



## **Stylistic Exploration of Existential and Spiritual Themes in Sitaram Adhikari's Poem *Unseen Existence***

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the application of stylistic elements in Sitaram Adhikari's poem "*Unseen Existence*", focusing on how these elements enhance the poem's thematic depth and philosophical significance. Through a detailed analysis of diction, tone, imagery, symbolism, structure, and rhythm, the research explores how Adhikari conveys the existential and spiritual themes central to the poem. The reflective tone and symbolic imagery engage readers, prompting introspection about their relationship with an unseen guiding force. The findings highlight the interplay between style and meaning, demonstrating how stylistic devices amplify the poem's universal relevance. Additionally, the study underscores Adhikari's contribution to Nepali literature, showcasing his ability to bridge traditional spiritual concepts with modern poetic techniques. This research offers valuable insights into the stylistic richness of contemporary Nepali poetry, paving the way for further exploration of literary craftsmanship in philosophical and existential contexts.

**Keywords:** Unseen existence, Sita Ram Adhikari, elements of style

### **Background**

A poem is a form of literary expression that utilizes language, rhythm, and often meter or rhyme to convey ideas, emotions, or experiences (Fabb, 2015; Pariyar et al. 2024). It is a creative expression that can take various forms, including sonnets, ballads, haikus, free verse, and many others. Most poems would deal with the use of metaphor, symbolism, or other figurative language to create affect and a series of images within one's mind. Poetry provides individuals with ways to put forward complex feelings and experiences into condensed, powerful form. It provides a medium for the expression of feelings and thoughts that are difficult to express in prose. Poems can express deep truths and insights about the human experience. They serve as



a means of connecting individuals across different cultures, languages, and periods by conveying universal themes and emotions. Writing poetry encourages creativity and self-expression (Neupane, 2019; Ribeiro, 2007). It allows one to play with language, form, and structure for growth and development in a person. Most of the time, poetry invites its readers to reflect upon life, nature, love, loss, and other profound subjects. It encourages contemplation and introspection, providing readers with moments of insight and understanding. Poetry celebrates the beauty of language and the rhythm of words (Sulianta, 2024; Tavlin, 2024). It can also evoke senses and create a sense of wonder and appreciation for the world around us. Poetry has made, modified, and molded societies and cultures throughout history. It has been used to critique social injustices, celebrate cultural heritage, and preserve traditions and values (Lukas et al, 2024). Overall, poetry enriches our lives by offering a unique form of expression that engages our emotions, intellect, and imagination. It invites us to enter into the most secret recesses of human experience and, more importantly, into a world of communication with other souls.

### **Problem Statement**

Poem is a potent form of art that conveys deep ideas and emotions through highly articulated language and literary techniques. But the sense of the poem can hardly be sensed if its stylistic elements are not analyzed within a framework. The poem "Unseen Existence" by Sitaram Adhikari develops themes of spirituality, existentialism, and interaction between the physical and metaphysical world. While the poem reverberates with a philosophical overtone and is full of imagery, most of its stylistic features, including diction, tone, metaphor, and structure, have not been duly analyzed.

The lack of such analysis certainly restricts any full appreciation of the poet's skill and the deeper meaning of the poem. This study seeks to address this gap by applying elements of style to "Unseen Existence," thereby uncovering the nuanced techniques and layers of meaning employed by the poet. Such an exploration not only enhances the understanding of Adhikari's poetic legacy but also contributes to the broader appreciation of Nepali literature in the context of literary studies.

This study mainly aims to identify and analyze the elements of style used in the poem "*Unseen Existence*" by Sitaram Adhikari.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze the stylistic elements of the poem "*Unseen Existence*" by Sitaram Adhikari. The primary method involves a close reading of the text to identify and interpret various literary devices, such as diction, tone, metaphor, imagery, symbolism, and structure. A thematic analysis is conducted to explore how these stylistic elements contribute to the central themes and philosophical undertones of the poem. Secondary sources, including literary critiques, reviews, and relevant scholarly articles on poetic style and Nepali literature, are used to provide contextual insights. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical framework, focusing on how Adhikari's use of style enhances the reader's understanding and engagement with the poem. This methodological approach aims to deepen



the appreciation of the poet's craftsmanship while offering a structured framework for analyzing other works of Nepali poetry.

### **Unseen existence**

Do you know the man who drives you?  
He is better than you,  
He is your guide.

He is eternal truth,  
He is dutiful,  
He never deceives like you,  
He has resigned selfishness.

You are in his existence,  
You are only a cage,  
If you are worn-out,  
He may leave you.

His presence is meaningful,  
You are credited by him,  
Think of his presence.

After his departure,  
Who are you?  
You don't know,  
No entity you will have.

(Adhikari, 2024, P.34)

### **Discussion**

The poem "Unseen Existence" by Sitaram Adhikari reflects upon deep philosophical analysis of spirituality and existentialism, which the poet has developed through his mastery of using stylistic elements. This discussion looks at how these poetic devices contribute to the depth, meaning, and aesthetic quality of the poem.

### **Diction and Tone**

The poet uses simple yet profound diction to convey complex ideas about existence and spirituality. Words like "truth," "guide," and "selflessness" reflect the moral and philosophical overtones of the poem. The tone is reflective and didactic in nature to make one ponder over the dependence upon a superpower or invisible force that shapes one's life. This reflective tone is more soaked with the use of rhetorical questions like, "Do you know the man who drives you?" These questions drag the readers directly into self-reflection if something like a guiding force exists in their lives.



### **Imagery and Symbolism**

The poet Adhikari has used imagery and symbolic language to depict the relation between the individual and the unseen force. While the "cage" acts as a metaphor for human confines, the "man who drives you" is something eternal to drive one ahead and perhaps points toward some spiritual or divine entity. Naturally, this play of symbols opens doors for many interpretations, imbuing the poem with meaning. In other words, such "departure" alludes to the idea of death or the human race being very perishable; while man exists momentarily in time, the driven spirit of man sustains forever.

### **Structural Aspect and Rhythm**

The free verse structure of the poem reflects the flow of thought and life. There is no fixed rhyme or meter, just as in life, where nothing is predictable, neither is the unseen life fixed anywhere. The poem falls into distinct thematic sections: the presence of the guiding force, the significance of its presence, and the space it leaves if it ever decides to leave. The rhythmic flow is soft, with a repetition of important phrases such as "He is" and "You are" that highlights the contrast between the guiding force and the individual.

### **Philosophical Themes**

The key theme in this poem is the belief in the existence of some superpower governing human life with direction and meaning. By pitting the selfishness of individuals against the selflessness of the guiding force, Adhikari is criticising human tendencies to lie and be selfish. The line "If you are worn-out, he may leave you" is quite a reminder of how temporary human life is and how conditional this guiding relationship is. However, this theme of existential dependency is more strikingly appealing because, without this unseen presence, as the poet says, individuals lose their identity and purpose.

### **Response to the Reader**

Several stylistic elements used by Adhikari provide a greater involvement of the reader with the poem. The reflective tone of the poem, with its rhetorical questions, is so personal that the readers are made to self-analyze their lives and the relationship they have with unseen forces. The poignant imagery and symbolic language stir the inner strings of emotions, wrapping in a better understanding of the themes the poem is talking to. Besides, the simplicity of the diction makes it comprehensible to a wide range of readers from various walks of life.

### **Contribution to Nepali Literature**

Adhikari's "Unseen Existence" stands out as a significant contribution to Nepali literature due to its universal themes and philosophical depth. By integrating traditional spiritual ideas with modern stylistic techniques, the poet bridges the gap between classical and contemporary poetry. This fusion not only enriches the literary tradition but also highlights the versatility and relevance of Nepali poetry in addressing universal human concerns.

Thus, the poem "Unseen Existence" exemplifies the power of stylistic elements in enhancing the thematic and philosophical depth of poetry. Through its masterful use of diction, tone, imagery, symbolism, and structure, the poem invites readers to reflect on their existence and



their relationship with a higher, unseen force. Adhikari's work serves as both a literary and philosophical masterpiece, reinforcing his legacy as a prominent figure in Nepali literature.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the significance of stylistic elements in understanding and appreciating the deeper meanings of Sitaram Adhikari's poem "*Unseen Existence*". By analyzing diction, tone, imagery, symbolism, structure, and rhythm, the research demonstrates how these elements enhance the poem's exploration of existential themes and spirituality. The reflective tone and symbolic imagery effectively engage readers, encouraging introspection about their relationship with an unseen guiding force. Additionally, the study underscores Adhikari's contribution to Nepali literature, showcasing his ability to blend universal philosophical ideas with accessible poetic forms. This analysis not only deepens the appreciation of the poet's craft but also paves the way for further research on stylistic approaches in contemporary Nepali poetry.

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