

IRONIC SUBVERSION IN L P DEVKOTA'S "THE ILLITERATE"

Nabaraj Dhungel

Research Scholar, Permanent Faculty of Tribhuvan University, Department of English, Campus of the International Languages (Bisha Bhasa) & Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Nepal

Received: 21 Jan 2021

Accepted: 04 Feb 2021

Published: 10 Feb 2021

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to explore how L P Devkota, in his poem "The Illiterate", subverts the conventionally established notion that the literate people are civilized whereas the illiterate are uncivilized. It also shows Devkota's effort to dismantle the hypocrisies, pomposities, arrogance, follies, fopperies, atrocities, discriminatory attitudes and calculating thoughts of the so-called literate people with the motive of establishing a harmonious society through education based on morality, humanity and equality first to the literate. The poet, being a humanist, disrupts all the hierarchical and discriminatory beliefs and practices throwing the center to the margin and bringing the margin to the center for raising the voice of the voiceless. His mission and vision of humanity in the society challenges the discourse of the mainstream that superiorizes the literate and inferiorizes the illiterate. Outwardly, the poet compares the illiterate people with the animals using the animal imageries like acephalous, dog, snake, dodo, mammoth, owl, cat, monkey, etc. but inwardly he criticizes the negative attitude of the literate who dehumanize the illiterate. Through the use of contrast- literate vs. illiterate, man vs. animal, sunshine vs. moonshine, head vs. heart, reason vs. emotion, vision vs. sightlessness, creationism vs. evolutionism, and religion vs. science- Devkotad is mantles the hierarchy centering on the marginalized ones in the society. The article analyzes Devkota's mission of establishing a moral, humane, equal and harmonious society exposing the negative qualities of the literate who make right wrong and wrong right using logic and empathizing the illiterate who are honest and innocent guided by morality, emotion and simplicity. The deconstructive ideas of Nietzsche and theories of irony by Paul Grice and Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber have been used to prove the research argument. The research proves its remarkability through exploration and analysis of how L P Devkota raises the voice of the voiceless to preserve humanity and morality.

KEYWORDS: *Irony, Subversion, Il/Literate, Animal Imageries, Morality, Humanity*