

Formation and Fulfillment of ‘Homing Desire’ in Ghimire’s “Diaspora”

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Abstract

Where is the home of Nepali diasporans? Is Nepal still their home? The recent theory of diaspora questions the traditional notions of home and homeland. Their place has been taken by the discourse of ‘homing desire’ that is the desire to make a home in the host land. Such a home has the quality of both of the homes that is the home they have left behind and the standard home they see in the host land. In Nepali Diaspora, too, such a theme has crept into literary creations. In this article Hari Ghimire’s poem “Diaspora” has been analyzed so as to see how it depicts the development of ‘homing desire’ and its fulfillment. The speaker of the poem, in the beginning, expresses his desire to home, i.e. feel comfortable, himself in the diaspora. Later he is happy because of the fulfillment of the desire. This analysis is primarily based on Avtar Brah’s theory of ‘homing desire’. The insights of Salman Rushdie’s idea of ‘imaginary homeland’ and Sara Ahmed’s concept of home in the globalized time have been used to support and extend Brah’s theoretical stand. It is hoped that this article will encourage further discourse on ‘homing desire’ in the study of Nepali Diaspora and its literature.

Keywords: Nepali Diaspora, homeland, host land, homing desire, subjectivity, identity.

‘Homing Desire’ and Diasporic Subjectivity: An Introduction

The confluence of emotion, desire and identity issue of the diasporans and the society they form make diasporic subjectivity. It is the subjectivity of an individual and the society s/he lives in. The compulsion of the first generation diasporans to leave the land where they were born and grew up causes the development of special emotions in them. Even when they settle well in the host land, they cannot be free from the influence of the homeland and its socio-cultural aspects that have been engraved into their blood itself. It makes them nostalgic; and consequently they are emotionally divided into the homeland and host land. This division creates a split self in the individual. It is the basis of the formation of diasporic subjectivity.

On the one hand, the same condition of subjectivity guides the desire they develop in the host land and the identity issue they have to feel and deal with. On the other hand, the new desire and identity issue help in the formation of newer subjectivity each time. It is where the

postmodernist diasporic thinkers such as Rushdie, Brah and Ahmed find the crisis of a diasporic self. Such a crisis can be further analyzed with the observation of the formation and fulfillment of the 'homing desire'. It is the moment when they feel that in the host land, they can create their ultimate home.

Unlike the strong homeland attachment and desire to return to it that the classic diasporas and their members (diasporans) had, the postmodern, postcolonial and globalization affected diasporas want to create a home of their own: "to speak of late twentieth-century diasporas is to take . . . ancient diasporas as a point of departure rather than necessarily as 'models' or as the 'ideal type'" (Brah 443). Their primary focus is not to return to the real homeland, but to create a home in which they can have the features of their home left in the homeland and the home the host land society terms standard of their type. As a result of this desire for a third space type home, these diasporans' subjectivity is different from that of the classical ones. Their focus on 'homing desire' in place of classical ones' focus on the return to the homeland plays a significant role in their differences. To look at Nepali diasporans and their literary creativity from this angle, this study has been done.

Problem, Objectives, and Methodology

Nepali Diaspora in the West is the result of Nepali transnational migration in the last forty years and so. Their major features comply with the features of the New Diasporas of the globalized era. The Nepali diasporans, thus, have similar subjectivity that is expressed well in their literary creations. Poetry, among the genres of literature, is believed to be able to give the best expression to such subjectivity. Thus, in this article, a poem entitled "Diaspora" composed by American Nepali diasporan Hari Ghimire has been analyzed from this perspective. As the poet represents American Nepali diasporans, it can be believed that the feelings expressed in it can shed light on the subjectivity of the New Nepali Diaspora. The major focus of analysis is the growth of 'homing desire' and its fulfillment and its effect on the formation of a diasporic subjectivity. So, how this poem depicts the growth and fulfillment of its speaker's 'homing desire' is the major problematic of this study. The following research questions are used to specify the problematic:

- What is the basic desire of the persona?
- What identity issues are raised in the poem?
- How do the desire and identity issues confluence in the formation and achievement of the 'homing desire'?

The major objective of the study is to assess the condition of the persona's subjectivity in connection with the growth and fulfillment of the 'homing desire'. For this, the research questions are answered with the use of interpretative methodology. The theoretical tool used to

support the methodology is Avtar Brah's concept of home, 'homing desire' and diasporic subjectivity.

Brah argues that "the identity of the diasporic imagined community . . . is constituted within the crucible of the materiality of everyday life; in the everyday stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively". She focuses on the idea of situatedness, relational positioning and a "confluence of narratives as it is lived and re-lived, produced, reproduced and transformed through individual as well as collective memory and re-memory" (444).

Commenting upon this argument Lauren Wagner posits: "The combination of Brah and Brubaker leads to a focus on the 'stances, projects, claims, idioms, practices and so on' that create the domain of this 'homing desire, and what motivates people to do in order to be diaspora.'" Then Wagner defines the 'homing desire' as a desire "to belong to a distant place" (6) away from the traditional homeland. Anne-Marie Fortier also extends Brah's definition of 'homing desire' including its embeddedness within 'motions of movement' and explains:

It is easy to read memories of homes as the longing for what was and no longer is, and the longing for home— homing desire as movement towards home— as a result of loss. When 'leaving home' is the condition of possibility for finding a 'real' home— and home as a new site of possibility . . . (in) this respect, 'homing desires' are constituted through both movement and attachment.

But 'homing desire' is not only about leaving the originary home behind, fixing it into a distance past, and serving hominess elsewhere. It can also be part of returning 'home' to remember it differently.

Leaving home or returning home [is] about moving between homes. In both cases, homing desires are determined by an initial movement away from the childhood home. (10)

The extension of these logics can also be found in Sarah Ahmed's idea of home. She argues: "Home is here, not a particular place; there are too many homes to allow place to secure" For her, home becomes "the impossibility and necessity of the subject's future (one never gets there, but it always getting there), rather than the past that binds the subject to a given place" (78). Thus,

The construction of "home" involves not only a spatial arrangement, but also a transformation of the space into a meaningful place where the occupant inscribes his or her values. Subsequently, it becomes a cultural index. It cannot be encapsulated solely by physical architecture. Its formation indexes the relationship between the occupant and home as a concept or as a physical presence of spatial arrangement, a place where people can locate their identities. (Wong 148)

It shows that the “relationship between an individual and home evolves and so does the sense of belonging.” Wong further states: “The once closed and homogeneous space of home becomes more metamorphic” (151). With this conditioning, home “becomes a space of negotiation” (153). It further establishes that “home is a place related to our dreams” (154). So, the ‘homing desire’ is “a desire for future” in which returning home means “not to return to the home that one departed from, but to a home that one seeks” (154). Consequently, the construction of home involves “not only a spatial arrangement, but also a transformation of the space into a meaningful place where the occupant inscribes his or her values.” Subsequently, it “becomes a cultural index” (155). The poem is interpreted with the use of these theoretical standpoints related to the ideas of ‘home’ and ‘homing desire’.

Nepali Diasporic Subjectivity: A Review of Literature

New Nepali Diaspora, also known as the insipient diaspora, is a globalization-affected phenomenon that started to be formed in the 1970s i.e. 2030s BS (Subedi 6). As a result of growing globalization and its effect, Nepali transnational migration took a significant leap in the 1990s and 2000s. This has resulted into the gradual growth of Nepali diasporic societies in the West, especially in the UK, the USA and the Canada. Nepali people who migrated to these lands with the decision to have permanent settlement there have developed such a society. Even those who reached there as students and refugees rarely return to Nepal. In the long run, these people manage their permanent settlement there. Unlike the classical diasporas that are formed with mass-level expulsion from their homelands, these people and the society that they form there do not have the strong desire to return home. Because of the revolution in the field of communication technology, now these people do not feel disconnected from their homelands to the level the members of classical diasporas had to feel. These conditions help in the development of a special subjectivity of the Nepali diasporans who desire for ‘homing’ in the host land instead of returning to the homeland.

Such subjectivity is expressed through diasporic Nepali poetry that basically deals with the emotion, desire and identity of the diasporans. Critics Taranath Sharma, Govinda Raj Bhattarai, Khagendraprasad Luitel and Homanath Subedi have dealt with these aspects of diasporic Nepali poetry. Sharma thinks that diasporic Nepali poetry is full of clarity, sensitivity and compassion. He believes that it is the result of a purified Nepali genius after their abandonment of the nation. As a result, in these poems the voice of Nepal has been expressed incorporating pure Nepali music and the vibration of the Nepali soul. These creators, according to Sharma, have immersed into imagination with the memory of Nepal. They write about the lack of peace, good management and security crisis that prevails in Nepal. These and many other realities in Nepal have touched the sensitive feelings of diasporic Nepali poets; and the same has got an expression through their creations (32-33). These poems connect Nepal and its diasporans.

Critic Govinda Raj Bhattarai finds that though the Nepali diasporans are in the foreign land, their emotion, feelings and memories have reached to their original land, i.e. Nepal. They have been entangled with their villages, their nation. Their memories connect them with their ethnic thoughts, their origin, rustic simplicity, beauty and even the pains that they have left back and that they have earned later (*Uttaraadhunik* 144). Bhattarai also addresses the issue of identity as the major issue of Nepali Diaspora and its poetry. In his book *Nepaalee Daayaasporaa: Siddhaanta Ra Samaalochanaa [Nepali Diaspora: Theory and Criticism]*, Bhattarai gives a detail analysis of the major issues of diasporic Nepali poetry. He argues that these poems have displayed the diversity of feelings and wonder of newly earned life in the host land (180). Because of the loss of already established identity in the homeland, the diasporans have to work for the creation of new identity in the host land.

This identity crisis works as the root cause of many diasporic poetic creations. The conflicting feelings and images used in some of the poems exemplify this reality. Even when they have lost their culture, they are compelled to live in the memory and paradox (187). When they have to live in the host land, they begin to connect the images from both the lands. They gradually begin to be sensitive even to the geography and incidents of the new land of settlement. Bhattarai describes it as an opportunity for those who have reached to the new space (188). Bhattarai adds that it is not the time of forced labour and mass expulsion at least in the case of Nepali diasporans.

Those who have settled in the West are basically educated, high-skilled and courageous Nepalis. So their lives and feelings are the results of their own choice. That is why; when the diasporans reach to the second stage of diaspora formation, they begin to pacify their pains, and accept even the host land as their land of choice (189). They learn to adjust their life there; but it is not an easy task. They have to accommodate with diverse cultures, civilizations and conditions. Even then some kind of regret lurks in their minds (190). So, to decrease all these socio-psychological problems, the Nepali diasporans have formed different groups and established their organizations. Through them, they try to create an image of Nepal both in reality and in their imaginations. The same has been expressed in their poetic creations (194). Bhattarai finally encourages the diasporans to feel good and develop a positive attitude towards the host land.

He explains this with the example of the poem by Homanath Subedi. Subedi uses the myth of Krishna in connection with his two mothers: Devaki and Yasoda. The diasporans live in the host land. So it is like Yasoda who rears them. But they cannot be separated from Devaki, the homeland Nepal, the mother who gave birth to them and her blood makes their life. So, both of them are respectable. That is why; Nepali diasporans need to be grateful to both Nepal (as homeland) and their respective host lands (200). Bhattarai has dealt with both the traditional

homeland-centric diasporic poems and the latest 'homing desire' centric discourse of the diaspora.

But other critics have focused only on the homeland-centric traditional approach to the life and creation of Nepali diasporans. Critic Luitel argues that there is a close connection between Nepali diasporic poetry and the Nepali nationality (18). He posits that Nepali diasporic poetry gives expression to the compulsion of Nepali citizens to leave the nation in search of better future. They are compelled to accept the foreign land as their own land. This absurdity has become the reality of Nepali diasporans and the same is expressed in their creativity (3). Luitel asserts that many of the Nepali diasporic poets have tried to give voice to their pains in the host land, the pangs of separation from the homeland, and the difficult psychology of non-identity.

In total, identity crisis is the major condition of these poets and the major theme of their poetic creations (17-18). Keeping it at the centre the themes related to the love of Nepal, need of progress, national unity, need of the end of poor condition of the nation and absurd politics have got their chance to be expressed. Similarly, the condition of women, excess value attached with money and other properties, depletion of humanity, pitiable old age, and the depiction of mechanical life are other themes of Nepali diasporic poetry (19-26). Luitel praises the use of simple, lucid and correct language, and appropriate use of images, symbols, similes, metaphors and myths in these poems (28). All these are related to the connection between Nepal as a homeland and its influence on diasporic Nepali poetry.

The next critic on diasporic Nepali poetry is Homanath Subedi. His book *Samudraparakaa Samaalochana [Criticism Across the Ocean]* deals with the major collections of diasporic Nepali poems published up to 2009. He has analyzed some of the collections from the perspectives of subject matter and art. He has enlisted the following themes these poems deal with: beauty and love of Nepal, love of the new land i.e. the host land, dissatisfaction with the contemporary condition of Nepal, society, human freedom, culture, voice of the diasporas, suggestions for life, growing inhumanity, existential condition, nationalism, politics and political consciousness, human psychology, language, sex, portrayal of the females, thoughts on life and other general humanitarian issues. He has also analyzed the use of imagery, symbols, figures of speech, qualities and the play with the power of words, imagination and musicality of the poems published in these collections.

The above discussed critics and their critical writings on diasporic Nepali poetry basically deal with how diasporic Nepali poetic creations connect the Nepali diasporans with Nepal. Most of the poems deal with the same relation. Very few poems deal with the diasporic Nepali poets' and people's praise of the host land and their attempt to emotionally adjust in the new land. The 'homing desire' of the diasporans is not still brought into the critical discourse of diasporic Nepali poetry. But as critic Govinda Ra Bhattarai has suggested, it is necessary to

deal with this emerging aspect of diasporic Nepali life and its literature. Thus, the following discussion concentrates on how Ghimire's poem deals with the latest type of Nepali diasporic subjectivity in connection with their 'homing desire'.

'Homing Desire': Formation and Fulfillment

Basically, a diasporan is a person who is compelled to leave his/her already existing home (in the homeland) and has to live in a strange land (host land). For the classical diasporans, the home that is left behind in the homeland is a place of ultimate return. It is because "[m]uch of the identity of these people is attached to their forefather's home, and by leaving it they ultimately leave a piece of themselves"; and some of them "never fully recover from it." But the idea of home "has changed along with the notion of diaspora" (Reis 48). Now, the primary connotation of home is "of the private space from which the individual travels into the larger arenas of life and to which s/he returns at the end of the day" (49). As the diasporans cannot return to their ancestral home at the end of each work day, for them the primary home now cannot be the ancestral one. It is surely the home they have created in the host land. But this new home does not end up at this geographic space only. It is, at the same time, an imaginary construct. It is where one feels safety, security and satisfaction in both the physical and mental aspects. This is the reason why home is sometimes termed as "a large cradle" (50). Moreover, a home is "very symbolic", and it also can be seen "as a metonymy of who we are" (51). For the diasporans of the globalized era, this symbolic value of home comes to the forefront. Ghimire's poem "Diaspora" deals with the same.

The speaker in the poem is a lover of freedom, humanity and adventure. He is always in need of flight and freedom. The very first line of the poem exhibits it: "A pigeon—that's who I am." It shows his personality. With the use of the symbols of pigeon he has tried to establish himself as a lover of peace, flight and freedom. The second line adds power to the idea: "Sailing expressly through the clouds." The image of a bird sailing in the sky that is full of clouds shows the obstruction that may hamper the desire of the persona. The third line gives a serious turn to the meaning of the poem. Why is the bird sailing so even in the cloud? The answer is: "In search of precious feed" (l. 3). Why should a bird search for food in the sky? Probably because the land where it lives cannot supply it; or its supply is not as precious as the bird wants to have. Up to this line, there lurks a suspicion on the emotional condition of the bird i.e. the speaker / persona of the poem.

The fourth line nearly reveals it: "I'm a pigeon in complete abandon." It shows that it is not doing all these with ease. It is not its primary desire; but the result of the compulsion the life has put upon it. It is compelled to abandon what it had; and the result is this flight with difficulty and uncertainty. Here, the poem reveals the symbolic connotation of the 'bird'. It is no one other than a diasporan. For a diasporan there is nowhere to return; and even nowhere to

make a definite reach. The whole life is destined to soar in the cloudy sky that does not provide satisfaction either. This compulsion has put a freedom on him: “A replica of peace and freedom” (l. 5). He seems to be peaceful; he seems to be free as there is nothing to bind him, to control him. But is he really free and peaceful? Here comes the connection with the meaning of the title of the poem.

Diaspora or the host land society of the homelander is a space of freedom and flight for the diasporans. It is neither the land of their origin nor the land without its intrusion. A diasporan is seen to be peaceful and free. But in reality, his/her flight is obstructed by many difficulties like that a cloud creates for a bird in flight. It is not his primary wish; but a compulsion caused either by living condition in the homeland or by his/her own ambition. Whatever is the reason, now the diasporan is an abandoned being. It is the condition of being plucked out of the root and fixed permanently in a route that probably does not lead to an ultimate destination. In this connection, the idea of home is “key to the understanding of diaspora as it routes itself to the identity of the diasporic subject” (Raj 91). Thus, the first stanza of the poem creates a background for the development of a diasporic self.

Then the second stanza exhibits the quality of a Nepali diasporan:

I'm industrious as I'm confident
I work in my field in freedom
I'm a labourer an active person
I'm a lover of freedom
A true friend of humanity. (ll. 6-10)

Such a good Nepali citizen has to leave the lovey nation; and he has to be a diasporan. Why so? The third stanza has clarified it:

However,
As soon as bogged down too much
Under enormous pressure
Pressure of navigating through
Obstacles of daily sustenance
Pressure of wanting to realize
A bright future of my family
Left behind I have my roots, my soil
In search of a better livelihood
And thus have landed in America. (ll. 11-20)

This is the story of every Nepali citizen who has left the nation to turn oneself into a diasporan. Once the person is in the diaspora, and s/he cannot return to the homeland to resettle

there, he has taken the life in the host land in different light. He realizes that his roots (cultural, physical) are left behind in Nepal. The soil that he touched at first in his life cannot be brought together. As a result, he has to make work with the new, strange soil now. But he has accepted that even the new land is similar to his homeland: “My own land and this land / Both have similar scent” (ll. 22-23). Though he does not take the new land as his own land, he finds it also similar to his homeland, i.e. Nepal. He now has come to know; and so has realized that the new land can never be his land with the level of affinity the homeland that he has left behind used to be and still is. The use of the term “my own land” for Nepal and “this land” for the USA, the host land indicates the difference of his emotional attachment with these two lands.

But it is not good for him just to see the differences and worry about his condition. Anyway, he is not going to return to Nepal. He is not a classical diasporan who, at any cost, wants to return to the homeland that is left behind. He is a diasporan of the global age. He wants to live in the host land, wants to develop a society of his homeland-originated people, develop a cultural set up where they at least can feel that they are different from the mainstream host land society; and there they can create their own identity that is the sum total of their culture of the homeland, and the culture they have learnt and acquired in the host land. It is not like both of them; and so is of a third type: “Diaspora places emphasis on the hybridity of ties that bind migrants / immigrants in a ‘host society’ to their place of origin thereby rejecting notions of pure origins and identities” (Winland 51). It shows how diasporic place is “a hybrid space motivated by historical changes” resulting into the diasporic subject as a being “torn-between two different homes” (Raj 87). Here, “the cultural identity of the diasporic subjects can connect in a plurality of homelands” (91). The poem exhibits the same condition of the persona.

Here, we can also see the crux of the creation of diasporic literature. Primarily, it gives expression to the feeling of alienation and insecurity in the new land. Because of the discrimination the diasporans feel in the host land, they get identity conscious. So, in the beginning they feel that they are uprooted (Cohen 22). But slowly when they realize that they cannot go back to their roots, they begin to bring the cultural, social, political and historical aspects of both the lands; associate their differences and this discourse between two lands will give a new space for them (Izarra 341). At this point, they put their differences aside and search for the similarity. The speaker of this poem thinks in the same light: “A similar flavor hard to define / That perspiration and this sweat / Color remains the same” (ll. 24-26). It shows that diasporic literature expresses the present reality of the diasporans. At the same time, it gives expression to what remains in their memory that is mixed up with what may come to their memory in future, too (Kim 340). Such a mixture is something that creates the third space i.e. the third home: neither the homeland nor the host land, but an imaginary home in which they

can feel homely in the emotional sense. The speaker in the poem depicts the reality of this stage in the following lines:

I've danced the "Rodi" here too
As I have listened to scripted
I have seen my Dashain and Tihar
Right here with my family
Have noticed in a pizza or a burger
My own Dhindo or Roti
Right here I've seen an elaborate Nepali wedding
Just as I've witnessed a Bratabandha setting
Difference I find there's none. (ll. 27-35)

In the new land, too, there is no scarcity of the opportunities to observe and take part in his traditional cultural performance from the homeland: dancing the 'Rodi', a Nepali ethnic song accompanied by dance of young Gurung people; listening to scriptures; celebrating the Dashain and the Tihar; eating Dhindo or Roti, the typical Nepali food items; managing Nepali-style wedding and Bratabandha i.e. the sacred thread giving ceremony and its setting. But can they all be as pure as they used to be in the homeland? No. it is not possible. The loud music needed for Rodi is not allowed in the USA and the UK. The laws of these lands prohibit the loud noise these celebrations originally demand. So the original taste is lost (Shrestha and Gellner 353). Thus, the cultural mix has brought a change in the original taste of the cultural celebrations, too.

A significantly visible example of such a cultural mix among those given in this poem is the speaker's beliefs that even a pizza and a burger, the Western food items, are made up of. He thinks they contain Dhindo and Roti, the typical Nepali food items. Though the appearance is different, the raw material is more or less the same. It is a very symbolic expression. Though on the surface Nepali diasporans are different from the people of other origins, internally they are the same; same human being. Here, the tenth line of the poem ("A true friend of humanity") has got an expansion.

When one thinks from the height of humanity, all the differences among human beings seem to be superficial divisions. They are artificial, too. This consoles the diasporans of the globalized time. Now, they can feel the place they live is their ultimate home. It is the fulfillment of the diasporans' 'homing desire'. Here, culture becomes a significant aspect of diasporic identity in a new home. It (culture) plays "a fundamental role in the formation of diasporic subjects who in turn participate in the creation and circulation of culture" (Clo and Fiore 417). Such a "cultural citizenship" defines diasporic "identities and homing desire, through various cultural practices to reclaim belonging in the place of settlement, to challenge

social exclusion, and to imagine transnational diasporic communities” (Hua 45). So, the speaker of the poem finds himself secure in the new home. The following lines indicate it:

But my body of food, shelter and clothing
I find is more secure here
The immense expanse of sky of freedom
Looks more spread out here. (ll. 36-39)

Here, the speaker finds his American Dream fulfilled: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Nepali citizens leave their homeland in search of better opportunities for life. They include better food, better shelter and better appearance (clothing). The speaker, here, finds all these in the host land. Additionally, the “immense expanse of sky of freedom” indicates the real dream of liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Such achievements and fulfillments are rare in the diaspora of the traditional or classical sense; but it is possible in the New Diaspora. It does not mean that they have completely forgotten their old land of origin. The following lines show such a connection:

Yet my soil is very much with me
My heart is still a very close part of me
The childhood that I have braved
They’re all with me
They’re there back in my country
As they’re here in this unfamiliar land! (ll. 40-45)

The new home is not a pure place of single cultural index:

In the face of globalization, boundaries and distances are dissolving because of the flow of capital and people. A new global space is created. The rigidity of the boundary circumscribing home is challenged. The (re)placing of boundaries, which re-negotiate the demarcation of inside and outside, becomes the point of interest. Clearly, one both belongs and unbelongs to ‘home’. (Wong 155-156)

These feelings and realizations have shown that their imagination helps the diasporan “to feel included even outside their home country.” In such a case, “imagination is used as the glue which holds people together creating a sense of belonging even if they are living in a completely different country” (Reis 17). So, they can feel that “imagination is less and less painful” and “they are no longer alone” (18). Thus, the ‘home’ becomes a place “with which we remain intimate even in moments of intense alienation from it. It is a sense of ‘feeling at home’. This is “an emotional perspective: a place where one feels part of a community” (19). Thus, this poem proves that “[t]he ‘homing desire’ . . . is not the same as the desire for homeland” (Brah 177). It further shows the idea of home in the plural as a “conflicting site of

belonging and becoming where various discursive formations (political, social, cultural, historical and clinical) converge and then diverge only to converge possibly again” (Rus, para 3). Living with the divided self that is recollected to create the third-type of the self, the diasporans of the globalized age work with the ‘homing desire’. The poem under analysis is an example of how this is the case even that of New Nepali Diaspora and its members.

Conclusion

The New Nepali Diaspora has promoted the idea of ‘homing desire’ as that is found in Hari Ghimire’s poem “Diaspora”. Unlike the classical diasporans, the diasporans of the globalized age do not pine for the return to the homeland in the physical sense. They want to create a new home in the host land that is similar to both the ideal homes of their abandoned homeland and accepted host land; and such a home is different from both at the same time. This is the home not like that of their daily existence, but of an idea type that the diasporans want to have in his/her life. It also connotes the nature of diasporic subjectivity.

In the poem, the speaker is a Nepali diasporan who lives in the USA. For him, the new land is like the cloudy sky for a pigeon in flight. Such a sky is both the space of freedom and difficulty at the same time. In the one hand, there is nothing to obstruct his flight there; and on the other, the journey is not very easy. The root is cut off and left behind; the destination is not sure. But he has to work with it as there is no other alternative. Thus, the diasporan consoles himself with the creation of the third space where the good qualities of both the homeland and host land lives can be put together. It is his ultimate desire now, technically known as ‘homing desire’ in diaspora discourse. In such a home, there is the availability of homeland culture, tradition, belief and practices mixed up with the same from the host land. This admixture creates a special hybrid identity of the person. It is also the creation of a different diasporic subjectivity. Such a discourse and analysis of diasporic Nepali literature from this perspective are necessary further research areas.

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Appendix

Diaspora

Hari Ghimire

- A pigeon- that's who I am
Sailing expressly through the clouds
In search of precious feed
I'm a pigeon in complete abandon
5 A replica of peace and freedom
- I'm industrious as I'm confident
I work in my field in freedom
I'm a laborer an active person
I'm a lover of freedom
10 A true friend of humanity

However,
As soon as bogged down too much
Under enormous pressure
Pressure of navigating through

- 15 Obstacles of daily sustenance
Pressure of wanting to realize
A bright future of my family
Left behind I have my roots, my soil
In search of a better livelihood
- 20 And thus have landed in America
- I have realized oh so subtly
My own land and this land
Both have similar scent
A similar flavor hard to define
- 25 That perspiration and this sweat
Color remains the same
I've danced the "Rodi" here too
As I have listened to scripted
- I have seen my Dashain and Tihar
- 30 Right here with my family
Have noticed in a pizza or a burger
My own Dhindo or Roti
Right here I've seen an elaborate Nepali wedding
Just as I've witnessed a Bratabandha setting
- 35 Difference I find there's none
- But my body of food, shelter and clothing
I find is more secure here
The immense expanse of sky of freedom
Looks more spread out here
- 40 Yet my soil is very much with me
My heart is still a very close part of me
The childhood that I have braved
They're all with me
They're there back in my country
- 45 As they're here in this unfamiliar land!

Translated by Amar Raj Joshi