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The Macaronic *Khyali*: Shifting Contours of Limbu Indigenous Aesthetics

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Abstract
This paper examines selected *khyali* (traditional performative art of Limbu) from the collection of Bakhat Angdembe and compositions of Swapnil Smriti and Munaraj Sherma in two major borderland contexts; the spontaneous embedding of Nepali and other codes into the paradigm of Limbu repertoire and the functioning of mestiza consciousness in the contact zone. *Khyali*, a unique four/five syllabic romantic folk song in *yakthung pan* (Limbu language) performed by young lash and lads, sets introductory inquiries to enhance the further course of y*alang* (paddy dance) and *palam* (song unison to *yalang*). However, macaronic shifts in its highly contextualized contemporary discourses epitomize the folk song as interstitial borderland text. The study addresses the primary questions of what factors contribute to the hybridization of *khyali* in contemporary contexts and what politics does its hybrid aesthetics promulgate in literary and social-political borders. Pertaining to these questions, the objectives of the study is to analyze resilience and resistance dynamics of Limbu contributing to the hybridity in contour*;* and to explore the politics of negotiation and re-signification of identity in literary and socio-political borders. To meet the objectives, the study applies theoretical insights of borderland studies specific to the concepts of third space, code switching/mixing and mestiza consciousness. Against the backdrop of this framework, the paper argues that hybridity chronicled in repartee results from the crisscrossed negotiation between Limbu ethnicity and counterpart cultures. The hybrid expressions and worldviews that *khyali* is filled with reflects the synthesizing power of Limbu people's while wrestling against the dominant borders. The poetic expressions in *khyali* function as their agency of resilience, resistance, reinterpretation and adaptation and their ability to recover and reinvent their identity in the face of a shifting literary and socio-political context.
Keywords: Borderland, code switching, mestiza consciousness, resistance, hybridity, contact zone

Introduction

The study analyzes the paradigm shifts in *khyali*, the traditional performative art of the Limbu people typically connected to *palam* a unison song of *yalang* (paddy dance) in the context of language contact and cultural negotiation leading to hybridity. It inspects the transformation in selected *khyali* of Bakhat Angdembe, Swapnil Smriti and Munaraj Sherma. The paper reveals a gap in the examination of *khyali* as a hybrid poetic discourse in relation to its linguistic contact and cultural negotiation. While *khyali* has typically been studied as a Limbu oral tradition, its macaronic shifts and the functioning of resistance trope against literary and socio-political borders invites for inspecting its borderland discourses. The traditional performance drifts apart from its original spirit as *khyali* trails the route of hybrid ruptures in both form and content leaning towards borderland juncture. Against this backdrop, I address the primary questions of what factors contribute to the hybridization of *khyali* in contemporary contexts and what politics does its hybrid aesthetics promulgate in literary and social-political borders.

The objectives study pertained to the questions is to analyze resilience and resistance dynamics of Limbu contributing to the hybridity in *khyali* and to explore the politics of negotiation and re-signification of identity in literary and socio-political borders. Using theoretical insights of borderland studies specific to the concepts of third space, code switching/mixing and mestiza consciousness, the study argues that hybridity chronicled in *khyali* results from the crisscrossed negotiation between Limbu ethnicity and counterpart cultures. The macaronic interventions on *khyali* unveil the double consciousness from the contact zone warring for new significations. At the same time, the herald of newly signed ethnic corpus promulgates the politics of reading against the grain of literary and socio-political structure. The hybrid repertories contest the borders of languages, cultures, and political ideologies while forging new paths for identity assertion.

The study supplies new framework of analyzing indigenous literature as the dynamic site of borderland text where new identity is formed through cultural resilience, resistance, and negotiation. It also theorizes indigenous borderland poetics debordering the paradigm of mainstream literary and socio-political discourse to expand the scope of Nepali literature. The section '*Khyali* as Traditional Limbu Repartee' describes historical significance, structure, and social function of *khyali*. Theoretical framework section discusses the concepts of mestiza consciousness, third space, and code switching. The textual analysis in 'Third Space Negotiation in Khyali: A Critical Analysis' explores shifting paradigms in macaronic dimensions of *khyali*. The conclusion summarizes key findings of the study and their relevance to the study of Limbu indigenous aesthetics.

Khyali as Traditional Limbu Repartee

Classically oral repertoire solely subscribing *yakthung pan* (Limbu language), *khyali*, a semi-lyrical folk song at its core, signifies a creative vehicle shaping the social relationships of the Limbus. A tunic constant meter pattern "structured in ten words, i.e., 3+2+3+2 in each couplet" (Kerung "The Exploration of Limbu Folk Songs") comprises uncomplicated syncopation with strophic forms. Since lyrics and emotions count the value, it applies extensive use of iterative vibrato. *Khyali* as preliminary negotiation or introductory inquiries creates an atmosphere to enhance the further course of dancing *yalang* (paddy dance) and singing *palam* (song unison to *yalang*). Such propositions manifest in *khyali* when young lash and lads meet at any social gathering. The performance can take place anywhere, but it should be in socially acceptable and recognized locations. With its unique features, linguistic games function as a form of socio-emotional wooing or persuasion and thus exhibit certain traits of courting.

Metrically defined verbal exchange with frequent paired expressions and appositives in *khyali* underscores metaphorical speech, and hence it renders poetic conventions of Limbu culture. In a social gathering, the female initiates duet-singing episodes on the condition that males appear as guests and vice-versa (Limbu "Majesty of Limbu Love Songs" 103). Whoever initiates the romantic repartee, it centers on boy courting or convincing a girl to marry him. The poetic exhilaration of the participants and turn taking in the conversational process hold the creative dimension in *khyali*. A highly metaphorical language of the repartee and the visual perception of the smiles, sideways looks, and body language of the parties serve as linguistic or even paralinguistic codes. The aesthetic purpose of rhythmic chanting plays the role of communal communication. Structured in verbal exchange leading to social relationships, *khyali* serves as pragmatic discourse in Limbu community.

The speech gradually becomes figurative in *khyali* when the introduction exchange premieres the session. In such exchange, participants extoll modesty as a great virtue to demonstrate their unfamiliarity to one another. The role relation between males and females is equal. A social bond formation process of *khyali* resembles courting ritual that involves "selecting partners from the members of the same race and class who are not only homophilous and socially similar but distinctive and have desirable attributes" (McFarland et al. 1597). The socio-emotional gestures evident in *khyali* echo the features of courting but it possesses creative dimensions. The boys invoking invitation to the girls hanging around in the same anticipation of recreational ritual manifests great respect for their opposite sex. As found in the *khyali* sessions, respect for women and their rights epitomize the semiotics of Limbu society based on matriarchal principles. For instance, a female participant unfolding the descending roots at the beginning of *khyali* shows culturally assigned preventive measures for consanguineous relationship:

Counting my fingers as a game
if we belong to the blood same
my mother is from *Hangsarumba* root
grandma is from *Meyongma* root
paternal grandma is *Peghama*
its me rooted from *Suhangma*
led by the care of *Phaktanglungma*
singer me, the daughter of *Yakthungba*
if it could be you, my family, or my kin
then, could be god's inflict for our sin
joined my hands, requested your turn
to tell about yours for the reason (Hang Movies 00:06- 01:13; in the verse above, the words *Hangsarumba, meyongma, Peghama, Suhangma, Phaktanglungma and Yakthumgba* are Limbu sub-castes.)

Khyali foregrounding the punishment in consanguinity suggests ethnic customary principles and ideals passed down over time in the Limbu community. In reply to the girl's query, the boy also unravels the genesis of his family as the discourses of prevention and persuasion to settle the love relationship leading to possible marriage. As his partner invents the repartee on the spot, the boy cautiously traces the biological details to guarantee further relationship based on mores and taboos as a cultural system steered by *Mundhum*, the foundation of Limbu life system:

Whistling back to the *palam* tunes
showing my origin and the runes
my mum is from *Sangamphema* root (Limbu sub-caste)
grandma is from *Chemjongma* root (Limbu sub-caste)

I am myself *Papo Sherma* (Limbu sub-caste)
singer, the son of *Yakthungba*
the huge river rock we rolled over
different types of blood we have each other
same blood we do not belong to I perceive
divine punishment we shall not receive. (01:15- 02:06)

Besides the romantic aura of the genre, exchange of biological and familial information between the participants manifests *khyali* as a barometer of the prohibitory cultural system of Limbu. If they are revealed biologically classed as being too close to "prepare the future love adventures" (Bista 44), further process of *yalang* and *palam* instantly breaks. In this regard, *khyali* adopts the essence of *Thimjik Mundhum* (ethics), "the moral principles, goodness and right action governing the choice and pursuits to be followed (Subba). *Mundhum* governs the entire Limbu life system, regulates explicit disciplines, and stipulates obligations to the participants of *khyali*. Such customary folk parlance in determining restrictive parameters perpetuated in creative means like *khyali* reveals Limbu culture structured in poetic propensities.

Third Space, Code Switching/Mixing and Mestiza Consciousness

Borders denote real and imagined, material and symbolic spaces whereas the borderland, the third space signifies a new culture or a new form of human experience stemmed from the contact of cultural borders. Homi Bhabha interprets the zone of cultural contact as the 'third space', "the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (141). His definition of the term implies cultural, linguistic, historical or literary exercises in the sites modifying the meanings of borders. In the conjunction of cultures, the lubricant sites of third space, old signs are "appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read a new" (37), to initiate "new signs of identity" (1). These hybrid identities in their performances negotiate the space to redraw its boundaries by disrupting the previous structures or the essentialist notion of cultural identity. He further claims, "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (4). Bhabha opposes the notions of fixed cultural identity and its binary paradigm. His notion reinforces the structure of the borders where subject goes through the articulation of splitting and doubling of identity.

Bhabhian notion of metaphorical third space as discursive and productive locus of hybridization for Edward W. Soja becomes a physical space for human interaction. Soja's version of Third space foregrounds "what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings" (2). His idea of third space highlights the social, historical, and spatial intra-activity in relation to the experiences and knowledge of people who occupy these locations. Soja's definition best applies in the language of hybridity. In fact, interchangeable use of 'third space' and 'hybrid space' question the binaries of traditional thinking such as real/imagined, physical/metaphorical, and local/global as they are dissolved, creating a space of multiplicity and possibility.

Borderland poets experiment with blending languages to juxtapose traditional figures, colloquial expressions, registers of discourse, and allusions to historical events or cultural references with contemporary contexts. Such embedding resonance indicates the shifting of borders where macaronic poetry combining the personal poetic and politics becomes a creative space of resistance. Borderland rhetoric in poems foregrounds cultural affirmation, resistance, and indigenization paradigms leaning on alternative identity. The crisscrossing endeavor frequently occurs in its implication to

code switching and code mixing or "the use of two language varieties in the same conversation" (Myers 239). Borderland poets writing into and out of ethnic tradition participate in a dialogic project to embrace a blending of cultures. Code switching in poems sharpens the awareness of the complexities of languages by displaying several languages overlapping, interacting, and jostling with one another. It provides new interpretations as the poetry shapes the convergences of peoples and cultures into the texts by breaking monolithic literariness. In the macaronic politics of code switching, border crossings and mestiza consciousness become the space of intervention. It creatively examines ambiguity, messiness, and unpredictability in third-space rhetorics.

Code switching and mixing renders the discourse of the borderlands in its double-voiced discourse. The normative power relationships and modes of knowledge production negotiate the reconstruction of the self of the liminal community. Such linguistic conditions arising between two cultures determine one's identity. The language of code switching "represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions" (Bakhtin 291) inherent in social and historical conditions. Mikhail M. Bakhtin further insists that code switching functions in the form of hybridization, "a mixture of two social languages . . . two different linguistic consciousnesses" (358) marked by "a constant interaction between meanings" (426). In borderland literature, the language of cultural crossings is evident, as writers combine at least two languages in a hybrid form. The figurative meanings of code switching and mixing disrupt the linguistic boundaries to render the perceptions of borders as sites of conflict and creativity.

The rhetorical strategy of code switching in poetry marks borderland characteristics since its inception by Gloria Anzaldua in her flagship work *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). In theorizing 'borderland', she instigates the concepts of 'new mestiza' (a liminal subject living in between borders of cultures, races, languages, and genders), '*mestiza* consciousness' (double consciousness of the liminal subject) and *nepantla* (the in-between space). In resorting to code-switching in short poetic lines, Anzaldua switches back and forth between Spanish and English language to offer a new way of viewing borderland as a place of transgression and hybridity:

Mira el mar atacar
la cerca en Border Field Park
con sus buchones de agua,
an Easter Sunday resurrection
of the brown blood in my veins. (*Borderlands La Frontera* 2)

Anzaldua's blending of Spanish and English to disseminate the racial, cultural, and personal mestiza originating from the people and places on both sides of the border between the United States and Mexico "yields new verbal possibilities, new images to deal with the stresses of living on tar and cement" (Algarín and Piñero 15). In blending two languages, she creates a new language or the language of the mestiza consciousness, "a new value system with images and symbols" that occurs "in the middle, between cultures" (Anzaldua *Interviews* 81). The inhabitants of these 'in-between' space, the place of contradictions develop a different perspective and systems of difference. In this space, the inhabitants of two cultures form a new sense of community. As per Anzadua's definition, the circulation between two different ways of knowing constitutes the fundamental premise of borderland studies. The term 'border' simultaneously implies a line of division and a line of encounter and dialogue. In the latter premise, it renders the borderland. In other words, border transgresses itself into the borderlands where resilience and resistance operate in terms of encounter, mediation, and negotiation.

Third Space Negotiation in Khyali: A Critical Analysis

Third space endeavors of *khyali* foreground macaronic discourse to show warring identities crisscrossing the borders. The border-crossing maneuvers in the repartee, via registers from other cultures, references to socio-political and historical contexts, and even cyberspace discourse, display their new dimensions. Recognized by society as the expression of social ethos, *khyali*'s borderland act begins by spontaneously embedding Nepali codes into its paradigm and shifting reference back onto itself. Code switching/mixing event occurs when the participants engage in conversation in the Limbu language followed by instant breaks of Nepali language. Focused on the addressee, the addresser uses Limbu language to signify cultural commonality but at the same time adopts an alternative affiliation to Nepali code. The following strophe exemplifies the transformation:

> *dholaki baja kebongbe* (wooden drum like Limbu ethnic musical instrument is all set)
> *saffodik langmala thebongbe*? (what happens dancing for a moment?) (Angdembe)

The speaker's reference to *kebongbe* or *chyabrung*, a Limbu ethnic musical instrument in relation to its counterpart, *dholaki baja*, a wooden drum common to other communities supplies the hybrid sense of cultural contact. The in-betweenness between *dholaki baja* and *kebongbe "*initiates new signs of identity, innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation" (Bhabha 2). The borderland between the two indicates the location for transcultural negotiation and collaboration, exchange of values, meanings and priorities. The shifting of reference back to Limbu codes in second line reflects the back and forth movement in the borders of two cultures. The spontaneous embedding process of Nepali coming into the system becomes an integral part of the discourse. Angdembe continues:

> *gewaara ukhu limmaanaa thenaa* (black sugarcane it is but sucrose lacked)
> *suhaaudo na pusto khemmaanaa thenaa* (neither befitted nor well matched)
> *ekohoro makai kewari laawaa* (young maize you might have weeded)
> *allaare ketaa kelari laawaa* (guttersnipe me you might have supposed) (Angdembe)

In a remarkable tempo, the speaker oscillates between two languages and registers. The predicate and complement in the example above are in Limbu, whereas the subject nominal cluster is in Nepali. Code-switching evident like this in *khyali* represents the sociolinguistic context of cross-lingual experience striking the Limbu community. Against the grain of the monolithic literariness, the poetic impetus toward conceptual coupling in the repertoire interbreeds the two languages. The playful compression of multilingual heterogeneity unveils the possibilities of distinct yet mutually reinforcing borderland paradigms. It explains the dynamics of intercultural encounter between sameness and difference of cultures in the liminal space. In the following merry making atmosphere, a girl participant teasing her counterpart not only traces the intercultural influence but also reveals political historical realities of Limbu people:

> *jyan matra dekhchhu man gayab* (body I see but the mind seems drought)
> *phulpati lyayaun e subba sahib* (hey! *Subba Sahib*, flowers we brought)
> *hajurko shirma talakkai topi* (glowing headwear put on your head)
> *hami ta garib yang nai hoppi* (but poor we are by our fate)
> *udima hidne man chari* (soul bird flies in the high)
> *I am sorry kathaibari* [I am sorry, poor am I] (Angdembe)

The honorific title *Subba* meaning 'chief' assigned to Limbu by the Shah Kings designating the authority of collecting land revenue and run certain administrative activities foregrounds historical subordination of Limbu people who had to offer "grants

of *kipat* land to non-Limbus immigrating into *Limbuwan* [Limbu territory] from areas to the West" (Caplan 121). This political course between dominant and Limbu culture paved way to the encroachment of Nepali language into Limbu's communicative system. Gradually, it converted into common register among Limbu speaking people. In addition, *Topi* (a traditional Nepali headwear) adapted as their cultural insignia signifies a negotiated identity between the dominant and local culture. The loss of *kipat* afterwards deteriorated the economic condition of Limbu people. In highlighting the poor material condition bound to open wounded situation of the group, the girl evokes resistance consciousness. She shows the contestation against dominant cultural essentialism from a marginalized position. Even English appearing in the repartee to heighten the merry making atmosphere expounds the parodic rendering of languages. In replying to the girl, the boy maintains the same fashion:

lekali pani semlaklo (cold mountain water shrouds around)
dukhiko binti hemrakro (this much is poor's pleading sound)
udeko chari pemuphala (flying bird went on flying wide)
hekyangso dekhi themubhala (what would happen from here ahead)
chinako desha kamnista (China with its communist rule)
sakiyo binti finista (this is the end, here I declare) (Angdembe)

The predicate and complement in the example above are also in the Limbu language. In contrast, the subject nominal cluster is in Nepali, except in the last two lines, which are in English. The interplay of Limbu, Nepali and English in the repartee enhances its macaronic dimension. The linguistic crisscrossing in the contact zone makes *khyali* a hybrid repertoire. The embedded language of *khyali* reads impure and unstructured from the perspective of a standard language as Pratt mentions, "like the societies of the contact zone, such languages are commonly regarded as chaotic, barbarous, lacking in structure" (6). *Khyali* represents bordered others constructed in response to or in dialogue with dominant one and are "merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations" (35). Therefore, more than its parodic significance, macaronic dimension in *khyali* foregrounds a negotiated identity. Above discussed *khyali* qualifies the subversive mode of mimicry contrary to the dominant literary structure. Such act of appropriation of double voice is attributable to the marginal discourse of resistance in the border of language and culture.

The idiomatic form of *khyali* keeps on embedding Nepali language into its paradigm. However, it does not limit to linguistic embedding when other cultural propensities also adapt into its matrix. Since borderland texts arising from the cultural liminality are encoded, and transformed in other cultural texts, *khyali* reflects the appropriation of Limbu to the dominant culture. Hindu codes devised by native Limbu people in communication process illustrate a gradual approximation of Nepali language and Hindu culture submitted into their cultural system. Therefore, beyond code mixed linguistic features of *khyali*, the metaphorical evocation of extant hybrid consciousness exposed in its Nepali idioms underscores the cultural affirmation and indigenization. The following couplet characterizes the trait:

Chandiko pustak thelaima (holy book of Chandi on the shelf)
Bhet bhayo hamro melaima (this is the fair where we met) (Angdembe)

The trope of *Chandi*, the holy book of Hindus juxtaposed with Limbu's typical social gathering in fair exposes mestiza consciousness between one identity and the other in both material and metaphorical circumstances of borderland. It stresses cultural borderland as flexible juncture where inhabitants of two cultural margins by using "reference codes between two or more cultures" (Hicks xxv) form a new sense of community. The role of referential codes "by means of which individuals and social

groups agree upon or contest the definitions of reality" (168) remains crucial in forming Limbu's hybrid identity as suggested in above strophe of *khyali*.

Using the codes of cultural fusion, *khyali* simultaneously engages in debordering the borders. In this regard, third space rhetoric of repartee evokes hybrid cultural experience that stems from multilingual and multicultural society. For instance, the contextual nativization of Nepali and Hindu tropes instrumental in driving home the codes of Hindu culture underscores the tendency of *khyali*. The representation of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of wisdom suggests the historical fact that Nepali speaking immigrants influencing Limbu territory were Hindus. As such, Hindu deity mentioned in the code-mixed verities of *khyali* indicates external influence upon Limbu:

> *Mul pani khaun ki bhal pani khaun?* (headspring or flood water to drink?)
> *Sristi gaun ki saraswati gaun?* (creation myth or hymn of Saraswati to sing?)
> (Angdembe)

More than spatial, doubling and splitting of borders occur on a psychological level, shaping the identity of the bordering community. The border reprises when a culture meets and clashes another culture anywhere. In such situation, borderland literary texts mediate on confrontation, appropriation, and translation, offering new significations. Speaker's ambivalence of the choice exemplifies hybrid identity of Limbu people. The reference of 'headspring water' indicates speaker's own original culture whereas floodwater symbolizes new culture assorted with the original one. Stuck between two cultures, the ambivalent roles of separating and connecting confuse the speaker. Moreover, dualism of his expressions hinged between 'creation myth' and 'hymn of Saraswati' reveals the contestations and negotiations of Limbu ethnicity with Hinduism. The former suggests the reference of *Nawa Chait Mundhum*, the *Mundhum* of creation providing the guidelines for the systematic understanding of the creation of universe. Conversely, the latter image of Saraswati signals the new value of Hinduism influencing Limbu ethnic identity. Speaker's liminal personae "neither here nor there [but] betwixt and between the positions" (Turner 95) transcends the idea of fixed identity inviting essential hybridization. The transgressive space of liminality invites the inhabitants of two cultural margins to engage in the productive potential of cultural fusion to form a new sense of community. The two cultures negotiate in an ambiguous and indeterminate manner in the transition and transformation into a new form of culture. The following *khyali* grabs the speaker's interstitial experience in his journey to Kathmandu:

> *bhagera gadi letai bhayo* (the delayed flight it was yet)
> *rajako gaunma bhetai bhayo* (in the King's village we met)
> *pashupati tirma birupaksha* (*virupakchhya* (an ancient sculpture featuring a Kirat/Limbu figure) in *Pashupatinath* (Holy temple of Hindu)*'s* bank)
> *bhassiun ki niskun manma* lagchha (duality in me, to escape or to stuck)
> *udhauli chariko gudai ritto* (empty nest of those descending birds)
> *dukhako chino menjosikcho* (the mark of sadness, just some words)
> *milanko mumdhum rachaula ni* (*Mundhum* of union we shall compose)
> phaktanglung bhai parkhaula ni (and shall wait in *Phaktanglung* (mount Kumbhakarna)*'s* pose) (Smriti)

Smriti's creative embedding of multiple registers into the matrix of *khyali* explains an exemplary formation of borderland identity. The juxtaposition between *birupaksha* and *Pashupati* bank foregrounds speaker's identity in negotiation between two cultures. His expression, 'duality in me, to escape or to stuck' provides the double edged identity. In such mobility, Smriti captures the movement of border constantly traveling and thus reinventing the borderlands. Poet sticking to *Mundhum* on one hand and adaptation of non-Limbu codes on the other, offers him a new signification of identity. In a productive

site of redefinition and re-signification, Smriti's narratives across the border of language, religion, ethnicity, and cultural realities offer the insight of borderlands rhetorics that characterize third-space subjectivities of resilience and resistance. In this regard, Smriti's *khyali* turns to be the locus of intellectual creativity leaning on negotiation in the borders of mainstream standards of language and culture.

Khyali's transition from traditional form to macaronic poetry follows experimentation with resistance dynamics. When it occupies border in the form of trafficked zone of confrontation, it becomes a space for resistance that provides the opportunity for transformative viewpoints from which to see and generate, to envision alternatives and new realms. In its interdisciplinary approach into resistance trope, *khyali* confronts and negotiates with the barbwires of hegemony. It articulates the narratives of life situation, place, identity and the politics against the regressive forces. In this regard, the repertoire's turn into political rhetoric commences resistance strategy. For instance, Munaraj Sherma uses dissident tools and codes to express gut feelings against sociopolitical disorders and pitiful conditions of Nepali society:

balakai nani chhodera (leaving the infant affectionately)
deshko maya todera (leaving the country desperately)
jholama passport bhirera (passport in the bag he holds)
rati nai gadi chadhera (bus in the night he catches)
bhirpakha jammai roeko (cliff and field dropdown the tears)
yo bato anshule dhoeko (the road weeps in pain it bears)
tamorai khola bagirahanchha (*Tamor* (a river) keeps flowing downwards)
magema ragat bagirahanchha (blood will flow if the situation demands)
prashnako andhi chalirahnchha (The storm of questions moves on)
shasaklai aula uthiranchha (finger against the rulers raises on) (Sherma)

Sherma captures the emotional and socio-political hardships of marginalized people compelled to move because of lack of opportunity, political unrest, or economic hardship. The protagonist's departure from his own country represents the phenomenon of outmigration, as individuals are driven to look for chances elsewhere by governmental neglect and economic instability. The metaphors of 'passport in the bag' and 'leaving the infant affectionately' highlight the forced aspect of migration, when ties to one's family and home must be given up. The poem juxtaposes the painful reality of migration expressed in 'the road weeps in pain it bears' with the natural beauty of the motherland suggested by the flow of Tamor river. The river metaphor also emphasizes fluidity of the borders where identities keep on changing continually as per the perpetual movement of people and culture.

Sherma reflects the liminality of borderland identities, where individuals are torn between a need to leave and an attachment to their place. This contrast illustrates that boundaries are not only physical but also psychological and emotional spaces. The landscape's tears representing communal sadness foreground the borders as the sites of constant struggle and desire for freedom. The resistance consciousness develops in the borderlands as alluded to in the stanza 'The storm of questions moves on / Finger against the rulers raises on.' Growing discontent and resistance result from frequent sense of desertion by the state. Poet's resistance against oppressive borders of hierarchy magnifies in the expression 'blood flowing if the situation demands'.

Sherma's literary resonance of *khyali*, plugged with contemporary political issue commences a borderland activity. Moreover, it occupies a contact zone when it interrupts the borders between frustrating halts of the insidious political system and the pathetic condition of youth marred by the system. Sherma's third space introspection with images of 'leaving' and 'tears' juxtaposed with 'blood,' 'finger', and 'storm' exerts political

resistance against the contradictions that prevails in the sociopolitical scene. His gut feeling and emotional articulations tugs at play within the contradiction between the remorselessness of the rulers and unemployed Nepali youths obligated to leave their own country. When it employs the imperative of resistance to remap and negotiate the borders between rulers and the people, it envisions a bridge across the gap between them.

Conclusion

In route from the folk romantic genre to macaronic adaptation and third-space strategy of resistance trope, *khyali* engenders the borders not as necessarily restrictive impasse of challenges but as the fertile juncture of borderland opportunities. *Khyali* repartees collectively foreground the complex interstitiality in which encounter, mediation, and negotiation shape the Limbu identity. The evolution of *khyali* demonstrates the defiance of cultural homogenization while integrating new influences into its matrix to remain relevant. They reveal the Limbu people's ability to recover and reinvent their identity in the use of poetic expressions as means of resilience and agency in the face of a shifting political and cultural context. Together, they embody a dynamic synthesis of tradition, adaptation, and evolution to offer a lens into the ways cultural practices navigate historical, social, and political tensions in the borderland.

They highlight the unique literary forms, styles, and modes of expression that differ from conventional frameworks.The advent of ethnic poetry heralds the politics of reading in Nepali language and literature against the grain of the monolingual paradigm. They offer a localized lens that values indigenous poetic traditions as equally valid forms of poetic expression. Furthermore, their study underscores the inseparability of language and identity in indigenous poetry, providing a framework for analyzing the ways linguistic nuances encode cultural heritage. The repartees foreground the themes of resistance and resilience to show indigenous poetry as a site of cultural empowerment, and resistance against cultural erasures. They deliver indigenous literary aesthetics that prioritize the oral, communal, and spiritual dimensions of poetry. These aesthetics broaden the scope of literary criticism to include indigenous philosophies and values. The study of *khyali* bridges multiple disciplines, including anthropology, linguistics, ethnomusicology, and literary studies. This interdisciplinary approach expands the theoretical tools available for indigenous poetry reading, allowing for more nuanced and holistic interpretations. By engaging deeply with indigenous folk songs like *khyali*, scholars can further develop theoretical frameworks that would unveil the distinctiveness of indigenous poetry while expanding the global understanding of literary traditions.

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