

**From Race to Nation: A Critical Perspective on the works of William Butler Yeats and
Hari Bhakta Katuwal**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of

Master of Philosophy

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I, **Vivek Mishra**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or, to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

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This is being submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of English, School of Languages and Literature.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled “**From Race to Nation: A Critical Perspective on the works of William Butler Yeats and Hari Bhakta Katuwal**” submitted to **Sikkim University** for the fulfillment of the requirement of the award of the degree of **Mater of Philosophy** in the **Department of English**, embodies the result of bonafide research work carried out by **Vivek Mishra** under my guidance and supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for any other Degree, Diploma, Association and fellowship.

All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by him.

We recommend this thesis to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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“From Race to Nation: A Critical Perspective on the works of William Butler Yeats and Hari Bhakta Katuwal ”

Submitted by **Vivek Mishra** under the supervision of Dr. Rosy Chamling of the Department of English, School of Languages and Literature, Sikkim University.

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Vivek Mishra

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present study entitled “From Race to Nation: A Critical Perspective on the works of William Butler Yeats and Hari Bhakta Katuwal” shall be a comparative literary survey across languages i.e. English and Nepali. The study seeks to explore the racio-cultural and nationalistic consciousness in selected works of the two poets. It shall further examine the quality of lyricism in their works with respect to race and nation, sheer love for their cultures and their clarion calls to the Irish and Nepali youths to ‘awake’ and ‘arise’. A natural way to understand the distinctiveness of a given culture, after all, is to compare it with and contrast it to other. Further, in *Writing in Tongues: Thoughts on the Work of Translation* Steven Ungar (2006) argues that translation is essential to comparative literary study across languages. As such ‘translation’ shall be an effective research tool in this study.

In 1886, Hutcheson Posnett, an Irish socialist lawyer and Professor of Classics and English Literature at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, published a volume under the title *Comparative Literature*. It was written to encourage the "establishment of chairs in Comparative Literature at the leading Universities of Great Britain, America and the Australian colonies," and can be said to mark the beginnings of the discipline's academic institutionalization. In *Comparative Literature* Posnett argued that literature must always be understood as a function of social organizations which are themselves (potentially at least) in process. And he used the comparative method to demonstrate that literature has played a key role in the ordered passage of social organizations from groups (clans) to a world community formed by globalized trade, communications, and corporate industrialization (cosmopolitan humanity).

According to Posnett, Comparative literature as a social science which, along with the World literature canon it addresses, forms a basis for the politics of cosmopolitan democratic individualism. It does so not just because literature uniquely articulates those structures through which individuals recognize themselves as connected to and formed by an increasingly wide range of distant social formations, but because the comparative method enables recognition of social and cultural differences and, hence, encourages the dissemination of relativism as well as entry into a single world system. For Posnett, comparative method further demonstrated

how different social structures produce different literatures that might then be judged in relation not to aesthetic universals but to the contemporary advanced society/literature nexus.

Posnett nonetheless finds in the ancient literatures of Asia a cosmopolitanism less retarded than that of the West of the time, being based on the extraordinary "diversities of language and race" that they had to address as well as on their sensitivity to the nonhuman environment. He contends that in Asia, "individual life" remained underdeveloped "among the castes and village communities of India or the family system and paternal government of China" (386), so that Asian literatures failed to cross the threshold into democratic individualism even if, in their merging of "personal being" with social life, by implication at least, they anticipate elements of the socialist future. Ironically, in 1907, the Indian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore gave a series of extension lectures on "Comparative Literature" for the Bengali Studies section of the Bengali Council of Education in which, not wholly dissimilarly, the "continuous diffusion of self" was posed as a terminus of *Bishwasahitya* that is, World literature. (During, 313-322)

Therefore the present study seeks to further augment the above idea by primarily investigating the racial and nationalistic sensibilities in the works of the two regionally and culturally disparate poets, William Butler Yeats, a 'European' and Hari Bhakta Katuwal, an 'Asian'. There is an obvious attempt in this research to accentuate the idea that literature has no geographical or cultural boundaries. The study also endeavours to broaden the hitherto limited scope of Comparative literary study between Nepali literature and English literature and open a new vista for further research on a similar plane.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) had begun writing poetry in his teens but he is introduced belatedly, for it was after 1920 that he made his major impact on English poetry. Yeats was initiated into mystic cults and the supernatural, very early in life. He was deeply influenced by the teachings of an Indian philosopher named Mohini Chatterji and some of his early poetry was inspired by Indian mysticism. Yeats also explored other branches of spiritualism and philosophy like theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Platonism and Neoplatonism and he was influenced by the thoughts of Blake, Swedenborg and Boehme.

Hari Bhakta Katuwal (1936-1981) also started writing poetry from an early age. He was born in a small village called Bogibeel in Dibrugarh, Assam. He received his education from George High School, Dibrugarh. Around 1957, after the completion of his studies Katuwal was appointed as a teacher in Assam Oil Company Nepali M.E. School in Digboi. Initially he worked as an art teacher and later became a highly esteemed teacher of Nepali language and literature. It was here that he attained a new glory in the spheres of Nepali society, Nepali literature and Nepali culture.

Katuwal had given the revolutionary clarion call to the Nepali community to 'awake' and 'arise' through his poem, *Aaohan* or 'Call' (1958) in a similar manner as Yeats had called upon his Irish youths through his poem, 'Under Ben Bulbin' (1938) where he instructs the younger generation of Irish writers. Both the writers were great lyric poets of rebellious nature. If the concern in Yeats's poems is with the 'new' Ireland and its future then Katuwal's poems exhibit the concern with the 'new' reawakening of the Indian Nepalis.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The 1914-18 War had brought in its aftermath the idea of the League of Nations, and Comparative literary study, in its own way, takes upon itself the garb of an apostle of international understanding. Haun Saussy (2006) in her essay *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization* stresses that our age of globalization makes comparative literature the actor here, and in ways that are not always so easy to register. For example, with the great increase in literacy in China, Chinese literary texts are being translated into many other languages, with more and more comparatists focusing on comparisons between Chinese literature and other Asian literatures, as well as with Western literature (261). Comparative study today is becoming as concerned with national as with international contexts, as involved with translations as with original texts, and as connected to specialized scholarship as to general approaches.

It is true that historically the relationship between the discipline of comparative literature/study and the phenomenon of translation was not blessed with the most auspicious of starts. However, in order to thrive today, comparative study must embrace translation far more actively than it did during the past century. Texts can be studied fruitfully in good translations so long as we attend to the cultural

contexts from which they come. In this context Nepali as a language of the medium for its own literature with limited readership can be a potential field of study on a comparative basis. Therefore, this research with its primary aim of a cross-linguistic survey between the two culturally disparate poets is also a study of translation.

Moreover, the present study would be the first work of its kind in the history of research activities undergone vis-a-vis the two literary figures. Notwithstanding, Yeats has been compared to a good many poets in other languages including Tagore but with none in the realm of Nepali literature. The research shall rely on critical analysis of few selected works of both the poets with recourse to related critical interpretations.

In *World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age*, David Damrosch (2004) observes that the field of World literature should be seen in terms of a new, three-tiered system: 'a hyper-canon,' 'a counter-canon,' and 'a shadow canon'. Damrosch designates those accepted masterpieces by older, established, and largely Western authors, who gained their reputation over twenty years ago, as the hyper-canon; works in less widely spoken languages and from the subaltern voices of writers in minor literatures are classified as the counter-canon; and older but minor authors, who are recognized only by an earlier scholarly generation, fade into the background and become a shadow canon. He argues that World literature is in the process of drawing 'new lines of comparison across the persisting division between the hyper-canon and the counter-canon of world literature,' which in turn generates a new canon that crosses the 'conflicted boundaries of nations of cultures'. Therefore, in line of Damrosch's observation the present study aims to enlarge the readership of Nepali literature by comparing Hari Bhakta Katuwal, a 'counter canon' with William Butler Yeats, a 'hyper canon'.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The current view of Comparative literary study is then all embracing and all permissive; its achievement, measured in literary production, enormous. Further, the growing emphasis on world literature provides a new avenue for comparative study. A close glance at the works of William Butler Yeats and Hari Bhakta Katuwal would convince one to arrive at a conclusion that there are significant parallels in their writings which need to be explored. Albeit these two poets exhibit thematic

similarities in their writings they quite naturally differ in their execution and rendering of the poetic thought. This actually accounts for their poetic uniqueness that provides them a distinct position. However, when it comes to the question of literary eminence William Butler Yeats is not only remembered as one of the greatest Irish/English poets but has also attained global recognition through his writings, and Hari Bhakta Katuwal's poetic prowess on the other hand is hardly a force to reckon with outside the boundaries of Nepali majority Assam and the literary circles of Darjeeling and Nepal.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the present study are enumerated below:

- 1) To enlarge the readership of Nepali literature and culture.
- 2) To harness the possibilities of a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural analysis.
- 3) To lend greater visibility to Nepali literature in general and Hari Bhakta Katuwal in particular.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Some of the research questions that have been worked on are as follows:

- 1) What are the common themes employed by William Butler Yeats and Hari Bhakta Katuwal. How do these themes boil down to a common poetic purpose?
- 2) Has the racio-nationalistic feelings in both the poets limited their area of creative exploration?
- 3) What are the reasons for the relative dearth of critical scholarship on Nepali culture and literature?

METHODOLOGY

Comparative literary study forms the basic methodology for the research which is of qualitative nature. Translation has been the major research tool in the study. Secondary sources in the form of books, articles, magazines and newspapers have been the basic content of the paper. Online sources have also been extensively used for the study. Verbal enquiries vis-à-vis Hari Bhakta Katuwal's study shall be incorporated in the research as well.

CHAPTER II

RACIAL AND NATIONALISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WORKS OF YEATS AND KATUWAL

It is with W.B. Yeats that the genuine spirit of Irish antiquity and Irish folklore makes its first entrance into English verse. Irish poets before him have either been absorbed in love and politics – as Yeats himself puts it, they have ‘sung their loudest when a company of rebels or revellers has been at hand to applaud’ – or (like Goldsmith and Moore) they have become to all intents and purposes Anglicised. Even William Allingham’s fairies, pleasant little people though they be, are rather Anglo-Saxon Brownies than Keltic Sheogues. In Yeats we have an astonishing union of primitive imagination and feeling with cultivated and consciously artistic expression. He does not manipulate from outside a dead and conventionalised mythological machinery. The very spirit of the myth-makers and myth-believers is in him. His imaginative life finds its spontaneous, natural utterance in the language of the ‘Keltic twilight.’ This is no literary jargon to him but his veritable mother-tongue.

(An extract from David Pierce’s ‘Critical Assessments: The 1980s’)

Queen Victoria died in 1901, but most of the certainties of the Victorian age had disappeared long before. So had the certainties of Victorian poetry in its sounding public voice and its conviction in the existence of a distinct poetic language everyone could accept and enjoy. The year 1900 marked only a chronological entry into the twentieth century: many of the new tones of voice, the new anxieties and difficulties that we associate with modern writing had already begun. This was apparent in the poetry of the 1890s – the decade of Aestheticism and Decadence. It was largely a poetry of urban themes; the Romantic dependence on nature had already declined. The poet was less likely to appear as the Victorian sage than the outrageous bohemian, conscious of the artifice of both life and art. Narratives gave way to lyrics, above all to ‘impressions’, capturing the sensation of an immediate scene or moment; a development paralleled in the ‘Impressionist’ painting of artists like Walter Sickert and James McNeill Whistler.

Above all, poetry was not statement or felt sensation, but ‘art’. In 1899, Arthur Symonds, one of the poetic ‘aesthetes’ of the 1890s, published his study *The Symbolist*

Movement in Poetry, which would have great influence on modern poets like W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot. It was Symons who brought home to British poets the significance of French experimental symbolists like Rimbaud, Verlaine, Lafourge, and Mallarme, and observed that with them literature ‘becomes itself a kind of religion, with all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual’. Yeats himself quickly drew the lesson that ‘We must purify poetry’, which was to continue, through movements like Imagism and Vorticism, up to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the period when the Modern movement in poetry was formed.

Yeats’s early poetry echoed Shelley, Spenser and the Pre-Raphaelites. Ezra Pound had liked the Pre-Raphaelite Yeats of the 1910 *Collected Poems*.

“The woods of Arcady are dead,
And over is their antique joy;
Of old the world on dreaming fed;
Grey Truth is now her painted toy.” (1-4)

The dreams which fed this short-sighted, vague-seeming man were of the wisdom of the East, the heroes and heroines of Ireland’s past, and the peasants of the West. Early poems such as ‘The Lake of Innisfree’, ‘Down by the Salley Gardens’, ‘The Stolen Child’, ‘The Song of Wandering Aengus’, ‘The Man Who Dreamed of Faery-land’, though beautifully made, did not alter the impression of a dreamer; nor did love poems interweaving ‘pale brows, still hands and dim hair’. Wilde and Shaw were not taken very seriously, and Yeats’s pre-war concerns – folklore, the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Irish nationalism – were discounted in London. After a transit of the metropolitan sky, his star was setting in the West.

But the dreamer had worked very hard, ‘All his twenties crammed with toil’. J.B. Yeats, a fine painter, left his son a fine example of how not to conduct a career, and also taught him to believe only in art. Chesterton once said that “a man who doesn’t believe in God, doesn’t believe in nothing: he believes in anything”. A need to believe and to worship fuelled Yeats’s devotions: to Blake, Irish mythology and folklore, the theatre, national causes, the Rhymer’s Club, poetry readings, committee meetings, public meetings, journalism, his own plays and poetry – and to the beautiful Irish nationalist Maud Gonne. He invested almost as much time in the occult and the

esoteric – séances, spirit-rappings, theosophy, reincarnation, automatic writing – and especially in visions. Yeats's significant work *A Vision* (1925), a book-length study of various philosophical, historical, astrological, and literary subject matters, enumerates a system in which human history follows a cycle linked to (among other things) the phases of the moon. He played at and half-believed in these ideas, but needed them. (Alexander, 240)

After working hard for an Irish literary revival and the Irish National Theatre, he returned to London disgusted. In 1890 a marital scandal had brought down Parnell, and in 1907 Dublin demonstrated against J.M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* at Yeats's Abbey Theatre, for showing Irish people as imperfect. Then in 1913 Dublin's Municipal Gallery rejected Impressionist pictures left to it by Hugh Lane, a nephew of Yeats' ally Lady Gregory. In Sussex in 1914 and 1915, Yeats worked with Ezra Pound on translating Japanese plays. Then in 1916 'a terrible beauty was born', as Yeats was to put it, in the Easter Rising, badly handled by Britain: executions, martyrs, struggles, and in 1921 the Irish Free State. Yeats became a Senator in a Catholic-dominated Ireland, and was henceforward to pay a new attention to Anglo-Irish ancestors and historical heroes.

From 1913 onwards his poetry had extended its range: of subjects, to politics; of diction, to the colloquial; of moods, to realism and even bitterness. He began to address others besides himself. Always he maintained his devotion to form, which for him (unlike Pound) meant 'a complete coincidence of sentence and stanza'. But now he had more ways of saying, and more to say. In 1917 he stopped adoring Maud Gonne and married; he had children. His poetry became more powerful and declarative, filled with his own voice, binding and provoking a large audience. The Romantic poets and their heirs, with rare exceptions such as Browning and Hardy, had tended to dry up after the age of thirty-five. When Yeats was 'close on forty-nine', he began to write his greatest poetry. And on the other hand Hari Bhakta Katuwal had written his greatest poetry until he was forty. Yeats has thirty or forty outstanding poems, more than any other poet of the 20th century, chiefly in 'The Tower' (1928) and 'The Winding Stair' (1933). This is synonymous with the Nepali poet in the present study. He too has written many poems of great significance in a short span of his career. Eliot was astonished, Auden and Dylan Thomas awestruck. In the next generation, Philip Larkin (1922-85) began by trying to write like Yeats.

Lamentably, Hari Bhakta Katuwal's writings neither received any profound literary reaction from his contemporary writers as Eliot, Auden and Thomas did in Yeats's case nor there was any Larkin in the Nepali literary domain to imitate him.

There is an obvious influence of race upon literature. 'It's a wise child who knows his own great-great-great-great grandfathers.' W.B. Yeats can be safely called the incarnation of the Irish Kelt as far as his love for race and nationalism is concerned. Incarnation, indeed, is scarcely the right word; he is rather the quintessential spirit of Keltic eld. His name does not imply an exclusively Irish ancestry, and his physique is so ultra-Keltic as almost to suggest a Southern admixture. There has been a good deal of Spanish blood in Ireland since 1588 or earlier; does any of it flow in Mr. Yeats's veins? The matter is really unimportant according to my theory, which is that a Yorkshireman, a Scandinavian, or even a Scot, if caught young enough, might have become equally impregnated with the melancholy, the mystery, the supersensual grace and beauty of the Keltic imagination and its treasure of myth and folk-lore. (Ryan, 1926)

If the poetry of W.B. Yeats stretches across the whole period of the late Victorian to Early Modern ages and he saw his first publication, in the *Dublin University Review* in 1885, continuing to write until his death in 1939, then it was after twenty one years since Yeats's death that *Samjhana* (1960) or 'Reminiscence' (1960), a small collection of poems by Hari Bhakta Katuwal got published, the Indian Nepali poet's first literary publication. In the meantime Katuwal was appointed as the editor of a quarterly journal titled *Mukti* which started its publication from the same year.

There are three main stages to Yeats's development as a poet. The first phase, when he was associated both with the Aesthetic movement of the 1890s and the Celtic Twilight, is characterised by a self-conscious Romanticism. The poetry is sometimes based on Irish myth and folklore and has a mystical, dream-like quality to it. Yeats at that time wanted his poetry to be seen as a contribution to a rejuvenated Irish culture but he also wanted it to have a distinctive stamp, and the structure and imagery of many of these poems have considerable clarity and control. Yeats was also regularly in the habit of revising his poems, and when he revised many of these early poems he sharpened the language in an attempt to clarify the imagery. A key early poem is 'The

Lake of Innisfree', a poem of idealistic escape bearing racial and nationalistic undertones which dates from Yeats's stay in London in 1890:

"I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,

And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made. . ." (1-2)

The second main phase of Yeats's poetic career was dominated by his revolutionary commitment to Irish nationalism, and it was Irish nationalism which first sent Yeats in search of a consistently simpler, popular, and more accessible style. As Yeats became more and more involved in public nationalist issues, so his poetry became more public and concerned with the politics of the modern Irish state.

In one of his most famous poems, 'Easter 1916', Yeats chronicles the events of the political uprising in Ireland on Easter Sunday, 24 April 1916. As part of their continuing struggle for independence, Irish nationalists launched a heroic but unsuccessful revolt against the British government. The uprising was badly handled by Britain. The callous and unfeeling treatment of the uprising had moved Yeats to deep anger and bitterness. The Irish nationalists, expecting help from the Germans who were at the time at war with the British, seized certain key areas of Dublin and proclaimed Ireland as a republic, free from the dominion of the British crown. The British took prompt military action suppressed the rebellion in a brutal manner. Seven nationalists including Pearse, Conolly, MacDonagh and MacBride who were known personally to Yeats had signed the proclamation which resulted in their instant execution. Yeats was in Dublin during the bloody rebellion and the heroism of the martyrs had deeply moved him. The idea that the poet's earlier cynicism about the earnestness of the martyrs disappeared at once and he became intensely aware of the 'terrible beauty' that was born out of the 'sacrifice' and martyrdom of the revolutionaries is obvious in the following lines:

"What is it but nightfall?

No, no, not night but death;

Was it needless death after all?

For England may keep faith

For all that is done and said.

We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse –
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Conolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be, Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.” (65-79)

Bearing a profound racial and nationalistic fervour Yeats’s ‘Easter 1916’ is a poem in which the poet “. . . perhaps alone among modern English-speaking poets, succeeds in creating a truly poetical myth out of contemporary politics.” (Pinto, 1967)

Yeats recognised, however, that the causes of violence, disorder, and repression are complex and have to be confronted and understood. For example, his poem ‘The Second Coming’ (1921) is a chilling vision of impending death and dissolution. It contains the famous lines

“Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. . .” (1-2)

but the dissolution is part of a cycle of history which also guarantees order , joy and beauty. There is gaiety and celebration in Yeats’s poetry in these years as well as terror and fear of anarchy. The refrain of one of his most famous poems titled ‘Easter 1916’ is that ‘A terrible beauty is born’. Terror and beauty are contraries, yet a recognition of the essentially cyclical nature of life and of history helped Yeats to resolve many of the contraries and paradoxes he experienced. It is not surprising, therefore, that Yeats’s poetry at this time contains many images of winding staircases, gyres, spinning-tops, and spirals. Yeats developed an elaborate symbolic system which was private to him, in certain particulars drawn from traditions of esoteric thought which almost compensated for a lost religion. But his greatness as a poet lies

in communicating both precisely and evocatively to readers who may know nothing of his sources.

Between the First World War and 1930, the most significant volumes Yeats published include 'The Wild Swans at Coole' (1917), 'Michael Robartes and the Dancer' (1921), 'The Tower' (1928), and 'The Winding Stair' (1929). Yeats handles themes of age and myth in poems such as 'Sailing to Byzantium' (from 'The Tower'), which opens with the line:

"That is no country for old men."

The concern is with the New Ireland, and its future; the poet 'returns' to the holy city of Byzantium as a symbol of artistic/creative perfection. The concern with the passing of time, a major concern in many Modernist writers, becomes clear in the poem's last line, which speaks "Of what is past, or passing, or to come".

In the third phase of his career, Yeats reconciles elements from both his earlier periods, fusing them into a mature lyricism. The poetry is less public and more personal. He develops his theories of contraries and of the progression which can result from reconciling them, but also writes about the eternity of art, producing in the process many memorable poems which have come to be seen as having enduring value. The later poems explore contrasts between physical and spiritual dimensions to life, between sensuality and rationality, between turbulence and calm. Yeats's 'Among School Children' (also from 'The Tower') places the 'sixty-year-old smiling public man', now a senator in the newly independent Ireland, among the new generation. His own uncertainties dominate the later poems, until his final words, in 'Under Ben Bulbin' (1938), when he instructs the younger generation of Irish writers:

"Irish poets, learn your trade,
Sing whatever is well made." (73-74)

Like T.S. Eliot, Yeats creates a modern idiom for poetry, particularly in merging formal and colloquial styles. He adheres, however, more strictly to traditional forms than Eliot and is more comfortable than his contemporary with the direct expression of a personal self. He is less ironic and less distrustful of Romanticism than Eliot. He is also less willing than Eliot to embrace a single religious view.

Yeats' last poems are full of self – destruction and renewal, as in 'The Circus Animals' Desertion' (1939), where his old symbols desert him: 'it was the dream itself enchanted me.'

“Those masterful images because complete
Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?
A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,
I must lie down where all the ladders start,
In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.” (33-40)

As filthy rags and bones are boiled down to make fine paper, and as the physical assimilation of food feeds the mind, so the spirit is fed by gross appetite. Some critics find the rhetoric of the later poems strained. Others dwell on how modernist poets were attracted to authoritarian attitudes. Although this is not true of European modernists generally, it is evident that Yeats, Pound and Eliot were doubtful of the future of high art in a popular democracy in which, to quote Pound in *Mauberley*, 'the age demanded/ An image of its accelerated grimace' made 'to sell, and sell quickly'. (Alexander, 241)

Similar to that of Yeats's, there are again three main stages in the development of Katuwal's literary career as well. His early writings present a peculiar nationalistic consciousness and a profound racial pride. During the second phase of his literary journey the poet writes more about the need of assertion for equal rights along with the need for the independence of womenfolk. It was towards the end of his career i.e. during the last phase that Katuwal became a lyric poet and wrote his famous lyrics.

Within a few years of Katuwal's birth there waged the great World War II. Meanwhile, Assam was witnessing a famine-like situation due to irregular monsoon – *Kamayeka baalile khana pugena* ('Assamey Nepaliharu', Bishnulal Upadhyaya,

1969) i.e. “The produced crops could not even suffice for sustenance” (self – translated) wrote the veteran Indian Nepali social worker Bishnupal Upadhyaya highlighting the plight of the Assamese people during the early 1940s.

Katuwal was compelled to receive his basic education in Assamese language and not in his mother tongue i.e. Nepali language due to the lack of institutions in Assam providing education in Nepali medium. Such prevalent education system during 1948-50 was a prime factor that provided the impetus to the Indian Nepalis in Assam to realise the absence of racial consciousness and unity among themselves. Further, the flowering of political awareness, distribution of education and other social activities under similar plane gained momentum in the Nepali society of Assam during the same period.

This fact is highlighted by the renowned Indian Nepali social worker from Assam, Bishnupal Upadhyaya in his book *Assamey Nepaliharu* (1969, 31) – “From 1943 to 1959 *Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League* played a major role in organising the Indian Nepalis in Assam which allowed them to come in contact with the intellectuals from popular centres of literary activities during that time viz. Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kolkata, Dharamshala and closely understand the contemporary education system and politics. Indian Nepalis have also earnestly participated in the national freedom struggle...” (Self translated)

Such dynamic social and political developments along with the variety of changes taking place in the country left a deep impact on the tender mind of the young poet which in turn became a major inspiration for the flowering of political consciousness during his youthful days. Consequently, he became an active participant of the ongoing freedom struggle donning the Congress cap.

Hari Bhakta Katuwal was the then Chief Secretary of the *Nepali Siksha Prachar Samiti* or ‘Association for Promotion of Nepali Education’. The rebellious Indian Nepali poet had given the revolutionary clarion call to the Nepali community to ‘awake’ and ‘arise’ through his poem, *Aaohaana* or ‘Call’ in a similar manner as Yeats had called upon his Irish people:

Aba aankhaa nachimla bhai ho, shaan timro nafaala

Sansaar nai jaagi sakyo Nepali jaagena.

Nepalile sansaarko khyaal nai raakhena,

Duniyale Nepalilai kehi jhain thaanena,

Tara pani Nepalilai iikh lagena.

Translated English version:

“Cease to shut your eyes comrades, your legacy’s at stake –

All of the world but a Nepali is awake.

What’s this world? A Nepali doesn’t bother,

A Nepali isn’t important to the world either.

But a Nepali could still not find a hint of resolve.”

(Self translated)

So it was through this ‘Call’ that Katuwal signalled his arrival in Digboi and pointed out his purpose to the Nepali people. A new vista for the expansion of Nepali literature opens up after his arrival in Digboi. The hitherto dormant domain of Nepali literature in Assam is at once animated, refined and brightened.

Katuwal received his education in an Assamese medium school and as a result Assamese poetry had a profound influence on him. He even translated Assamese poet Durgeshwar Sharma’s poem *Dhuli Kana Maii* into Nepali. The self translated version of the first line *Sahasra dhulako ma euta bindhu vishal vishwako* is “I’m a particle of the world made of the same universal dust”. This poem is compiled in a lyrical anthology entitled *Samjhana*, the poet’s first literary publication and it has come to resonate as a memorable song.

Katuwal was proficient in many languages – Assamese, Hindi, English and Bengali. There are scores of works written by the poet in the Assamese language which he published in the leading newspapers of his time. He had even co-edited an Assamese journal titled *Radaali* during the initial stage of his literary career. *Bhitri Manchhe Bolna Khojcha* or ‘The Inside Man tries to Speak’, his first collection of poems in Nepali was published in 1962.

The 1960s was a period of literary and cultural renaissance in Digboi as there started the circulation of Nepali journals and newspapers from Darjeeling, Benaras and Nepal. Katuwal exploited this situation to the fullest. It was a pre requisite for a language and literature teacher to have a sound knowledge of the concerned grammar. So Katuwal had read Parasmani Pradhan's 'Basic Nepali Grammar' and Dilliram Timsina and Chudamuni Bandhu's 'Rhetoric and Prosody' by heart. He used to read poems written in Nepali, English, Hindi and Assamese with great interest and even recite some of those to his students. In this manner he developed a deep interest in poetry and made it his genre of literary prowess.

Gradually, Katuwal's pen grew mightier in the realm of Nepali poetry. He was awarded by the Royal Nepal Academy for his poem *Akashka Tara ke Tara* or 'The Stars of the Sky, What Stars!'. In the year 1967 *Sudha*, Katuwal's *khandakavya* i.e. epyllion was published in Kathmandu. The work presents a refined language than before. A mini journal, *Baannki*, edited by Katuwal was published from Kathmandu in the year 1970. It was the smallest journal in the Nepali world and Katuwal is credited for bringing it up. The poet was also the editor of the standard Nepali journal, *Praghya*. In the year 1973 *Yo Jindagi khai ke Jindagi* or 'What life, oh! What a life!', Katuwal's second collection of poems was published. It is one of his most significant works and a landmark contribution in the history of Nepali literature. Around 1976 a quarterly journal, *Abhivyakti* is published from Kathmandu under Katuwal's editing. In the field of prose and play Katuwal published *Spashtikaran* or 'Clarification', a prose collection and *Ma Mareko chhaina* or 'I am not dead', a collection of plays. He was working on two novels towards the end of his life but nothing is known about its publication. Thus, the great poet spent even his last days in forging something new for the still barren field of Nepali literature.

The following information viv-a-vis Hari Bhakta Katuwal was acquired by me through a personal interview with Kabita Chetry (Katuwal's eldest daughter, a senior school teacher and writer), Kishna Chetry and Saraswati Chetry (Katuwal's sisters) at their residence in Naholia, Dibrugarh, Assam on the 30th of December, 2016.

The Katuwal family had moved out from Bogibeel to Digboi after the disastrous 1950 earthquake. A few years later, the poet started working as a teacher at Assam Oil Company M.E. School, Digboi. It was from Digboi that the Katuwal

family moved and settled in a village called Pengaree. Katuwal resigned from his teaching job in 1969 and left for Kathmandu. The poet continuously penned down his poems after his school duties and painting classes. Kabita Chetry informed that her father was greatly inspired by the Indian writers like Hari Bansh Rai Bachchan, Amrita Pritam and Rabindranath Tagore.

Kabita Chetry informs that the poet had gifted the iconic 'topi'(cap) to the great Assamese singer, Bhupen Hazarika who had asked his loved ones to have it removed only after his demise. Katuwal had a small courtyard at the backside of the Digboi house where he used to sit and write his poems and songs, merrily reciting them to his two sisters. Katuwal wrote poems in the Assamese language while he was in classes seven, eight, nine and ten. Saraswati Chettri remembers that Katuwal seemed to be engrossed in deep thoughts even while walking or performing household activities. He had a keen interest in gardening so he was often found amidst his flowers.

Around 1975-76 the State government came up with a policy to evict the Nepali population from Assam. At such a challenging juncture Katuwal had worked very hard in rehabilitating the dispersed Indian Nepalis. He even supervised the display of organic food products produced by the Indian Nepali population toiling hard in their fields. Katuwal was supportive of his hard working people and at the same time sad to think of the dire consequence if such a prejudiced decision is taken by the government. However, the poet was successful in averting the situation.

The sisters recount their brother to be extremely generous, helpful and compassionate. Once while strolling along a cold Kathmandu street he had removed his jacket and wrapped it around a shivering stray dog. Whatever pocket money Katuwal got from his father during his school days was spent in paying fees for his friends or buying books for his juniors. Bhavilal Lamichhane and Yuddhavir Rana, both reputed writers in Assam of present times owe their reputation to be the result of Katuwal's unprejudiced outlook, persistent guidance and dedication towards the formation of the youths.

(Chetry Kabita, Kishna chetry, Saraswati Chetry. Personal Interview. 30 December 2016.)

Similar to Yeats, Katuwal also became pessimistic towards the end of his career. He was in a dubious state about the future of art and literature in the Nepali domain. He could though very well speak about the pangs of life, its bitterness and sweetness, its blows and counterblows, its pains and adversities through his poetry:

Bandhan ra badhyatama baanchnu pani khai ke baanchnu

Aansu lukaai gahama haansnu pani khai ke haansnu.

Translated English version:

“What is it worth to live in bondage and obligation?

To hide one’s tears, and smile, is just a consolation.”

(Self translated)

Katuwal wished to live independently but ‘bondage’ and ‘obligation’ were his life - long hurdles. Perhaps this was the reason for his despair that is conspicuous in his writings towards the end of his life. His pen though outruns his tongue:

Katai juwadele kaudi khelaundai hereko chhuk jasto

Katai basantale chhoda gayeko udaas rukh jasto

Yesto lagirahecha aafailai yo jivan

Antim paato pani chyatiyeko euta thuto cheque book jasto.

Translated English version:

“Like a gambler’s scheming view as he jangles his dice

Like a gloomy tree abandoned by Spring

This life’s I feel has become

A tattered check book; a useless thing.”

(Self translated)

Further, Katuwal viewed human life to be like the water on top of a ‘Karkala’ plant or a yam which can fall on the ground at any given time. Such nothingness of

human life is finely presented by Katuwal in the following lines from his poem ‘Yo Jindagi khai ke Jindagi’ or ‘This life, oh! What a life!’:

Pasalma showcase bhitra sajaiyeko

Kaanchko chura jasto yo jindagi

Kunai yuwatiko haatma charda chardai

Pyatta phutna sakcha yo jindagi

Rubberka sasta chappal jastai yo jindagi

Batama hirda hirdai

Chyatta tutna sakcha yo jindagi.

Translated English version:

“This life, like a glass bangle
Neatly arranged in a shop’s showcase,
That can break any moment
As it gets adorned around a maiden’s hand.
This life, like a cheap rubber sandal,
Can come apart any time
As one strolls along the road.”

(Self translated)

Though the poet led a discontented short spanned life, as evident in his later poetry, he never failed to present in his writings, the hardships and denigration faced by the Indian Nepalis. His poems are thus, replete with racial pride and nationalistic consciousness. The poet through his poetry has expressed his temper at the inability of the authorities in recognising the sacrifices made by the Indian Nepalis in nation building. He writes in his poem *Khai manyata Aatmahutiko Balidaanko?* or ‘Where is the Value of Sacrifice?’:

Hami jo kunai din bideshiyon ra aaja pani

Bideshi mai dariyeka chaun.

Hamra vivash chhati jam jamauchan – marmahat chaun

Hami kina bhane

Yahaan dhungakaa kaap-kaapma runchan hamrai aafantaka atripta aatmaharu

Khai manyata yahaan aatmahutiko balidaanko?

Translated English version:

“We, who have once been foreigners, have even today

Found our strength in ‘foreignness’.

Our tortured heart feels the pain – we are sorrowful

And so be the reason

As the sans bliss souls of our loved ones weep in the dark corners of the stones

Where is the value of sacrifice?”

(Self translated)

Katuwal has closely observed the sorrows and vilification inflicted upon the Indian Nepali-Gorkhali societies in the Indian mainland and written about those experiences in his poetry. It is through the medium of his poems that the poet seeks justice of such countless sacrifices made by the Indian Nepalis in nation building and asserts his racial and nationalistic consciousness.

Katuwal’s poems are full of episodes related to the sacrifices made by the Indian Nepalis in nation building, ‘warm sweat’ of the Indian Nepali martyrs and their blood ‘all loyally red’. The poet aspires for the proper assessment of their devotion in the noble deed. The Indian Nepalis are deprived. They have been denigrated and belittled. They have been in bondage. In a poem titled *Raatko Gherama eklai ma* or ‘Alone in the dark’, the poet writes:

Ghari ghari pugirahecha mastishk simantaka

Tee trenchharuma

Jahaan vyarthai larirahechan Gorkhaliharu!

Jahaan vyarthai marirahechan Gorkhaliharu!!

Tee jo tyahaan marnai najaani marirahechan!!

Translated English version:

“Constantly compelled I am, and so I ponder

On the trenches at the borders

Where the Gorkhalis have been fighting in vain!

Where the Gorkhalis have been dying in vain!!

Those who not know the art of dying are dying!!”

(Self translated)

Katuwal was hard hit by the sights of the countless loss of lives of the Indian Nepali soldiers and the bereavement of their families thereafter, during the post-independence war between India and Pakistan. Therefore, he educates the bereaved families of the martyrs in the Indo-Pak war to claim their rights through his revolutionary poems. The following quote from his poem *Hamilai Nirdho Nasamjha* or ‘Do not consider us Gullible’ is an instance:

Hamro pani raato ragat yahin bageko cha

Hamro pani taato pasina yahin khaseko cha

Hamile ke po garenau ke garna ajha baanki cha.

Translated English version:

“Our blood has flown right here, all loyally red

We have given everything, all our warm sweat

What haven’t we done, what’s there to be done yet?”

(Self translated)

Mr Yeats's revolutionary poems on the other hand are commentaries on men and manners in his own country. They are usually suggested by incidents that hardly find publicity outside of the local Press. One such commentary which finds an expression of disappointment that another than his friend, the distinguished patron of the arts, Sir Hugh Lane, should have been appointed to the curatorship of the Dublin Museum. Continuing his championship of Sir Hugh, Mr. Yeats found an enemy. But the enemy was not 'England'; it was the organised bourgeois 'mob' of Dublin, Philistine, and basely suspicious of generosity in action, prepared to exploit Irish nationality to the profit of its own common prejudices and material interests. This mob had become so powerful that Mr. Yeats announced the death of 'Romantic Ireland' in the most celebrated of his political poems, 'September 1913':

"Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.
Was it for this the wild geese spread
The grey wing upon every tide?
For this that all that blood was shed,
For this Edward Fitzgerald died,
And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,
All that delirium of the brave. . . ." (23-32)

In another poem of the same series, 'To a Shade' (1916) Lane is compared with Parnell. The same 'foul mouth' that had encompassed the downfall of the one man now 'herded the pack' against the other:

"A man
Of your own passionate serving kind who had brought
In his full hands, what had they only known,
Had given their children's children loftier thought,
Sweeter emotion working in their veins." (9-13)

The attack here was upon a nationalist politician of the old school and no one minded much. But in his lines 'To a Wealthy Man' (1916) Mr. Yeats – his subject still Lane, plans for art in Dublin – showed a greater courage. The lines might have been – and indeed were – interpreted as a slight upon young Irish democracy, upon the Gaelic peasantry, 'their country's pride': the foundation of rising Sinn Fein. Mr. Yeats rebuked the rich man for saying that he would double his donation to the Modern Art Gallery if 'the people' would show they wanted pictures:

“Leave Paudeens to their pitch and toss.

Look up in the sun's eye and give!” (31-32)

One of the problems that set Yeats to write poetry about Ireland, about race was the broken and tragic lives of his early friends Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson, Arthur Symons, Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, John Davidson, Francis Thompson, all Irishmen and the poet's associates of the Rhymers' Club and *The Savoy*, were artists of unusual silent and personal modesty. 'Why', he asks, 'should men who spoke their opinions in low voices, as though they knew that all subjects had long since been explored, all questions long since decided in books whereon the dust settled – live lives of such disorder?'

Yeats in his autobiography suggests not one but several reasons for the end of what he calls the Tragic Generation. Most of them, he says, were poor men, strained and broken by their poverty. Their effort toward intense and lyrical emotion may have made them emotionally unstable. Again, they may have been weakened by their philosophy of life for art's sake and art for its own pure self. They made what 'what Arnold has called that "morbid effect," that search for "perfection of thought and feeling, and to unite this to perfection of form," sought this new, pure beauty, and suffered in their lives because of it.'

This last would apply to other tragic poets as well – Poe, Baudelaire, Rossetti – and therefore is the most convincing of the reasons, that Yeats offers for their decline. A still more convincing reason is one that he often suggests but never mentions explicitly: their self-imposed and utter isolation. When Lionel Johnson was asked whether his irregular hours 'did not separate him from men and women', he replied, 'In my library I have all the knowledge of the world that I need.' – "That

room was always a pleasure to me,” Yeats himself continued, “with its curtains of gray corduroy over door and window and bookcase . . . and a general air of neatness and severity; and talking there by candle light it never seemed very difficult to murmur Villiers de l’Isle Adam’s proud words, ‘As for living, our servants will do that for us.’”

The truth is that these poets were completely cut off from living, screened from the world by their curtains of neat gray corduroy. They had very few human sympathies and no instinctive attachment to birthplace or class or nation. They had to draw song from – their inner resources, like water from a cistern that was never renewed from the outside, till at last as it dwindled, it became stagnant and poisonous.

Malcolm Cowley in his critical essay, ‘Poet in Politics’ (1938) observes, Yeats had always been of a divided mind about his participation in politics. His eagerness to change the minds of the people and his pride in success were mingled with his shame at having surrendered himself ‘to the chief temptation of the artist, creation without toil.’ – ‘Politics, for a vision-seeking man, can be but half achievement, a choice of an almost easy kind of skill instead of that kind which is, of all those not impossible, the most difficult.’ He came to speak with revulsion ‘of the dirty piece of orange peel in the corner of the stairs as one climbs up to some newspaper office; of public meetings where it would be treacherous amid so much geniality to speak or even to think of anything that might cause a moment’s misunderstanding in one’s own party.’

Further, Yeats believed that poetry and politics, abstraction and image, public life and private vision, were fixed in eternal opposition. Yet one can scarcely doubt that his own political life helped to save him from a broken career and an early death like those of his friends. The variegated opinions adopted by the poets along the various stages of his life bear a profound sense of racial and nationalistic pride. He fancied himself as a socialist in his youth and in his manhood he was actively working for the Irish revolution. The poet continued living with his Irish mystical nationalism, with its talk of the Irish racial spirit and the Irish over soul. He worked and fought among the Irish masses, shared their hopes and hatreds, learned to speak their language and transformed into a medium for great poetry. He had broken the isolation, stepped out of his private world; he had found a subject and an audience. And the effect of that ‘baptism of the gutter’ persisted in his later work, just as it

persisted for a while with Wordsworth and longer with Baudelaire. Today when he peers from his lonely tower into the Irish mist, the visions he sees there are not disembodied, like Francis Thompson's or Lionel Johnson's visions; they are given shape and endowed with life by the passions of his active years. (96)

Yeats was born in a Protestant middle and professional class of Ireland. He was well aware of the inconsistencies of being born in such a class. An observant Yeats can be found in the following lines he had written in his childhood:

"Everyone I knew well in Sligo despised Nationalists and Catholics, but all disliked England with a prejudice that had come down perhaps from the days of the Irish Parliament." (Autobiographies, 33-4)

The notion of not belonging anywhere was not only a childhood affair for Yeats but he led an oscillating life even during his teens and old age. Yeats tells his readers about how, as a young man, he felt uncomfortable even in his surroundings:

"I had noticed that Irish Catholics among whom had been born so many political martyrs had not the good taste, the household courtesy and decency of the Protestant Ireland I had known, yet Protestant Ireland seemed to think of nothing but getting on in the world." (Autobiographies, pp. 101-02)

This particular observation made by Yeats exemplifies the 'Anglo-Irish solitude' which is not only recurrently present in his later works but it also became a way of his life. Yeats was thus, brought up in that nationalist-despising Sligo. So it is surprising that he went on to write his intensely nationalist little play, 'Cathleen ni Houlihan' for the Irish National Theatre Society. It was first performed in 1902. Yeats' poem 'September, 1913' and some of the late ballads on Parnell and Casement are among his other works that are again intensely nationalist. Towards the end of his life Yeats was thinking of 'Cathleen ni Houlihan' as he wrote the following poetic lines in 'The Man and the Echo' (1938):

"All that I have said and done,
Now that I am old and ill,
Turns into a question till,
I lie awake night after night

And never get the answers right.

Did that play of mine send out

Certain men the English shot?" (6-12)

The play is set in the revolutionary year of 1798. Yeats has written beautiful lyrics in the play, especially those sang by the Poor Old Woman who hopes to get her 'four beautiful green fields' back, for instance:

[She goes out; her voice is heard outside singing.]

"They shall be remembered for ever,

They shall be alive for ever,

They shall be speaking for ever,

The people shall hear them for ever." (CP, 86)

Yeats through his works highlights the need to sacrifice all the personal ties and interests and come forward to the service of Ireland. There is an obvious urge on the need for blood-sacrifice. The poet feels that a heroic gesture in safeguarding one's nation is a glory that has the power of transforming failure into triumph. Such an individual 'shall be remembered for ever' as a legendary being. It is the sheer sacrificial act that transforms an ordinary person into a legend.

Similarly, Kakuwal also remembered and held the Indian Nepali martyrs who sacrificed their lives fighting for the nation in high esteem and expressed his respect for them in the following manner:

Deshkaa laagi marneharuko

Kirti yo jagma metiney chaina.

Kaafar jo chhau hamro gatha

Itihasma lekhine chaina.

Translated English version:

"To those who died for their nation

Your glory shall live forever

Remember, a coward's tale
History shan't preserve ever."

(Self translated)

Further, Katuwal pledges to fulfil his duty towards his motherland in the following manner:

Jarjar jagko shulka maruma, shantiko phool phulaaunla.

Paakha pakheraa deep jalai bhaiko pir naasaunla.

Translated English version:

"Flowers of peace shall I bloom, along the lifeless desert sands

Your pain shall I take away, lighting the hopeful flame with my hands."

(Self translated)

A true patriot and a conscious citizen, Hari Bhakta Katuwal was frequently displeased with the social set up that featured hierarchy and discrimination according to ranks and races. It was this disposition of his that forced Katuwal to give away his job at the Academy. The poet bore an utterly generous and compassionate disposition. He used to address his errand-boy as his father and vice-versa – *Yo pani mero babu ho ra ma pani yasko babu hoon* or "This boy is my father and I am his father". The poet always voiced out against domination and pseudo authoritarian attitude. He was a symbol of change in the contemporary Indian Nepali society. In fact, Katuwal had become a figure of inspiration for all the Nepalis as he kept on interrogating:

Aba aankhaa nachimla bhai ho

Shaan timro nafala nafala

Himali chuchuroma Nepali nai charyo

Thulo thulo ladainma Nepali nai laryo

Bandukko goli khaai Nepali nai maryo

Tara kina yo Nepali ahile pachi paryo?

Translated English version:

“Cease to shut your eyes comrades

Your legacy’s at stake

It was first a Nepali to summit the highest peak

And it was a Nepali fighting all the great battles

Yet again a Nepali succumbed to the bullets

But why is the same Nepali far behind today?”

(Self translated)

The poet’s pride in being an Indian is unparalleled in the realm of Nepali literature. His love for the country is boundless which is evident in the following lines:

Hami Bharatka santaan haun hami Bharatka santaan!

Bharat hamro janmabhumi hami Bharatka santaan!!

Translated English version:

“We are the children of India, we, the children of India!

India is our birthplace, we, the children of India!!”

(Self translated)

CHAPTER III

REPRESENTATION OF IRISH AND NEPALI CULTURES IN YEATS AND KATUWAL

It is a pleasure to be part of the Oxford Literary Festival, especially as I am neither a writer nor an academic. I am here because of a lifelong interest in the work of our great Irish poet and Nobel Prize recipient, William Butler Yeats In Ireland throughout the year, we will be paying tribute to Yeats's literary achievement during his lifetime and in the years since his death in 1939. I am confident that the poet would be especially pleased to be remembered here in this city, a place he knew well and liked. In Oxford, he once wrote: 'One almost expected to sing instead of speaking. It is all – the colleges I mean – like an Opera.'

(An extract from Ireland's ambassador in London, Daniel Mulhall's speech entitled 'W.B. Yeats and the Ireland of his time' at the Oxford Literary Festival, 2015.)

Yeats as a writer delved into the Ireland of his time; an era of nation-building and forging of Ireland's modern identity. He was a powerful, perceptive interpreter of that seminal period in the history of the Irish nation. Just like Shakespeare's history plays bring England's past to life, Yeats's poems do the same for Ireland.

As Irish literature moved into the twentieth century, there was an upsurge in interest in Celtic myth and legend. Often called the Celtic Twilight, this is more of a renaissance than a decline, but it tended to be looked on rather in the same way as the sentimental Scottish Kailyard School at around the same time. It is true that it shares some of the Kailyard's homely sentimentalism, but its inspiration is more concerned with national identity and cultural revival. Writers began to find a confidence in their own ground, place, and speech, expressing themselves in English and Irish. The poet W.B. Yeats, whose career spans the end of the nineteenth century, the struggle for Irish nationhood and the period between the two world wars, used Sligo for much of his inspiration, just as J.M. Synge used the setting, the language, the *otherness* of the Aran Islands in his plays.

So, the Irish Literary Revival which was associated with the revival of interest in Ireland's Gaelic culture was also instrumental in providing the appropriate impetus to the growth of Irish nationalism as highlighted in the preceding chapter. The Revival

movement initially had two geographic centres, in Dublin and in London. Yeats was found oscillating between these two centres in his aim of promoting and disseminating Irish culture and learning.

The Celtic Twilight was in fact the title of a collection of stories published by W.B. Yeats in 1893. The slightly negative connotations which the term came to have are due to the emphasis on the belief in fairies expressed in some of the tales. But much more positive is the rediscovery of myth and legend which allowed Yeats and other writers to bring such figures as Cuchulain and Finn McCoull into their works as symbols and expressions of Irishness past and present.

Many poets contributed to the Irish Literary Revival or the Irish Literary Renaissance, although Yeats rapidly left them behind. Thus, he is well known as one of the most active and prominent leaders of that movement in present literature which also goes by the somewhat high-flown title of the Celtic Renaissance. This renaissance is less self-laudatory and more workmanlike as it marked the flowering of Irish literary talent upholding the culture and folk-lore of the isle.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ireland was in the midst of a growing nationalist movement, with increasing calls for home and independence. As patriotism swelled, literature became a major source of promoting and shaping Irish identity and culture. Yeats was at the helm of this literary movement, publishing works and creating and spearheading organizations that endorsed Ireland's native culture, which like the Irish language, had been repressed under English rule.

Yeats promoted Irish folklore in the compilation entitled 'Fairies and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry', which he published in 1888. Through his 'Celtic Twilight', the poet hoped to "show in a vision something of the face of Ireland to any of my own people who would look where I bid them." Although largely prose, the book closes with the poem 'Into the Twilight', written in 1893 as an homage to Ireland, or 'mother Eire':

"OUT-WORN heart, in a time out-worn,

Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;

Laugh, heart, again in the grey twilight,
Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.
Your mother Eire is always young,
Dew ever shining and twilight grey;
Though hope fall from you and love decay,
Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.
Come, heart, where hill is heaped upon hill:
For there the mystical brotherhood
Of sun and moon and hollow and wood
And river and stream work out their will;
And God stands winding His lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight;
And love is less kind than the grey twilight,
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.”

The poet in his bid to uphold and promote Irish culture embodied a vision of artistic perfection for Ireland that is conspicuous in ‘Sailing to Byzantium’, the first poem in a collection of Yeats’s poetry called ‘The Tower’ published in 1928. Through the subject of the poem – the spiritual quest of an old man for a timeless existence, Yeats seeks to represent a perfect balance between the conflicting demands of the spiritual and the sensual. Byzantium, an ancient holy city situated at the site of modern Istanbul is a complex symbol in Yeats’s poetry. In the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., it was the centre of highly developed art and architecture, which was a blend of the Oriental and the Occidental style. In his prose work, ‘A Vision’, Yeats explains why Byzantium became such an important symbol in his poetry: “I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, that architect and artificers . . . spoke to the multitude and the few alike.” The Byzantium artists and architects seem to have

expressed through their work, the vision of a whole people, though they might have worked individually in different mediums like gold, silver, mosaic or other metals. For the old poet, the act of sailing to Byzantium, therefore, implies a voyage from the material world to the ideal land of eternity where the perfect ‘unity of Being’ can be achieved through art. The idea that the poet endeavoured all his life to build a part of Byzantium for Ireland and his Irish people is evident in the following lines from the poem:

“Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.” (25-32)

The poet chooses not to take any natural form after discarding his natural self but chooses to remain absent from the earthly abode and sing along the praises of accolades and laurels brought home to Ireland.

On the other hand if literature was Katuwal’s lifeblood then social work in the form of promoting the Nepali culture was an essential part of his being. Nepali literature and culture has gained abundantly from his brief life span. Vishnu Pranami Mandir Samiti of Digboi is immensely indebted to him. He has toiled hard in aiding the construction of so Mandir by singing *Bhailo* (similar to carol, during Christmas) at the doorsteps of the people during the festive eve of Diwali. He was also the chief supervisor in the construction of the *Vishnu Mandir Bhawan* Theatre. Just like Yeats, Katuwal strived to preserve his Nepali culture and thereby provide security to the Nepali population living in Assam. He spearheaded the cultural programmes on stages, theatres and institutions established by him.

Katuwal was the vanguard of racial culture and always worked hard in the realising of racial establishments. The poet during the Assamese festival of *Bihu* used to represent the Nepali community and lead them to various programmes showcasing the talents of his Indian Nepali people, thus, enlarging the milieu of Indian Nepali culture. He used to initiate poets' meet and literature festivals in and around Assam and encourage the younger generation of literary enthusiasts to display their creativity. (Rana, 30 Self translated)

During Katuwal's Digboi days, a key institution in preserving the Nepali culture was *Nepali Siksha Prachar Samiti* ('Association for Promotion of Nepali Education') established in the Agreement Line area of Digboi in 1958. The *Samiti* that functioned largely under Katuwal's supervision worked for the promotion of Nepali education among the people residing in different villages and towns and accordingly schools were also established. It organised campaigns to eradicate illiteracy among Nepali men and women of all age groups and necessarily came up with a library. The association also promoted music, theatre, art and sports. It also published a bi-annual journal and also celebrated the *jayanti* of great personalities. The association even published books written by promising poets and authors. Katuwal left no stone unturned in order to realise the goals of the association.

Nepali poetry since 1970s can be neatly classified into two categories – one that progresses from simplicity to complexity and the other from intricacy towards simplicity. Those poems inspired from the latter seem to be simple and easy, thus a delightful read for the lovers of literature, both ordinary and intellectual and Katuwal excelled in writing them. Thus, his poems had the potential to appeal both the ordinary and intellectual levels of readers. Writing poetry was not Katuwal's only forte but the poet was equally competent when it came to the recitation of his creations. People used to flock in great numbers whenever there was a poetry recitation programme being conducted and Katuwal would be one of those reciters. In this manner he has contributed immensely in disseminating the glory of Nepali culture and society through his poems and their recitations which is suggestive in the following lines from his poem *Hamilai Nirdho Nasamjha*:

Hamra gothala dajaile yahinko vann ra paakhama

Mann ko baha pokheka chhan salaijuko bhaakama

Hamri khetaalni didile chhaatiko maya sinchera

Yahinko khet ropeki chhan bhok ra tirkha birsera.

Translated English version:

“It is in these very woods and valleys that our cowherd
Has expressed his inner feelings through *salaiju*, like a bird
With pure love and dedication, our lasses in those farms
Work day in and day out, unwary of food and other charms.”

(Self translated)

Salaiju is a cultural and traditional song sung by the Nepali community while working in the fields. The above lines evoke one’s love for his/her culture and at the same time it highlights the social and economic backdrop of the Indian Nepali community during the 1970s. Haribhakta Katwal in his essay ‘Nepali Sanskriti ra Assamka Nepali’ or ‘Nepali Culture and Nepalis in Assam’ writes – Every Nepali is incomplete without the musical instruments of great cultural value such as *Maadal*, *Khainjadi*, *Tyamko*, *Damaha*, *Sanai*, *Narsinghaa* and *Turahi*. Cultural and traditional songs fondly called *Sangini*, *Malashri* and *Bhailo* are integral aspects of principal festivals of the Nepali community like *Teez*, *Dasain*, *Tiwar*. Farming among the Nepali community is never complete without singing the traditional song, *Asarey* and *Salaiju*. It is for such depiction of utmost realistic pictures of Indian Nepali culture and society that Katwal is considered to be the pioneer from the North-East Indian region in the field of modern Indian Nepali literature.

Katwal used to teach at the Assam Oil Company, Nepali M.E. School during the initial stage of his professional life. As a teacher, Katwal not only confined himself within the boundaries of the textbooks or the Nepali subject to be taught in general but the poet being an ardent lover of Nepali culture extended the arena of orthodox teaching practice and gave a new meaning to the duty of imparting education. He did so by taking charge of instilling the need of nurturing cultural individuality among his students and trained them for cultural dance forms and drills, thus adding a new dimension to his profession, thereby introducing the significance of

upholding one's culture. The students also got the opportunity to learn painting and develop their creative skills in the area of writing. Painting and sketching have also remained the poet's forte.

Later he also worked as the chief-editor of the journal called *Praghya* at the *Nepal Rajakiya Praghya Pratisthan* in Kathmandu. Katuwal returned from Kathmandu with the twin gifts that proved instrumental in shaping his now twin personalities – experience as a writer and responsibility as a cultural representative. He established the *Dibrugarh Zilla Nepali Sahitya tatha Saanskritik Parishad* or 'Dibrugarh District Nepali Literature and Cultural Council' and equipped the Indian Nepalis of Assam to display their literary and cultural flairs that had hitherto remained dormant, in front of the non-Nepali communities. As such the Indian Nepalis could also take pride in their own rich and variegated literature and culture.

The Dibrugarh District Nepali Literature and Cultural Council left no stone unturned in its aim to uplift the Nepali culture, there on. Within a few months of the establishment of Dibrugarh District Nepali Literature and Cultural Council Katuwal organised a cultural meet at a place called Lakhpathar, Assam. It was here that the great Indian Nepali female singer from Darjeeling, Aruna Lama was felicitated and awarded the prestigious *Mitrasen Puraskar* or 'Mitrasen Award' for her contribution to the Nepali culture and society. Katuwal was an ardent lover of language, literature and culture. Apart from being supportive of the Nepali language and literature, he was also interested in Assamese language and literature and culture. He bore deep affection to the Nepali communities residing in Assam.

The poet was equally hurt to learn about the pitiable conditions of the other Nepali communities and their obligations to lead such lives in different parts of the globe. Katuwal was an Indian Nepali born in Assam and on the basis of his 'Nepalism', he became a poet who willingly embraced the idea of *Vasudevam Kutumbakam* – the idea that all the Indian Nepalis residing in different parts of the globe are related to each other, they share the same mirth and celebrations, they are hurt by the same sorrow and deprivation and yet again they are united by the same literature and culture. (83)

The following information vis-a-vis Hari Bhakta Katuwal was acquired by me through personal interview with Yuddhvir Rana, reputed writer of Assamese and Nepali literature and Katuwal's junior – at his residence in Tingrai, Assam on the 31st of December, 2016 -

One artist gives boundless contribution to his society or even his country before he leaves his earthly existence. His contribution and dedication as an artist should be in focus. Rana believes to have incorporated this idea in his poem *Katuwalko jindagi: Euta Itihas* or 'Katuwal's life: A History' published in 1980. The writer recounts reciting the poem on the occasion of Katuwal *jayanti* in 1980.

Every great artist has died while creating something new. Katuwal was initially a man of dignity and respect. His dressing sense and appearance were quite impressive during the early 70s. However, after mid 70s there was a conspicuous change in the poet's appearance. He started labelling himself as a 'hippi' and proclaimed that such a drastic change in his lifestyle shall draw abundant critical perspectives in future. Sadly, his proclamation faintly finds any place in the present state of Nepali literature that innately lacks any kind of critical scholarship.

Yuddhvir Rana used to take up the role of the lead actor in most of Katuwal's one act plays enacted in the *Vishnu Mandir* stage. Unfortunately the manuscripts of those plays could not be preserved for reference at the present times.

Katuwal was also a good sportsman. He played cricket very well. He was also a champion billiards player. Apart from this he was also a talented painter, sculptor and a speaker – a multifaceted personality.

Rana calls Katuwal to be one *rashtra hitaarthi*, a true patriot. His nationalism is evident in his poems and songs.

Katuwal created the ideal literary ambience in Assam for the flourishing of Nepali literature. The dim fire was already there, even some firewoods but it was Katuwal who blew the coal the hardest and brought the fire to life. It was Katuwal who brought the Nepali literary wave to Digboi, and later he became an inspiration for the North-East and gradually a great name in the domain of Nepali literature in Nepal and India. He inspired a number of literary enthusiasts and his juniors – Yuddhvir Rana himself, Bhavilal Lamichhane, Khadgaraj Giri and so on.

As a result of the untiring efforts of Katuwal, Digboi became the centre of creative Nepali literature. It became the ‘Darjeeling’ of Assam during the 1960s, says Rana. A number of singers, actors, painters and writers were provided able guidance by Katuwal during this time. Katuwal’s contribution towards his society should never be overlooked, warns Rana. The Digboi *Rangamancha* or ‘Theatre’ was made under Katuwal’s initiative and supervision.

(Rana, Yuddhavir. Personal Interview. 31 December 2016.)

Katuwal moved ahead in his professional and literary careers with the belief that one should always uphold and nurture his/her literature and culture no matter where they get dispersed in their attempts to lead a good life. He instructs the younger generation of writers to delve more in representing the Nepali culture. Further, Katuwal’s poetry found expression in the celebration of landscape, because this world is interesting and enjoyable for the poet. And so is his life, he believes, though it is never devoid of troubles. As such the poet urges the contemporary and younger literary enthusiasts to keep on writing about the interesting landscape, about their culture, their happiness and tears. He writes in his poem *Kavi Prati* or ‘To the Poet’:

Hey kavi!

Aba kalpanama matra nagumsiyera

Kalpanama matra naalmaliyera

Vaastavma padarpan gara!

Yatharthako kaakhma khelne gara!!

Yatharthabadi sahityako rachana garyou bhane

Bholiko hamro sansaar naya hunecha!

Yas dhartile chola phernecha!!

Translated English version:

“O poet!

Cease to delve in that house of imagination

Having shut those windows of imagination
Make your debut in the world of reality!
Start amusing yourself in the laps of reality!!
Your creation of a realistic literature, today
Shall bestow upon us a new world, tomorrow!

A moulted world!

O poet!”

(Self translated)

Yet again, it is also true that young Yeats’s nationalism had found expression in the celebration of the landscape, particularly of his own Sligo and the west of Ireland. ‘The Lake Isle of Innisfree’ is only the best known example of this poetry of place – all of Yeats’s early writing is informed by the spirit of locality . The poet had genuine love for the west of Ireland. He admired the landscape for its physical beauty and for its connection with folk-lore and legend and myth. (296)

Yeats’ early poetry is characterised by cloudiness and imprecision. However, these two characteristic features of his poetry can potentially be his strengths if viewed from a nationalist angle. Nicholas Mansergh’s observation may aptly presented here as he speaks of Yeats’ dreamily visionary early poetry:

“Yeats’s vision of Ireland was imprecise, but in one sense it was that very imprecision that made it so stirring an inspiration, for it meant different things to different men and in so doing filled the minds of his countrymen with dreams and clothed in glamour his country’s past.” (Nicholas Mansergh)

Yeats had yoked the nationalist themes to a mystical and occult symbolism as he writes in ‘To Ireland in the Coming Times’ (1892):

“Know, that I would accounted be
True brother of a company
That sang, to sweeten Ireland’s wrong,

Ballad and story, rann and song;
Of her, whose history began
Before God made the angelic clan,
Trails all about the written page . . .
Nor may I less be counted one
With Davis, Mangan, Ferguson,
Because, to him who ponders well,
My rhymes more than their rhyming tell
Of things discovered in the deep. . . .” (1-12)

Yeats through the above lines attempts to represent his aim of broadening the basis of the national cultural identity in Ireland.

The Old Irish myths and legends were first discovered by the great nineteenth century antiquarians and grammarians. These myths and legends were popularised in the works of men like Ferguson and Standish O’Grady. Yeats found in those myths and legends a subject that was undoubtedly national, but devoid of modern politics and modern hatred. Hence it might appeal to many writers of differing tastes and of course to a wider audience. It heralds the idea that the unity of culture anticipated in the future would be sought for first in the remote past. And for this very reason Yeats employs the Old Irish epic machinery while writing the poems in his early period such as ‘The Wanderings of Oisín’, ‘The Madness of King Goll’, ‘Cúchulain’s Fight with the Sea’, ‘Fergus and the Druid’ and so on. These poems are remarkable especially because they do not have the strident, hectoring tone of militant nationalism.

The dissemination through the culture of the image of an epic, legendary Ireland by Yeats and many other poets, popularisers and antiquarians, did indeed have an effect on the popular imagination. Yeats believed in the salving power of the remote past. Though the conception was noble as far as Yeats’s hopes about ‘unity of culture’ was concerned it could not provide him the anticipated security for the

Anglo-Irish identity. This irony is fittingly observed by a distinguished member of Yeats's class named J.C. Beckett:

“. . . it is not altogether fanciful to suppose that Anglo-Irish writers felt, perhaps subconsciously, that the further back they went the safer they were . . . But this study of Gaelic antiquity proved more potent and more divisive than those who encouraged it could have foreseen. The popular imagination was caught by the picture of a glorious past, of an Ireland with a distinctive culture of its own, untouched by English influence; and the very vagueness of the outline left the imagination free to shape the picture as it would . . . [The Anglo-Irish writers] thus contributed, unwittingly, to the downfall of their own tradition. The ideal of a Gaelic Ireland bred an attitude conducive to cultural, and even to racial, exclusiveness.” (102)

It is noteworthy that with the passage of time the characters employed by Yeats in his works both poetry and plays have undergone a conspicuous transformation from a pitiable lot of the remote past to rather self-consciously 'aristocratic' people. This is Yeats's reaction to the militant nationalists' 'exclusivist' use of the heroic legends.

Yeats has written many poems representing an idealisation of the Irish peasantry. His subject matter also included those stories on men who dream of fairyland, who lose their brides to the fairies and on children who are stolen away. J.M. Synge, the renowned Irish writer is also known for the idealisation of the Irish peasantry. However, when it comes to the comparison between the individual approach of the two Irish writers towards the idealisation of the Irish peasantry, Synge had more basis in experience for the importance which he assigned to the peasant as a symbol of life's potentialities and on the other hand Yeats had observed the peasants from a distance in the comforting and Irish-speaking presence of Lady Gregory at Coole Park. The idealisation of peasantry was important for Yeats. It can further be understood to have a role to play in 'the cause' of Irish independence. Yeats could find parallels between the folk-beliefs and superstitions of the country people with his own theosophical beliefs. It is noteworthy that Yeats's conception of the peasantry was highly romantic and not social or political. As such the poet over the years constructed his ideal, semi-feudal Ireland:

“Sing the peasantry, and then

Hard-riding country gentlemen . . .” (Under Ben Bulbin, 77-78)

The image of the peasant was the focal point of a racial and cultural clash of images during the nineteenth century. For many Englishmen, Paddy and his Pig symbolised the comic slovenliness of the Irish, a kind of Caliban whose poverty and lack of education was proof positive of Ireland’s inability to govern herself. The rehabilitation of the peasant was of utmost importance for many Irish writers in their attempt to bring back dignity to Ireland. There arose the difference of faith between the archaic, peasant but spiritual Ireland on one camp and the modern, urban and materialist Britain on the other. The Irish countryman could never fall victim to the utilitarian materialism which afflicted the unfortunate Englishman, because his racial memory, imagination, even his very landscape, were saturated with the ethos of an alternative and ancient world. Yeats describes ‘The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland’:

“He wandered by the sands of Lissadell;
His mind ran all on money cares and fears,
And he had known at least some prudent years
Before they heaped his grave under the hill;
But while he passed before a plashy place,
A lug-worm with its grey and muddy mouth
Sang that somewhere to north or west or south
There dwelt a gay, exulting, gentle race
Under the golden or the silver skies;
That if a dancer stayed his hungry foot
It seemed the sun and moon were in the fruit:

And at that singing he was no more wise.” (CP, 49-50)

Thus Irish culture could hold its head up alongside English culture – indeed, alongside any culture.

The sociological accuracy of the portrait of Irish country life drawn by Yeats is not pertinent, for as he said in connection with the work of Thomas Davis, whose rhetorical narrowness he tried so hard to broaden,

“ . . . a country which has no national institutions must show its young men images for the affections, although they may be but diagrams of what should be or may be.”
(*Essays and Introduction*, 312-13)

W.B. Yeats's epic, 'The Wanderings of Oisín' is the result of patient effort and slow development with the curious crispness, delicacy, and artful simplicity of his style. His verse has a peculiar, indefinable distinction, as of one tiptoeing exquisitely through a minuet. The opening passage of the long poem is rich in the portrayal of the Irish culture, its past and its heritage. Irish myth and folklore had been suppressed by church doctrine and British control of the school system. Yeats used his poetry as a tool for re-orienting the Irish people about their culture. It was also the poet's earnest scheme for developing Irish nationalism. Therefore, his poems inspired from the Irish folk-lore largely depict the Irish culture as seen in the following opening passage from his epic poem 'The Wanderings of Oisín':

S. PATRIC

“You who are bent, and bald, and blind,
With a heavy heart and a wandering mind,
Have known three centuries, poets sing,
Of dalliance with a demon thing.”

OISIN

“Sad to remember, sick with years,
The swift innumerable spears,
The horsemen with their floating hair,
And bowls of barley, honey, and wine,
And feet of maidens dancing in tune,

And the white body that lay by mine;

But the tale, though words be lighter than air,

Must live to be old like the wandering moon.” (1889, 1-12)

The above lines tend to heighten the cultural aspect of the passage and make it more characteristically Celtic and Irish to its inmost fibre.

CHAPTER IV

LYRICAL QUALITY IN YEATS AND KATUWAL

Mr. Yeats is the only one among the younger English poets who has the whole poetical temperament, and nothing but the poetical temperament. He lives on one plane, and you will find in the whole of his work, with its varying degrees of artistic achievement, no unworthy or trivial mood, no occasional concession to the fatigue of high thinking. It is this continuously poetical quality of mind that seems to me to distinguish Mr. Yeats from the many men of talent, and to place him among the few men of genius. A man may indeed be a poet of high order, he will not be a poet in the full sense, unless his work, however unequal it may be in actual literary skill, presents this undeviating aspect, as of one to whom the act of writing is no more than the occasional flowering of a mood into speech.

(Arthur Symons in 'Mr. Yeats as a Lyric Poet')

This is what the great nineteenth century symbolist, Arthur Symons had to say about W.B. Yeats as a lyric poet.

The above quote in praise of the Irish poet is also applicable to the lyrical quality of the Nepali poet in the present study, especially when it comes to Symons's understanding that 'as of one to whom the act of writing is no more than the occasional flowering of a mood into speech'. One such instance of 'flowering of a mood into speech' in Katuwal's case can be found when his sister had requested him to write a song for her radio audition. The poet agreed and said *Huncha ni ... timi mero samu basi musukka haansi raakha, ma timilai herdai geet lekhidinchu* (Bhanu, 67) or "Alright! You sit beside me and smile; I shall look at your smiling face and write a song for you." (Self translated) The following lines were penned down by the poet:

Pokhiyera ghaamko jhulka bhari sanghaaraima

Timro jindagiko dhoka kholoon kholoon laagcha hai

Sayapatri phoola sitai fakri aanganaima

Bataasaiko bhaaka tipi boloon boloon laagcha hai.

Translated English version:

“As the sun’s rays spill and illumine the passageway
Love to unlock your life’s door if I only had the keys
Blooming with marigolds along the pathway
I feel like conversing in the language of the breeze.”

(Self translated)

The lyrical poem *Pokhiyera Ghaamko Jhulka* went on to resonate as one of the most songs in Nepali language. As Aarati Newar in *Mero Smritima: Haribhakta Katuwal*, her critical essay on the poet aptly states *Haamra othharu ajambari chhainan tara tee geetharu amar rahane chhan* i.e. “Our lips are not immortal but his songs shall remain forever” (Self translated).

Yeats’s pure lyrics and ballads, on the other hand are full of beauty and charm, for instance, the dedication ‘To Some I have Talked with by the Fire,’ ‘To the Rose upon the Rood of Time,’ ‘When you are old,’ ‘The White Birds,’ ‘To Ireland in the Coming Time,’ ‘The Lake of Innisfree,’ ‘The Stolen Child,’ and ‘The Ballad of Father O’Hart.’ But the masterpiece of all – an inspiration to the Irish literature and a possession for ever with an appealing universal spirit – is this

A Dream of a Blessed Spirit (1892):

“All the heavy days are over:
Leave the body’s coloured pride
Underneath the grass and clover,
With the feet laid side by side.
One with her are mirth and duty;
Bear the gold embroidered dress,
For she needs not her sad beauty,
To the scented oaken press.
Hers the kiss of Mother Mary,

The long hair shadows her face:
Still she goes with footsteps wary,
Full of earth's old timid grace:
With white feet of angels seven
Her white feet go glimmering;
And above the deep of heaven;
Flame on flame and wing on wing."

This song originally formed part of 'The Countless Cathleen,' being sung as a dirge at Cathleen's death.

'The Wind Among the Reeds' (1899), a collection of lyrics, and 'The Shadowy Waters' (1900), a poem in dramatic form are Yeats's two other works further highlighting his lyrical quality and his peculiar gifts of imagination and of utterance. He extracts from a simple and rather limited vocabulary effects of the rarest delicacy and distinction. There is a certain appearance of mannerism, no doubt, in Yeats's individuality. One can scarcely turn a page of these books without coming upon the epithets 'dim,' 'glimmering,' 'wandering,' 'pearl-pale,' 'dove-grey,' 'dew-dropping,' and the like. His imagery is built up out of a very few simple elements, which he combines and re-combines unweariedly. The materials he employs, in short, are those of primitive folk-poetry; but he touches them to new and often marvellous beauty. What in our haste we take for mannerism may be more justly denominated style, the inevitable accent of his genius.

Is it mere mannerism, for instance, that constitutes the haunting individuality of such 'swallow flights of song' as the following?

Aedh tells of the Perfect Beauty.

"O cloud-pale eyelids, dream-dimmed eyes,

The poets labouring all their days

To build a perfect beauty in rhyme

Are overthrown by a woman's gaze

And by the unlabouring brood of the skies:

And therefore my heart will bow, when dew

Is dropping sleep, until God burn time,

Before the unlabouring stars and you.”

Aedh Thinks of Those Who Have Spoken Evil of His Beloved

“Half close your eyelids, loosen your hair,

And dream about the great and their pride:

They have spoken against you everywhere,

But weigh this song with the great and their pride;

I made it out of a mouthful of air,

Their children’s children shall say they have lied.” (1899)

Yeats’s ‘The Shadowy Waters’ appears to be more of a ballad in dialogue than a poem in dramatic form if the following lines from the prologue of the poem be considered:

“How shall I name you, immortal, mild proud shadows?

I only know that all we have comes from you,

And that you come from Eden on flying feet.

Is Eden far away, or do you hide

From human thought, as hares and mice and coneys

That run before the reaping-hook and lie

In the last ridge of the barley?...” (1900, 531-8 540-4 547-8 552-7)

W.B. Yeats has in some measure simplified the task of criticism by collecting in a single book of ‘Poems’ (1895) all that he ‘cares to preserve out of his previous volumes of verse.’ The previous volumes were three: ‘The Wanderings of Oisín and other Poems’ (1889), The ‘Countess Cathleen, and Various Legends and Lyrics’

(1892), and a little play called ‘The Land of Heart’s Desire,’(1894). The second of these three books contained the following preface:

“The greater number of the poems in this book, as also in ‘The Wanderings of Oisín’, are founded on Irish tradition. The chief poem, ‘The Countless Cathleen’ is an attempt to mingle personal thought and feeling with the beliefs and customs of Christian Ireland whereas the longest poem in my earlier book endeavoured to set forth the impress left on my imagination by the Pre-Christian cycle of legends. The Christian cycle, being mainly concerned with contending moods and moral motives, needed, I thought, a dramatic vehicle. The tumultuous and heroic Pagan cycle, on the other hand, having to do with vast and shadowy activities and with the great impersonal emotions, expressed itself naturally – or so I imagined – in epic and epic-lyric measures. No epic method seemed sufficiently minute and subtle for the one, and no dramatic method elastic and all-containing enough for the other.” (1892)

The distinction thus indicated is just enough; but in whatever form the poet chooses to write, his genius is essentially lyrical. His epic poem, ‘The Wanderings of Oisín’ consists of three long lyrical ballads. The charm of his works lies in the ‘lyric cry’ which runs through them. There are touches of character in them, no doubt, but no character-development or clash of will with them. They show the melancholy race of mortals at the mercy of vague and for the most part malevolent external powers, and their chief beauty lies in single speeches, easily detachable from their context, each of which is a little lyric in itself. The following five lines addressed by Old Oona to her mistress in ‘The Countless Cathleen’ can be studied as a case in point:

“Dear heart, make a soft cradle of old tales,
And songs and music: wherefore should you sadden
For wrongs you cannot hinder? The great God
Smiling condemns the lost; be mirthful: He
Bids you be merry and old age be wise.”

This is a little lyric as complete as a quatrain of Omar Khayyam. Similar to this is a speech of the good priest, Father Hart, in ‘The Land of Heart’s Desire’:

“My colleen, I have seen some other girls
Restless and ill at ease, but years went by
And they grew like their neighbours and were glad
In minding children, working at the churn,
And gossiping of weddings and of wakes;
For life moves out of a red flare of dreams
Into a common light of common hours,
Until old age bring the red flare again.”

In order to feel the beauty of the above detached single speech one does not require the knowledge of either the characters or the situation. It is simply self-explanatory. The whole play might be called a dialogue in folk-songs.

With the dawn of Modernism in Nepali literature, a new trend in the writing of Nepali poetry was set by the trio, Gopinarayan Pradhan, Krishnaprasad Gyenwali and Hari Bhakta Katwal. It was H.B. Katwal, who despite having a good knowledge of *Shaastriya* (Classical) poetry started to write his works in a self created style of *Antyanupraas* or End Rhyme. This was his own strength and quality as a poet. One can also find a profound influence of *Jhyaure*, a vernacular meter, in many of his poems. *Jhyaure* was much popularised by Laxmiprasad Devkota, one of the brightest names in the history of Nepali Literature, through his epoch making *khandakavya* or epyllion, *Muna Madan*. The following lines from Katuwal’s *Baddnaam Mera Yii Aankhaharu* or ‘These Defamed Eyes of Mine’ depict the influence of *Jhyaure* in his writings:

Aansule mero tyo pira timro pakhalna sakdo ho

Ma rune thiye aansukei euta sagar bando ho.

Translated English version:

“If my tears would end your sorrows and woe,

I would have cried an ocean of tears by now.”

(Self translated)

Katuwal was unequivocally a great poet but he was also a lyricist of equal merit. His style of writing is one of simplicity and gracefulness. A collection of poems penned by Ranbahadur Chettri, Kaluram 'Abhaga' and Hari Bhakta Katwal entitled *Kopila* was published in 1957. *Kopila* includes more of the lyric-poems of Katwal. As a matter of fact Katwal did not intend to write in a lyrical manner but his style of writing was such that his poems, eventually moulded into lyrics. It is difficult to distinguish between his poetry and songs as there is no definite point of rupture between the two genres in his writings.

There was a time during the sixties that Katuwal was known more as a lyricist than a poet. His songs were first heard at the Guwahati Radio station and then they also started resonating at the radio stations in Nepal. In fact the poet had begun his literary career as a lyricist. His first publication was also a collection of songs titled *Geet Sangraha* published in 1958 which includes his eight songs along with the other eight songs of Ranbahadur Chettri, a fellow contemporary Indian Nepali writer from Assam. This very joint venture can be seen as the first published collection of songs of Katuwal. It was in the year 1960 that his famous *Samjhana*, a collection of songs got published. The recurrent themes found in his songs are those of disappointment, death, loss, complexities of life, degradation of society and so on. His songs have had the potency to penetrate through the sorrows and adversities of life and present a new vista full of hope and encouragement. Thus it is believed that Katuwal has been successful in opening a 'new chapter' in the history of Nepali literature through his songs. It would be unfair not to mention that Katuwal was also proficient in writing romantic songs that were utterly realistic. However, to be precise, it can be safely said it is "life that speaks through his songs". (31)

Katuwal's poetry is a fine specimen in the line of *Vakyam Rasatmakam Kavyam* – beauty in every poetic line. In its aim of attacking the varied ills of society and the blows and counterblows of life, his poetry has touched the reader's pain. Thus, his poetry has become the poetry of a common man. Every word in his poems illustrates the *yaantrana* or atrocity borne by the people and their struggle against it. Katuwal in his best known poem *Yo Jindagi khai ke Jindagi!* or 'This life, oh! What a life!' seeks to bring out the hollowness and artificiality of life and the 'visible world'. He highlights the angst and nothingness so essentially attached to a man's

temporal existence. This intent is vividly expressed in the following lines from his celebrated poem, *Yo Jindagi khai ke Jindagi* or ‘This Life, oh! What a life!’:

Khukuriko dharna paaila tekera jiunu parcha yaahan

Aankha chimlana pani jagjagi

Aankha ughaarna pani jagjagi

Yo jindagi khai ke jindagi !

Translated English version:

“Here, one has to live by standing on a Khukuri’s edge

Terrible brightness hinders the closing of the eyes

Evil brightness, yet again obstructs the opening of the eyes

This life, oh! What a life!”

(Self translated)

Similarly, W.B. Yeats being a mystic regards the visible world as little more than a hampering veil between him and the far more real and momentous unseen universe; he is full of pity for the blindness and helplessness of man, encompassed, in all his goings out and comings in, by capricious, vaguely divined, and generally malevolent powers. This proposition can also be brought to light by the melancholy theme expressed by the poet in his play ‘The Countess Cathleen’, dedicated to Miss Maud Gonne, the Irish woman he loved but failed to marry. The theme can be told in a few words: The land is famine-stricken; Satan sends two demons in the guise of merchants to buy the souls of the starving peasants; the Countess Cathleen will sacrifice all her vast wealth, her ‘gold and green forests,’ to save the people; but the emissaries of hell (the heavenly powers being apparently asleep) steal her treasure, becalm her ships, delay the passage of her flocks and herds; so that at last there is nothing for her to do but to sell her flocks and herds; so that at last there is nothing for her to do but to sell her own soul and feed the people with the proceeds. The absolute impotence, the practical non-existence, of the powers of good, and the perfect ease with which the powers of evil execute their plot, render the play depressing almost to

the point of exasperation. It is true that at the end an Angel intervenes, and gives us to understand that Cathleen's soul is safe, because

“The Light of Lights

Looks always on the motive, not the deed,

The Shadow of Shadows on the dead alone.”

Here, Yeats draws his inspiration from the note of oppressive melancholy of the folklore. However, in his delightful little book of prose, ‘The Celtic Twilight’, he seems inclined to contest the fact. ‘The Countless Cathleen’ is as beautiful as it is sad. The blank verse has a monotonous, insinuating melody which is all its own, arising not only from the dainty simplicity of the diction, but from the preponderance of final monosyllables and of what the professors of Shakespearometry call ‘end-stopped’ lines. Yeats eschews all attempt to get dramatic force and variety into his verse by aid of the well-known tricks of frequent elisions, feminine endings, periodic structure, and all the rest of it. And herein he does well. No rush and tumult of versification could suit his mournful fantasies so perfectly as this crooning rhythm and this limpid melody.

Keeping Classical poetry at bay, Kautsky employed the free style of ‘Antyanupras’ or end rhyme in his works. This poetic experiment was later carried forward by the younger poets of his generation. When it comes to lyrical quality and melody, Yeats is one such poet who seems to even disregard accent. He is inordinately fond of putting a trochee or ‘inverting the stress’ in the second foot in the line, thus bringing out an irregular pattern without losing the essential melody – a licence which even in Milton is very rare, and rarer still in other masters. The following verse from ‘The Land of Heart's Desire’ is suggestive of this particular irregularity:

“A wing moving in all the famished woods, . . .

And saw, sniffing the floor in a bare cow-house. . . .

The noise wakened the household. While you spoke. . . .

Your eyes lighted, and the strange weariness. . . .

Are not precious to God as your soul is. . . .

So black, bitter, blinding and sudden a storm. . . .

Have plucked thunder and lightning on our heads.” (1894)

In these lines we should have to read ‘mov-*ing*,’ ‘sniff-*ing*,’ ‘wak-*en*’*d*,’ ‘light-*ed*,’ ‘pre-*ci*ous,’ ‘bit-*ter*,’ and ‘thun-*der*,’ in order to avoid a marked cacophony. In one place the poet actually inverts the final stress, “We do but ask what each man has. Merchants” thus, producing a line of which the effect is about as pleasant as that of walking against a closed door in the dark.

Katuwal’s songs are primarily filled with the emotions of love and suffering. They are essentially ‘Romantic’ in nature and reflect the realistic pictures of life. His works are written in accordance to the changing patterns in social, political and economic life of the Indian Nepalis. They are characterised by patience, beauty, emotions, racial anguish, a futuristic hope and optimism. Love for one’s country is evident in the following lines from his poem *Hamilai Nirdho Nasamjha* or ‘Do not consider us Gullible’ –

Yo deshko maatole bhancha

Yo deshko dhungale bhancha

Hamro pani raato ragat yahin bageko cha

Hamro pani taato pasina yahin khaseko cha.

Translated English version:

“The nation’s earth voices out

The nation’s stones voice out

Our blood has flown right here, all loyally red

We have given everything, all our warm sweat.”

(Self translated)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The course of William Butler Yeats's eventful life, which ran from 1865 to 1939, coincided with momentous events in the public arena: the beginning of the end of the British Empire, the fall of feudalism in Ireland, the renewed struggle for mastery in Europe, the widespread collapse of cultural optimism, and the difficult birth of modernity. Yeats began as a dream-led Victorian and ended as a scornful modern. As one acerbic Irish journalist observed in 1902, Yeats 'dreams dreams and gets things on his nerves'. (Pierce, 1-2)

The contexts for Yeats's work stem from but are not confined or reducible to the colonial encounter between Britain and Ireland. In the context of Anglo-Ireland, Yeats's general stance often looks highly political, but against the background of Irish Ireland it can often seem depoliticised or even anti-political. In his Introduction to *A Book of Irish Verse* (1895), Yeats caustically remarks that Trinity College, Dublin,

“desires to be English, has been the mother of many verse-writers and of few poets; and this can only be because she has set herself against the national genius, and taught her children to imitate alien styles and choose out alien themes, for it is not possible to believe that the educated Irishman is alone prosaic and uninventive.” (14)

Like his fellow-Irishman Shaw, Yeats never felt any sense of inferiority towards England and never assumed he was the colonialist or she the mother country. After all, the English ate dogfish, put marmalade in their porridge, kissed at railway stations, and disclosed their affairs to strangers (*Reveries Over Childhood and Youth*, 1916, [R] 60-2).

“Every one I knew well in Sligo despised Nationalists and Catholics, but all disliked England with a prejudice that had come down perhaps from the days of the Irish Parliament.” (R, 59)

Yeats's view of Englishness is bound up with his sense of Irishness; his sense of Irishness is bound up with his view of Englishness, and in this he was no different from his contemporaries. Like, Rudyard Kipling, Yeats saw England as a political

nation and almost never distinguished ‘England’ or ‘English’ from ‘Britain’ or ‘British’. It was English, not British, commercialism that he attacked. Perhaps Scottish friends and admirers such as ‘Fiona Mcleod’ (William Sharp), Cornish friends like Arthur Symons and Welsh friends like Lionel Johnson found common cause in Yeats’s anti-English, pro-Celtic stance. And he impressed his closest American friend, Ezra Pound, with memorable attacks on the host country: ‘England is the only country where a man will lie without being paid for it.’ Of course, from today’s perspective, Yeats’s version of Englishness looks both familiar and dated, but there is more to it than this. Yeats went to school in Hammersmith, lived for more than half his life in London, and travelled throughout the country both on lecture tours and with the Abbey Theatre, but his understanding of Britain is almost entirely confined to stereotypes learnt in childhood and to images derived from his reading of English literature. (153)

In prose, some of Yeats’ opinions, spiritual and political, from today’s perspective again seem very strange indeed. In the poems they are held as dramatized ideas, often in dialogue within a volume. In style and form, his poems dramatize the tradition of the Romantic ode. Some of those set at Lady Gregory’s house at Coole, and ‘Among School Children’, are comparable to Keats’ odes, and the most splendid of 20th-century poems. His paradox of soul and body finds classical expression in ‘Sailing to Byzantium’:

“That is no country for old men. The young
In one another’s arms, birds in the trees
-Those dying generations – at their song,
The salmon – falls, the mackerel – crowded seas,
Fish, flesh or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.” (1928, 1-8)

‘We were the last Romantics’, Yeats claimed of his friends in the Irish Literary Revival. He has since been claimed also as a modernist, partly on the strength of extremist later poems which express, often with epigrammatic force as found in

‘Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop’ his sense that his soul was growing younger as his body aged:

‘Love has pitched his mansion in

The place of excrement.’ (1933, 15-16)

Capt. Stephen Gwynn in his charming essay, ‘The Aging of a Poet,’ has compared Mr. Yeats’s development with that of Wordsworth, who, after finding it ‘bliss to be alive’ in the days of the French Revolution, came in his middle and later years to be so fearful of change that he wrote a political verse which is still good to quote against Red Terrors and Bolshevism. Did not Mr. Yeats, too, have an enthusiasm in his youth which caused him to write the patriotic dream play ‘Cathleen ni Hoolihan’, a play – Mr. Gwynn says – that surely must have had the effect of making those young Irishmen that saw it think there was ‘nothing to be done’ but ‘to go and shoot or to be shot.’ Mr. Yeats, however, has denied that he had any propagandist intention when he wrote and produced this intensely Irish play. He was an artist – if you like, an Irish artist who took for his subject-matter the legendary aspirations of his people – but never a purveyor of opinion, or a preacher seeking to make his listeners think this way or that in politics. On this view of the matter Mr. Yeats should not be reproached, as the Sinn Feiners have reproached him, for being a lost leader of their idealism. Nor is his conservatism similar to Wordsworth’s, that of an anxious elderly gentleman; it is rather a lament for passing privileges, particularly the privileges of the poet. But although the poet cannot ‘set a statesman right,’ he can still comment on the tendencies of the time, deplore or praise. Mr. Yeats is not preoccupied, as Wordsworth was, with abstract ideas of liberty and order, or, as Kipling is, with conduct and other moral imperatives. His exasperations have been personal rather than patriotic; but if he has said hasty things about his countrymen, he has also said much that is wise – and much, for all his protest, that is beautiful and tender. He has written in his poem, ‘Easter 1916’, of the lives and deaths of Pearse and Connolly:

“Too long a sacrifice

Can make a stone of the heart.

Oh, when may it suffice?

That is heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild."

Wordsworth, old or young, would scarcely have been moved by so extravagant an adventure as the Irish Rising of 1916. But there are reserves in Mr. Yeats's emotion before the spectacle of his country's struggle. He has observed the evil effects of patriotism, how, when uncontrolled by philosophy, it may turn the mind into 'a bitter, an abstract thing,' thought into popular enmity. So he writes in his poem 'A Prayer for My Daughter':

"An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?"

Weak and hysterical natures who must be 'anti' this or that, if they are to have strength to live, who demand to be hated that they may hate in return, will turn to Kipling for their tonic. They will find no sustenance in Mr. Yeats's writings, prose and verse; more than once he has condemned on a Dublin platform the nationalism that is inspired by enmity. And he is not certain even about a political idealism which is founded on love, as his poem on Pearse and Connolly shows. Does not such idealism cause some waste of human quality in its votaries? Can the personality of the man whose whole life is bound up in service to a cause – however nobly motive be the service – come to its richest fruition? These are the questions which Mr. Yeats asks in those political poems of his, which are not concerned at all with political morality or political wisdom.

J.M. Hone in his critical essay, 'The Political Poems of Mr Yeats' (1922) recounts an incident when Mr. W.B. Yeats had offered to deliver a lecture at the University of Aberdeen but some students – so we read in the newspapers – put in a protest on the grounds that the Irish poet was a notoriously 'seditious' and anti-British person. And for fear of disturbance the authorities of the University intervened and cancelled the programme. "The silly incident is, I think, worth notice, because it marks the first occasion in recent years in which intellectual exchanges between Ireland and Great Britain have been affected by considerations of a political nature. Within Ireland itself Irish writers have been cried down on account of their political opinions, real or alleged (Mr. Yeats himself, it may surprise the dissentient students of Aberdeen to learn, has suffered from the suspicion of being insufficiently Nationalist); but I do not know of a case in which an English poet or novelist has been boycotted in Ireland for political reasons. In England the fact of an Irish author becoming known as a rebel has generally produced a particular demand for his works." (89-90)

Similarly Malcolm Cowley in his critical essay, 'Poet in Politics' observes that back in the first days of the Rhymers' Club, Yeats had told his friends 'None of us can say who will succeed, or even who has or has not talent. The only thing certain about us is that we are too many.' There was no doubt even then that some of them would fail disastrously; but nobody could have suggested that within a comparatively short time the Rhymers would be swept off the scene as if by a virulent plague. And nobody could have guessed that the young Irishman who addressed them – awkward, embarrassed, lost in private world, given to experiments in spiritualism and black magic – would be the only one of them to show practical wisdom and, after twenty years, almost the sole survivor. During those years, Yeats had followed a different path from his friends. It was chiefly his interest in Irish literature that led him to found the Irish Literary Society (London, 1891) and the National Literary Society (Dublin, 1893). But the question of reviving poetry in Ireland was intimately connected with the question of restoring the Irish nation, which in turn was connected with the colonial question and the land question – and the result was that Yeats for a few years became an effective political agitator. He went on lecture tours through England and Scotland, he spoke at tumultuous Dublin conventions, he presided over committee meetings in the back rooms of Irish pubs, and he was rumoured – though falsely – to have instigated the riots against Queen Victoria at the time of her Jubilee visit. His

own story is that he was merely lost in the window-breaking Dublin mob. ‘In a battle like Ireland’s,’ he wrote to Lady Gregory, ‘which is one of poverty against wealth, we must prove our sincerity by making ourselves unpopular to wealth. We must accept the baptism of the gutter.’ (191-92)

That was the romantic way of conceiving the part he played; and it was inevitable that Yeats would be unhappy when he found that ‘the gutter too was divided into factions, most of them hostile to visitors from the upper world. The Irish National movement in the 1890s was almost like the American radical movement in the 1930s, with Parnellites hating Anti-Parnellites and both sides hating the Irish Unionists almost more than the British. ‘Most of us were prosecuting heretics,’ Yeats says, ‘and our conventions . . . were dominated by little groups, the Gaelic propagandists being the most impassioned, which had the intensity and narrowness of theological sects.’ – ‘A movement first of poetry, then of sentimentality, and land hunger, had struggled with, and as the nation passed into the second period of all revolutions, given way before a movement of abstraction and hatred.’ Slowly the poet became disillusioned; and after his allies, the Nationalists had rioted against ‘The Playboy of the Western World’(J.M. Synge’s play) which was written by his best friend and produced in a theatre that Yeats himself had founded, he withdrew almost completely from political life.

The poet and Nobel laureate from India, Rabindranath Tagore praises his Irish contemporary and says, “Yeats is never lost in a crowd; his individuality is at once recognized. With his tall figure he towers over almost all and as you look at him you discover a certain plenitude about everything in him. He seems to leap upwards from the even surface around him like a fountain bursting out of some abundance of God’s creative spirit. There is the same incessant overflow about his whole being.” (1)

It can be inferred that on one hand the works of Yeats and Kautuwal are full of revolutionary ideas, their nationalism and lofty racial pride and on the other they have also equally incorporated the themes of inspiration, struggle and disappointments in their writings, thus closely observing the realities of life.

Among the modern writers in the international arena of Nepali literature, if there is any poet who has been liked and received equal respect from the readers of all levels – youths, old, intellectuals and non-intellectuals, all alike, it is Hari Bhakta

Katuwal. Therefore, if Bhanubhakta is the most popular and respected poets in the history of Nepali literature followed by Laxmiprasad Devkota, then arguably it is Katuwal who follows the great Devkota in the hierarchy.

Katuwal had dedicated his life towards literature. He was aware that his place of birth, Assam, though accommodates a large number of Indian Nepalis always lagged behind in the field of literature as compared to Darjeeling and Kathmandu – two places where the flourishing of Nepali literature took place and led the way in contemporary times. Katuwal felt the need of providing an ideal environment for the spreading of Nepali literature in Assam as well. With this aim in mind, he used to visit Darjeeling and Kathmandu quite often in order to learn and understand something new.

Katuwal had met the great revolutionary Nepali poet, Ishwar Ballav during his first purposeful visit to the hill station and had shared his ideas and his future plans in spreading Nepali literature in Assam. After a lapse of around two decades Ballav had interviewed Katuwal in Darjeeling and on a subjective understanding he had rated Katuwal above ‘Agamsingh Giri’, the *Jaati Kavi* from Darjeeling. Ballav believed that Giri always thought of the nation, Nepal and her people in his writings whereas Katuwal always thought of his race in forging his works.

However, Katuwal regarded Giri to be a poet of higher stature than himself. He liked Giri’s works. He respected Giri as a poet. In fact Katuwal claims to have been inspired from Agamsingh Giri’s poems that were published in journals like *Bharati*, *Gorkha* and so on. Katuwal like Yeats had a belated introduction in the field of Nepali literature. At the initial phase of his literary career Katuwal was found writing stories, poems, essays etc. in the Assamese language. Later, he became utterly disappointed to witness the poor state of Nepali literature in Assam. Katuwal felt that he has failed to love his race as much as Giri has loved his people. (Ballav, 16)

Katuwal in his collection of poems, *Yo Jindagi khai ke Jindagi* has incorporated such poems that have a deep connection with his personal experiences in life. A poem titled *Rahar* or ‘Wish’ found in this collection presents the rage against tradition but does not fail to ignite the flame of hope for the contemporary Indian Nepali society:

Rahar chaina malai baanchidine

Kewal itihaaska paanaharuma

Maileta baanchnuparcha aaune dinharuma

Itihaasko gatilai uchhinera.

Translated English version:

“I wish not to live
Just in the pages of history
I ought to live in the days ahead
And, so outrun the history.”

(Self translated)

The Indian Nepalis of the poet’s generation or those of the present days have always boasted about their history – their people of the past, their valour, their courage and dutifulness – with awe. But they have failed to forge something new. The poet educates that we are long done with the boasting of our great past and it is time to innovate and excel in the present. The above lines from *Rahar* are applicable in today’s context as well.

When Katuwal was in Assam, people looked up to him as a man of genius bearing multiple personas – he was then at once a poet, a playwright, a political leader, a social worker and a farmer. However, he was never in search of any recognition or he bore any pride about the fact. He always believed that there are two ways to lead one’s life – a) to take the constructed road and b) to construct the road and walk along – and he chooses the second. (Ballav, 16).

If viewed closely Katuwal’s works from the first phase of his initial stage as a poet and lyricist bear a profound ‘Romantic’ influence. Later, Katuwal went and stayed in Kathmandu where he got acquainted with the leading writers, lyricists and musicians of the time like Ambar Gurung, Nagendra Sharma, Ishwar Ballav, Bhupi Sherchan, Siddhicharan Shrestha, Madhavprasad Ghimire, Uttam Kuber. Katuwal’s familiarity with them helped him further nurture his poetic talent. Just as the literary career of *Mahakavi* Laxmiprasad Devkota is characterised by a variety of literary

modes and his poetic expressions also have their own uniqueness, he is still regarded to be a 'Romantic' poet. Similarly, Katuwal's poems and songs irrespective of the sources of inspiration have been classified to be 'Romantic'.

A poet full of optimistic thoughts, Katuwal was in fact a respectable figure during his heyday. His heart was full of compassion and nurtured in it the seeds of brotherhood for his people. Since the poet could not convert all his dreams into realities and often felt the void inside him and he sometimes expressed – *Jaati hunthyo baru ma kavi nabhayera ritto bhanrobhari mattiteil huna sakeko bhaye, mero deshko euta gharma ek raat, ek chhaak baalna sakne thiye* i.e. 'I would consider myself fortunate had I not been a poet but a pot full of kerosene, I could at least help to burn the fire for a square meal at one of the houses in my country.' (Self translated 27-29)

The period 1960-1980 can be seen as the most productive years for Haribhakta Katuwal's literary career. It was during this limited span of time that his creativity as an artist was the most profound. Katuwal is known to be a romantic poet from 1960 to 1962. Independence of the womenfolk and individual liberty are among other significant themes that the poet included in his writings during this phase. Katuwal is the pivotal figure in the whole of Nepali literature when it comes to writing in the genre of lyrical satire and the framing of *muktakkar* or epigrammatic phrases.

Katuwal had the ability to write with equal merit in all the genres of literature be it plays, poems, lyrics or novels though he is remembered mostly as a poet. If he championed the case of social awareness and morality through the characters in his plays, his prose collections include the subject of grief and hatred bore by the womenfolk in their social life.

A folk tale by renowned Lebanese American writer Kahlil Gibran is as follows:

Once upon a time 'beauty' and 'ugliness' descend from the sky to take a tour of the earth. Enroute they reach a sea-shore and both are tempted to dive into the clear water body. Beauty removes her glamorous clothes and moves into the sea and Ugliness too prepares to get inside the water after removing her shabby and tattered clothing. Both start enjoying amidst the splashes of the calm sea and Beauty happens to swim quite far across the sea. Having seen this Ugliness who has been swimming

closer to the shore comes out of the sea and clads herself in Beauty's attractive clothing and runs away. After some time Beauty comes to the shore and to her utter dismay she neither finds Ugliness nor her clothing. In a helpless state Beauty decides to put on the tattered clothes of Ugliness and begins her earthly trip. It is from that day that the world wrongly began seeing 'beauty' in 'ugliness' and 'ugliness' in 'beauty'. (Shrestha, 36)

In line of the above tale it is the entire Nepali literary world that has been seeing 'ugliness' in 'beauty', since a poet of Katuwal's calibre finds only a dim place in the history of Nepali literature.

The following lines from Katuwal's *Sunghaabaa* leave a compelling message on women empowerment:

Na maile timilai Lakshaman rekhale baandheko chu

Na maile baandhidaima timi baandinchau priye.

Mann lageko bela fadkera harek saandha

Ma jastai timilai pani ta hirne rahar hola kata-kata

Ma yessbela khola jastai bageko chu

Tyesaile kunai baandhale timilai chheknu chaina.

Translated English version:

“Neither have I bonded you by the *Lakshman rekha*

Nor will you succumb to my bondage, my love

As I please, you would also want to cross all the barriers

At your own will and wish to wander like a drifter

I'm 'meandering' like a river right now

And I do not intend to obstruct you at all.”

(Self translated)

These lines from Christina Rossetti are reminiscent in the context of Katuwal's *Sunghaabaa*-

“I love you and you know it at least

This comfort is mine own in all my pain.” (45-46)

Katuwal was known for his high regard towards the womenfolk of the society and worked for their empowerment which is evident from his belief in *Sunghaabaa*. He was also at once a poet, a playwright, a political leader, a social worker, a cultural representative and a farmer. Katuwal admits the fact that it was the Indian Nepali community of Assam that has been instrumental in shaping his multifaceted personality – “Since you have been to Assam, my friend, Ballav, you must have noticed that there I was at once a poet, a playwright, a political leader, a social worker and a farmer.” – (extract from an interview with Katuwal, taken by the Nepali rebel poet Ishwar Ballav, published in ‘*Akanchun*’, vol.2, vikram samvat 2036).

A keen interest in poetry and painting is discernible in the poet all his life. With regard to these two genres of art, Katuwal held the conviction that the medium may vary but the subject matter always remains the same. If a poet expresses his/her feelings through different words in a poem, a painter expresses similar feelings in a canvas using different colours. Therefore, if a poem speaks, the painting also speaks in its own *mukk bhasa* (original language). The source of both the genres is one but they differ in their presentation. (30-32)

In the poem *Ma Asim chu* or ‘I am boundless’ from his collection of poems titled *Badnaam Mera Yi Aankhaharu* or ‘These Defamed Eyes of Mine’, he writes:

Bolne mukhama bujo laune

Payou timile adhikar kaahan?

Khaana diyera gaans thutne

Cha ki niti yo vishwamaha?

Translated English version:

“The ever uttering lips have been obstructed

Who gave you the right?

To snatch away the morsel after arranging a feast

Is that the way of the world?”

(Self translated)

As evident in the above lines, the reader finds a soulful rendition in Katuwal’s poetry. In fact his poetry is the manifestation of the harsh reality – loss of identity, lack of recognition of their sacrifice – faced by the Indian Nepali community. His interrogations are simple. His rebellious consciousness has gained immense popularity and has likewise influenced his younger generation. The following lines from his poem *Ma Elaan Garirahechu* highlight this proposition:

Tyesaile maangera hami aba kasaisita kehi linnau

Hamra adhikarharu khosera lina sakne bhayeka chaun hami

Tee fyauraka hoollai

Bagh jastai jhamtana sakne bhayeka chaun hami.

Translated English version:

“Never shall we ask anyone for anything

We are capable of snatching our rights

We now have the tiger-like strength

To attack those herds of foxes.”

(Self translated)

The Indian Nepalis have fought and witnessed the World War I, World War II, Freedom struggle, Indo-China war and the Indo-Pak war. The brave Indian Nepali-Gorkha youths have sacrificed their lives in all these horrific wars. It is the foremost

duty and an opportunity to fight and die fighting for one's country. There is a hint of rebelliousness in the above lines but the poet does not express dissatisfaction.

Katuwal is a poet – a complete poet! He wrote poetry all his life and through the subtle depiction of the contemporary Indian Nepali social and cultural life, Katuwal paved the way for Indian Nepali literature to expand its horizon and make its place possible at the *Sahitya Akademi* and the *Praghya Pratisthan*, the two esteemed literary platforms.

Most critics prefer to place Katuwal among the Romantic poets in the history of Nepali literature. He was indeed a great romantic poet but his style of writing was simple, uncomplicated and original. It was through his simple writings that Katuwal broadened the horizons for the flowering of Nepali literature along the hills and the plains in India and Nepal. This is an unparalleled contribution in the realm of Nepali literature.

The poet's style of writing is simple in any genre be it lyrics, poetry or play. The lyrics that he wrote towards the fag end of his career are like a painter's masterpiece created by using various colours. This can also be an obvious influence of his own talent since he was also a master painter. Some kind of predicament keeps on engulfing the poet throughout his life. As a result he could not stay at one place for a prolonged period of time – sometimes he is found in the villages and towns of Assam and sometimes at the Royal Nepal Academy as an august member. He was also spotted at New Road in Kathmandu and sometimes at the narrow lanes of Bagh Bazaar. At some point the poet would be found at a prestigious state and the next moment in a condition utterly deplorable.

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