maoist insurgency. He meticulously reflects the pain, suffering, agony, fear, lamentations, tears, and sighs of the innocent people caught in the crossfire, enduring double oppression. Each story in this collection overflows with the tears of ordinary citizens, expressing the nation's grief, hardship, and torment. The stories compellingly depict the profound psychological trauma inflicted upon the general populace by the decade-long conflict, portraying a society steeped in fear and devoid of vitality.

This not merely a chronicle of events but a site for the contested production and dissemination of knowledge, particularly concerning the portrayal of rebels and the state. Drawing from a robust theoretical framework encompassing cultural studies, this study will critically analyze how meaning is constructed, challenged, and transformed within the text. Specifically, it will investigate the story's deployment of cultural representation to articulate class and gender dynamics, authorial ideology, and the intricate dance between hegemonic power and counter-hegemonic resistance. By dissecting these layers, this analysis aims to illuminate the story's contribution to understanding conflict narratives and the broader socio-cultural landscape of post-conflict Nepal.

Shah synthesizes his observations, experiences, and auditory recollections of the wartime period, presenting reflections that formed in his mind. In recounting the mental anguish and terror of war, the narrator describes an incident where; while monitoring the imprisoned wife of a guerrilla and her son, the son's actions trigger an experience

that leads to the conclusion that guerrillas are bloodthirsty and violent. This collection, which vividly portrays the wartime environment, reveals the tears of ordinary citizens and expresses the nation's suffering and torment in every story. The extent to which Shah's stories are amenable to cultural studies based on various paradigms necessitates a review of previous studies related to this story to establish a research gap.

Previous scholars has recognized the significance of Shah's work. Laxman Prasad Gautam and Gyanu Adhikari (2069 B.S.), in their book *Nepali Kathako Itihas*, note that stories in Chapamarko Chhoro express the tragic realities of a turbulent period in Nepal's history, born from the terrifying imagery of death and bloodshed. They emphasize the vivid depiction of the impact of the conflict on Nepali society, suggesting that Shah's stories are fertile ground for cultural analysis. Dayaram Shrestha (2070 B.S.), in *Nepali Katha ra Kathakar*, identifies Mahesh Bikram Shah as a storyteller who offers engaging presentations of war-related activities, impacts, and outcomes, employing regional specificities. He characterizes Shah as an artist who captures war scenes, events, and the tension arising from terrified mindsets, using pictorial styles to portray the wartime environment and its effects on combatants, state actors, and ordinary citizens. This characterization of the author's tendencies implicitly connects Shah's stories to studies of representation, hegemony, and ideology. Govinda Bhattarai (2071 B.S.), in *Uttaradhunik Bimarsha*, introduces Shah as a war writer who depicts the mindset of police, military, and administrative mechanisms during wartime, hinting at the potential for cultural studies in Shah's narratives. These ideologically driven studies primarily focus on representation and hegemony. Cultural studies interpret the meaning of a work based on the social power reflected within it, examining the status of caste, class, and gender in the development and expansion of cultural knowledge. It posits that meaning is determined and governed by power relations.

Tarakant Pandey (2073 B.S.), in his article "*Chapamarko Chhoro Katha ma Bishwadrishti*", concludes that despite the author's attempts to remain neutral, complete neutrality is not achieved. He argues that the causes of the armed conflict and the decade-long war should be analyzed impartially, considering both the subjective consciousness of the rebel side and the discriminatory and oppressive nature of the state. This text-centric study highlights the existing gap in analyzing class representation, hegemony, the production of meaning, and authorial ideology within the story, thereby guiding further research. Thus, these prior studies confirm that Mahesh Bikram Shah's stories remain underexplored from a cultural studies perspective.

In cultural studies, concepts related to the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge are intertwined with the process of representation. This perspective examines who represents what in the production of hegemonic knowledge within the cultural constructs of social institutions, particularly regarding ideological apparatuses. While cultural studies, as an interdisciplinary field, is vast, this article will focus on analyzing the production of knowledge in the story through the lenses of class, caste, and gender hegemony, as well as narratives of resistance, all falling under the umbrella of cultural representation. The analysis of "*Chapamarko Chhoro*" from this perspective is presented in the subsections below.

Research Methodology

This article employs a qualitative research methodology, primarily focusing on critical textual analysis. The approach is informed by a post-structuralist and postcolonial theoretical framework, allowing for a deconstruction of power relations, discursive formations, and ideological underpinnings within the narrative.

Material Collection and Analysis

The primary source material is Mahesh Bikram Shah's short story "*Chapamarko Chhoro*". Materials relevant to the research problem of this article were collected from libraries. This study utilized both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources include various articles, research monographs, criticisms, and books written about the story, as well as research articles, monographs, and books related to marginality studies. For material analysis, a qualitative method based on text analysis has been employed in this study. This article is grounded in the fundamental propositions put forth by theories essential for marginality studies. The analysis of materials in this article also utilizes interpretive and analytical methods, with cultural representation serving as its theoretical foundation.

The analysis employs an interpretive and analytical method. Rather than simply summarizing the plot, the study delves into the literary and linguistic choices made by the author, examining how characters, settings, dialogues, and narrative voice contribute to the construction of meaning. Specific attention is paid to:

a. *Discourse Analysis*: How language is used to frame the guerrillas, the state, and the conflict, identifying specific "codes" and "signifiers" (Hall, 1997).

b. *Ideological Critique*: Unpacking the authorial ideology and how it might align with or diverge from dominant state narratives, or how it constructs alternative viewpoints (Althusser, 1971,).

c. *Representation of Power*: Examining how Gramscian hegemony (both coercive and consensual) and Foucaultian power/knowledge dynamics manifest in character interactions and institutional portrayals.

d. *Analysis of Resistance*: Identifying various forms of resistance – overt defiance, symbolic acts, and the implicit challenge to hegemonic narratives.

By applying these methods, the research seeks to move beyond surface-level interpretations to uncover the deeper socio-cultural and political significance embedded within Shah's narrative.

Theoretical Framework:

Cultural studies originated in Britain in 1964 with the establishment of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. Its pioneers include Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, and Stuart Hall. The methodology of cultural studies developed from the concept that culture, much like the economy, shapes people's identities. British cultural studies are primarily rooted in left-wing thought. Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Stuart Hall's theories of representation and the production of meaning, and structuralist thinker Louis Althusser's concept of ideology have significantly contributed to the development of this school of thought.

Another influential stream of cultural studies was developed by American cultural thinkers, beginning after the 1980s. This approach, in the cultural analysis of literature, treats literary works as texts, seeking to uncover the power relations embedded within them, identify peripheral power, and explore states of representation and resistance. Raymond Williams, a neo-Marxist thinker and British cultural studies scholar, describes culture as "a particular way of life" (Pandey, 2073 B.S., p. 55), arguing that it expresses specific meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and general behavior. Williams asserts that culture is inherent in every form of social activity, and its analysis reveals the meanings and values embedded within it.

Representation, according to Stuart Hall, is about "connecting meaning and language to culture" (Hall, 1997, p. 15). More precisely, it is the production of meaning

through language from the concepts in our minds. Representation is considered a process through which members of a culture use language to produce meaning. Producing meaning means identifying something in a certain way, or creating a linguistic image of an object in the mind, giving something a symbolic form. Essentially, every person, object, or event exists as a concept in the human mind. This means that mental representation of such persons, objects, feelings, events, or actions can occur. For example, when we say "pen," what appears in our mind is not an actual pen, but merely an image of it, and such concepts or images can also be formed for abstract things. Thus, the search for the connection between language, meaning, and society or culture clearly indicates that representation is fundamentally a central subject of cultural studies.

Representation investigates how the ideologies established by centralized power and those of marginalized classes, castes, and genders are presented in a text. When exploring representation in a text, the focus is on how marginalized castes, classes, and genders are present within mainstream culture and what their state of resistance is. Cultural studies, developed in the late twentieth century, is a branch of knowledge where it is possible to discuss various subjects from multiple fields simultaneously. This clarifies that cultural studies is an interdisciplinary branch of knowledge (Giri, 2070 B.S., p. 12). It studies how meaning is constructed. Culture itself is a way or method of giving a special meaning to the world, worldly behavior, or objects. Such meaning cannot be created by an individual alone; it is derived from shared social practices or constructed as a common concept. Therefore, people understand it collectively. According to the postmodern cultural theorists Laclau and Mouffe, culture is related to the study of the production, consumption, and transmission of meaning, as noted by Dr. Tarakant Pandey (Pandey, 2070 B.S., p. 174).

Hall proposes three types of theories regarding representation: (a) the reflective theory, (b) the intentional theory, and (c) the constructivist theory (Hall, 1997). The reflective theory posits that meaning resides within individuals, objects, and events themselves, and language merely reflects those meanings like a mirror. The intentional theory suggests that meaning is imposed by the speaker, or the speaker creates meaning and imposes it upon the receiver. The constructivist theory, however, believes that language does not directly give meaning, but rather language has a system through which knowledge is constructed. Central to this analysis are Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony and Althusser's (1971, pp 79) theory of ideology. Gramsci argued that power is maintained not solely through coercion but significantly through the winning of consent, through hegemony. This involves the dominant group's ability to propagate

its worldview, values, and norms as "common sense," making its interests appear as universal interests. Such consent is often achieved through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (e.g., education, media, family, religion), as theorized by Althusser, which subtly shape individuals' subjectivities and their relationship to the state. In contrast, Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) (e.g., police, army, prisons) enforce power through direct coercion. The interplay between ISAs and RSAs is crucial in understanding how state power operates within the narrative of "*Chapamarko Chhoro*."

The constructivist theory also has two branches: semiotic and discursive. The semiotic theory is based on Saussure's structuralist binary relationship between the signifier and the signified. The signifier is a linguistic unit used to represent something, while the signified is what such linguistic units represent (person, object, feeling, event, etc.). Semioticians believe that such signifiers used to represent something are arbitrary or conventional. However, according to Michel Foucault, meaning is constructed from discourse, or meaning is constructed from linguistic discussion. Generally, power creates a code and transmits it to others through discourse. Others decode it through discussion and understand the meaning. Foucault thus states that there is no meaning outside discourse. Building on Foucault's ideas, Stuart Hall states, "Culture is not just an arrangement of things, novels, TV programs, farces, etc., it is a process, an arrangement of practices. Primarily, it is the production and exchange of meaning, i.e., the exchange of meanings" (Pandey, 2070 B.S., p. 174). According to cultural critic Ramesh Prasad Bhattarai, the search for representation in literature is based on texts, social processes, discourse, ideology, institutions, and economics. He states regarding representation, "In a cultural context, the search for how a class, gender, caste, or nationality is present in literature is representation itself. The task of finding representation becomes possible through the characters present in literature" (Bhattarai, 2070 B.S., p. 336). This clarifies that the analysis of characters used in a text can determine the state of representation.

Stuart Hall (1997) asserts that representation is "the production of meaning through language." It is how cultural members use language to make sense of the world, shaping our concepts, images, and understanding of people, events, and objects. Hall delineates three main theories of representation: reflective (meaning is inherent), intentional (meaning is imposed by the sender), and constructivist (meaning is constructed through language and discourse). The constructivist theory, particularly its discursive branch influenced by Foucault, is most pertinent here. It posits that meaning is not inherent or fixed but is discursively constructed, often in relation to power.

Michel Foucault's (1978) concept of power, knowledge posits that power is not merely repressive but productive; it produces knowledge, and knowledge, in turn, generates power. Discourse is systems of thought, practices, and texts that constructs what can be known and said about a subject, thereby shaping reality itself. For Foucault, there is no meaning outside discourse, making the analysis of narrative discourse vital. Importantly, Foucault also argued that wherever there is power, there is also resistance (Foucault, 1978). Resistance is not simply a reactive force but an inherent dynamic within power relations, often taking diverse and sometimes subtle forms. This provides a crucial lens for analyzing the actions of the marginalized characters in Shah's story.

Ideology is a subject connected to human socio-cultural structures. It appears as a fictitious re-creation of reality. Resistance refers to the effort or struggle made by marginalized or peripheral classes, castes, and genders, due to power dynamics, to express disagreement with the activities of the ruling class, caste, and gender, to displace them, and to come into power themselves. According to Michel Foucault, wherever power is exercised, the possibility of its counteraction also flourishes simultaneously (Upreti, 2069 B.S., p. 423). When a centralized hegemonic individual, class, or institution abuses power, the marginalized power becomes subordinate or oppressed, and it rebels against that oppression physically or ideologically. This rebellion is called resistance. Resistance is fundamentally related to self-defense for cultural power. It arises from subordinate social events and phenomena (Barker, 2008, p. 454). When a powerful entity in society or a family establishes power or hegemony, it discriminates against, exploits, and oppresses the subordinate class, pushing them into oppression. In such a situation, the marginalized, oppressed, exploited, and victimized individual or class raises their voice against the oppressor. This voice is resistance.

The struggle for cultural power, acquisition, and defense is resistance. Foucault's concept that the practice of power and the practice of resistance should be viewed together is presented by Sanjeev Upreti as follows: "Wherever the exercise of power appears, the possibility of its counteraction also flourishes simultaneously. Therefore, resistance should also be viewed alongside the exercise of power" (Upreti, 2069 B.S., p. 43). Thus, Foucault clarifies the relationship between power and resistance, stating that when a hegemonic oppressive culture exercises power, the oppressed peripheral culture resists. Gramsci argues that powerful individuals in society maintain dominance over peripheral power through hegemony. According to him, central culture internalizes the idea that the welfare of the peripheral community lies in being governed. Althusser, a Marxist structuralist philosopher, states that even if the repressive and ideological apparatus of the state is powerful, the possibility of rebellion and opposition remains,

arguing that no individual can remain hegemonized forever (Upreti, 2069 B.S., p. 181). Thus, there is always a possibility for individuals or communities in a peripheral position to resist. This resistance can manifest both emotionally and actively. Raymond Williams, a founder of cultural studies, in his discussion of emergent culture, presents how hegemony and counter-hegemonic consciousness appear. In literature, marginalized groups such as women, homosexuals, the exploited, the working class, suffer at the hands of rulers. Resistance is against existing unequal power relations, discrimination, and exploitation to gain access in society.

The conflict context also invites consideration of subaltern studies and postcolonial theory. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) introduced the concept of the "subaltern," referring to those marginalized by colonial or dominant power structures, whose voices are often unheard or misrepresented. The guerrilla's family in the story, subjected to state repression, can be understood through this framework. Postcolonial theory, broadly, examines the lasting effects of colonialism and imperialism, including how former colonial powers and dominant national narratives continue to shape representations of "the Other" or dissenting groups (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994). This helps illuminate how the state in "Chapamarko Chhoro" might construct a "distorted" or "othered" image of the *Chapamar* (rebellions, guerrilla).

By integrating these theoretical strands, this article aims to provide a nuanced and comprehensive interpretation of "*Chapamarko Chhoro*," demonstrating how the story functions as a powerful cultural text in shaping and contesting understandings of conflict, power, and identity.

Results and Analysis

"*Chapamarko Chhoro*" is set against the volatile backdrop of Nepal's Maoist insurgency, a period of intense ideological and armed conflict. The story is largely narrated through the internal monologue of a state security officer (the *samakhyata* or narrator-observer) who monitors the imprisoned wife of a guerrilla commander, "*Raktabij*", and their young son. The narrative initially embodies the state's efforts to produce and disseminate specific knowledge about the rebel forces, portraying them as inherently violent and a fundamental threat to the established order.

Hegemony and the Production of Deviant Knowledge

From the outset, the story reveals the state's attempt to establish hegemony through the production of deviant knowledge about the guerrillas. The naming of the

rebel commander as "*Raktavij*" is a prime example of a signifier deliberately chosen to evoke negative connotations. This appellation, implying an innate propensity for violence and bloodshed, functions as an ideological code (Hall, 1997) designed to demonize the rebel leader and, by extension, the entire movement. This is a clear instance of the state's Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) at work, shaping public perception through symbolic representation, even within a literary text.

The narrator initially internalizes and perpetuates this state-sanctioned discourse. His suspicion extends to the innocent child, projecting the father's perceived cruelty onto the son:

> "My eyes now reflect cruelty, a cruelty born from the mental pain inflicted by his guerrilla father. I begin to fix my gaze on his child's body, thinking that if his father ever found me unarmed, he would not hesitate to make me his prey, like a wolf chasing, catching, biting, tearing, and finally playing with a deer before killing it. This guerrilla's son, too, when he grows up tomorrow, will follow in his father's footsteps and will not delay for a moment in severing our heads." (Shah, 2064, p. 50).

This passage vividly illustrates the narrator's ingrained fear and the pervasive power/knowledge dynamic (Foucault, 1978) at play. The state's discourse has produced "knowledge" that labels guerrillas as inherently brutal, and this knowledge, in turn, informs the narrator's interpretation of the child's innocent actions. The projection of "cruelty" and the assumption of future violence onto the child serve to rationalize state repression and reinforce the narrative of the rebels as an existential threat. The child's playful imitation of war techniques – hiding, attacking, running – is interpreted by the narrator as a confirmation of his inherent "guerrilla" nature, rather than as a natural response to a pervasive wartime environment. This distortion underscores how hegemonic discourse can manipulate perception to perpetuate fear and justify control.

Shifting Perspectives and Consensual Hegemony (or Strategic Co-optation)

As the narrative progresses, a significant shift occurs in the narrator's perception, hinting at a more complex negotiation of hegemony. The repeated observation of the guerrilla's son, particularly his desire to ride a bicycle and his pure joy upon finally getting the opportunity, begins to erode the narrator's preconceived notions. He observes the child's raw human emotions – the frustration of not having access, the delight of participation – and recognizes a universality that transcends the divisive political labels.

The turning point comes when the narrator reflects on the child's actions:

"Addressing my son, I say loudly, 'Let your friend ride the bicycle too, son! Don't you two fight, play together." (Shah, 2064, p. 53).

This seemingly simple act of sharing a bicycle becomes a powerful metaphor for Gramscian consensual hegemony. It symbolizes an aspiration for a society where power is shared, where inclusion replaces exclusion, and where cooperation supplants conflict. The narrator's internal monologue further solidifies this shift: "His face looks as loving as my son's... These are not innate flaws inherited by the guerrilla's son from his father. These are human learnings forced upon him by a bewildered time and a distorted situation." (Shah, 2064, p. 54).

This realization is crucial. It signifies a departure from the initial production of deviant knowledge. The narrator now reframes the child's "war-like" behaviors not as inherent, inherited traits, but as a product of the "distorted situation" – the very conflict that the state and rebels are embroiled in. This represents a subtle but significant form of counter-hegemonic thought emerging within the dominant discourse. The state's initial coercive hegemony, based on demonization, begins to cede ground to a potential consensual hegemony, where an understanding of shared humanity and a desire for reconciliation replace outright condemnation.

However, a critical reading might also interpret this as a strategic move by the state, or even a form of co-optation. By acknowledging the "humanity" of the rebel's child and framing the conflict as a product of "circumstance" rather than intrinsic evil, the state's narrative implicitly positions itself as the benevolent entity capable of offering peace and integration. Releasing the mother and son and facilitating their reunion with "*Raktavij*" in the jungle (albeit briefly, as they return to the rebel fold) could be seen as an attempt to de-escalate, understand, and perhaps ultimately absorb the dissenting elements into a broader national consensus, rather than a genuine dismantling of power structures. The "idealistic" message of mutual sharing and cooperation, while seemingly benevolent, could also subtly reinforce the state's desire for control through integration, a classic mechanism of hegemonic maintenance (Gramsci, 1971).

Resistance and Subaltern Agency

Despite the state's hegemonic efforts, "*Chapamarko Chhoro*" simultaneously foregrounds powerful acts of resistance, demonstrating the agency of the subaltern

(Spivak, 1988). The imprisoned wife, though silenced, embodies an ideological commitment that keeps her aligned with the rebel cause. Her very presence and the children's actions serve as a constant reminder of the ongoing struggle.

The guerrilla's son, despite his age, is a significant site of resistance. His unhesitating demonstration of war skills and his fearless assertion ("I know, I know everything... my father also taught me how to hide and how to strike if enemies come to the village. Shall I show you?") directly challenge the authority of the state representatives. More profoundly, his persistent struggle to ride the bicycle, even when hurt or when the bicycle is damaged, is a powerful metaphor for the resistance of the marginalized. It signifies an unwavering determination to overcome obstacles and claim agency, a metaphorical fight for one's place and dignity in a world that seeks to deny it.

The most overt act of resistance, however, comes at the story's conclusion: "On the third day after those mother and son were sent home, I receive news that on the second night after their arrival in the village, guerrilla commander *Raktabij* came and took his wife and son into the jungle." (Shah, 2064, p. 53). This re-integration into the rebel fold, initiated by *Raktabij* and implicitly consented to by the family, directly subverts the state's efforts at co-optation or consensual integration. It signifies a powerful reaffirmation of loyalty to the insurgency, demonstrating that the hegemony of the state is far from absolute and that counter-hegemonic forces continue to operate effectively. Even after experiencing the "benevolence" of the state (their release), the family chooses the path of continued struggle, reinforcing Foucault's assertion that "where there is power, there is resistance" (1978). This act solidifies the ideological commitment of the guerrilla's family and the persistent challenge to state authority.

Conclusion

Mahesh Bikram Shah's "*Chapamarko Chhoro*" is a richly layered narrative that transcends a simple recounting of war, offering a profound commentary on the socio-cultural and political dynamics of armed conflict in Nepal. Through a critical lens informed by cultural studies, post-structuralism, and postcolonial theory, this article has elucidated the intricate processes of knowledge production, ideological contestation, and resistance embedded within the story.

The analysis reveals the state's initial attempts to exert hegemony by constructing a dominant discourse that demonizes the guerrilla forces, utilizing ideological codes and signifiers to portray them as inherently violent and deviant. The narrator's initial internal monologue vividly illustrates how this state-produced

"knowledge" shapes perception and justifies repression. However, Shah masterfully introduces a compelling ambiguity as the narrator's perspective evolves. The recognition of shared humanity and the re-contextualization of the guerrilla's son's actions from innate brutality to circumstantial learning signify a potential shift towards consensual hegemony or, arguably, a strategic attempt at co-optation by the state. This subtle ideological maneuvering highlights the complexities of maintaining power beyond mere coercion, suggesting the state's recognition of the need to win hearts and minds.

Crucially, the story simultaneously underscores the persistent and multifaceted nature of resistance. From the child's defiant spirit and symbolic struggle for the bicycle to the ultimate act of the family rejoining the rebel ranks, "*Chapamarko Chhoro*" showcases the agency of the subaltern. These acts of counter-hegemony demonstrate that dominant narratives and state power are never absolute, and that alternative forms of knowledge and resistance continue to thrive, challenging and disrupting the established order.

In sum, "*Chapamarko Chhoro*" stands as a significant contribution to conflict narratives, demonstrating how literary texts actively participate in the production and dissemination of knowledge about social and political upheavals. It invites readers to critically examine the discourses that shape their understanding of conflict, revealing the often-unseen struggles over meaning, identity, and power. For multidisciplinary scholars, this story serves as a fertile ground for further exploration into post-conflict reconciliation, the psychology of trauma in wartime populations, and the role of literature in articulating subaltern voices in challenging hegemonic narratives. Future research could further explore the gendered dimensions of resistance and representation within the broader collection, offering deeper insights into the lived experiences of women during the insurgency.

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