

Multifaceted Experiences of Trauma and Embedded Peace in Post-Conflict Nepali
Narratives

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation entitled “Multifaceted Experiences of Trauma and Embedded Peace in Post-Conflict Nepali Narratives” was prepared by Badri Prasad Pokharel under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final evaluation by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "Multifaceted Experiences of Trauma and Embedded Peace in Post-Conflict Nepali Narratives " submitted to the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, is an entirely original work and I have made due acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of writing this dissertation. The results presented in this dissertation have not been presented anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other reasons. No part of the content of this dissertation has ever been published in any form before. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

Badri Prasad Pokharel

February 2024

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A decade-long conflict (Maoist Insurgency 1996-2006) in Nepal has forced many people to live in a dilapidated condition. Personally, I was also badly affected by it: the only option I had was to migrate to Kathmandu from my home town Rajbiraj, Saptari for security reasons. This includes the relocation of my work at Tribhuvan University Central Office from Mahendra Bindeswari Multiple Campus, Rajbiraj in 2002. The horrific and terrific events that happened for about a decade and took the lives of more than seventeen thousand people; the texts written about it inspired me to do my Ph.D. work on the topic entitled “Multifaceted Experiences of Trauma and Embedded Peace in Post-Conflict Nepali Narratives”.

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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes twenty post-conflict Nepali narratives written about the Maoist insurgency from the perspective of trauma theory propounded by theorists like Cathy Caruth, Jeffery C. Alexander and Dominick LaCapra. The rationale of selecting these narratives is that each of these stories is a text which would best show the paradigm of individual life badly impacted by the consequences of the insurgency during the decade. The narratives written as testimony of the insurgency show the multifaceted traumatic events witnessed or experienced by the narrators who have narrativized their testimonies either demonizing one fighting group or keeping both groups away and presenting neutrally. Each of these narratives has traumatized characters who, though in acting out condition, are seen working through this condition with embedded peace and reconciliation. Among the narratives produced during and after the Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006, twenty stories have been selected for analysis which are divided into two groups: seven post-conflict narratives which have been written by othering or demonizing one group and idolizing another group would not help the readers accept them as testimony of the insurgency, and remaining 13 narratives which have been written objectively not aligning to any group or keeping both groups at a distance and all events have been narrated neutrally, subsequently help soothe the tension. In this study, the second category of narratives can be accepted as actual testimony of the event. While narrativizing their testimonies, each narrator along with traumatized character has been seen anticipating for peace, so he or she could live a life forgetting the past enmity. These stories are compiled in *Stories of Conflict and War* edited and translated by Govind Raj Bhattarai.

The dissertation has sought three research questions: To what extent do these narratives written about Nepal's ten-year long insurgency as post-conflict Nepali

narratives talk about the trauma of the Maoist insurgency? Why do these narratives become the means of representing the ten-year long conflicts' agony? And how does the trauma seen in the primary texts relieve or aggravate the tension of the victims of the insurgency? To answer these research questions, the selected narratives have been taken as a testimony of the people for analysis that can either relieve or aggravate the tension. Thus, this study explores how the post-conflict Nepali narratives talk about the trauma of all citizens living in the conflict-hit locations. This dissertation analyzes the narrator's voice in narratives to show how post-conflict narratives can be used as a means for soothing pains and suffering of the war-affected people, and to bring to the fore the pleas for peace embedded in the narrativization of multifaceted trauma. As a hypothetical aspect, the dissertation delineates and explores the traumatic experiences in the post-conflict Nepali narratives and brings forth the chances of embedded peace. Following such important tenets, many warring people and communities can have peace forgetting their past feud. The key assumption is that seminal trauma writing on the Maoist insurgency eschews the language of the prose of otherness and thereby contributes towards a peaceful co-existence of all classes of Nepali people.

The dissertation scrutinizes various traumatic aspects seen in the post-conflict narratives by using the traumatic insights such as Caruth's psychological trauma, Alexander's cultural trauma and LaCapra's middle voice as theoretical parameters and views the experiences of the ten-year long Maoist insurgency as represented in the selected primary texts. There existed the trauma of the orphaned, the separated, the abandoned, the betrayed, the ruined and the destitute. Women like Nirmaya from the story "The Silence of Violence" who have lost their husbands in the war and were brutally gangraped at night by insurgents still hope for peace and reconciliation. And people like Kaude from the story "The Lankuri Tree Will Blossom Again", who run

away from home due to insurgency and later come back and find parents in miserable condition, anticipate for peace and prosperous life ahead without blaming any fighting groups for the catastrophe. Still these war-affected people have been found anticipating peace and stability in their places, so they could return with a hope of reconciliation. The findings of the study show that all characters who are seen with multifaceted traumatic experiences have been anticipating for peace, solidarity and reconciliation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Armed Conflict in Nepal and Its Aftermath as a Source for Writing Narratives

1.1 Background

The word “trauma” has been understood as physical or psychology wound, however, the precious definition of the concept of trauma differs according to context and discipline. Trauma theory has become a provocative element to bring such physical and mental wounds to the readers, but such wounds would not provoke tension, rather it should soothe the pains of others. Violence of high force leads to muteness. But literature has the uncanny propensity to overcome this muteness and give voice to the wounds that the perpetrators of violence inflict to the victims who could hardly come out of their trauma even after a long time. Texts written on conflicts and wars seek to promote the construction and reconstruction of memories that would help one create literary texts.

The violence and mass killing in the world is a great threat and worrisome for common people. This has threatened the world peace and also undermined progress of democratic consolidation. It has become a good source for the researchers to observe that conflict and violence are inimical to and threaten the continuous co-existence of the people of the world. Therefore, frantic efforts must be made that peace is not negotiable in the world. This feat can be achieved by advocating peace through all forms of literature. The significance of literature cannot be overstated in this regard; the past is seen by people of the present. This medium can be a panacea to various causes of bloodletting and violence seen all over the world. Also, literature is an effective way for socio-political reformation in society. The organized armed conflict and its aftermath bring enormous psychological and social burdens on the individuals who have gone through such experience.

The ten years Maoist insurgency (1996-2006) brought havoc in Nepali society and people living in the hinterland as well as rural areas were badly affected. Elucidating this chaotic condition, Aditya Adhikari, a critic known for writing on Nepal's geo-politics argues, "Mass displacement, attack on civilian populations, mass losses of homes and belongings, amputations, child soldering and rape had typified in many parts of Nepal" (33). The political and economic disenfranchisement of a large number of youths and other under-privileged people made them enroll themselves in the armed conflict. It was grounded in an unpredictable mixture of poverty, poor governance, and fragile political and economic system. This conflict even shattered the importance of civil society that could be the foundation of peace and development. Hence, different kinds of conflict and violence produced a lot of patterns of psychological distress that would lead victims to suffer from trauma. In this context, Dipak Thapa and Bandita Sijapati state, "Rape and other forms of gender-based violence were also integral elements of armed conflict" (161). Even among the combatants, the main actors in the conflict, who survived gender-based violence suffer from mental health problems.

A historical event can best be understood not only through its realistic accounts but also through its literary representations. Literature has the power to portray a situation with such force of precision that it brings alive vivid events in the minds of the readers. It recites the simplest and the rarest life experiences which help broaden the understanding of humankind. The literary representations of ten-year long Maoist insurgency not only reproduce the widespread violence and the newly found hatred, but also delve deep into the traumatic impact on the individuals' psyche.

1.2 Introduction

Trauma narrated in the fiction of conflict and war would not be of the same type, rather it can have long lasting effects on human psyche. Those people who

witnessed and experienced it are traumatized with different forms – multifaceted painful and unspeakable memory of the victims. The narratives written on the periphery of the Maoist insurgency explore how the conflict exacerbated the life of people and how the course of their life got changed. Even if they are in trauma and narrating their painful experiences, they anticipate for long lasting peace and solidarity. Different texts have been written which speak about people's trauma. Among these texts, some have been written by the rebels themselves such as Ganga Bahadur Lama, Nabin Jirel and Sarita Rai about their pains and suffering igniting the Maoist combatants against the state, whereas some others have been written by either neutral authors or the members of security forces such as Mahesh Bikram Shaha and Narayan Subedi against the insurgency. To bring the fact of bearing trauma of the insurgency and longing for peace in conflict-hit society, this dissertation has analyzed twenty post-conflict Nepali narratives written about the Maoist insurgency by applying trauma theory propounded by various prominent theorists including Caruth, LaCapra, and Alexander. These narratives are compiled in *Stories of Conflict and War* edited and translated by Govind Raj Bhattarai.

Among these narratives, in Ramesh Vikal's "A Pair of Innocent Eyes", Parashu Pradhan's "Sitas – 23", Padmavati Singh's "The Silence of Violence", Narayan Dhakal's "Mother and the Motherland", Pradip Nepal's "The Motherly Doctor", Kishor Pahadi's "The Tears of Terror", and Srijana Sharma's "The Sky was Still Overcast", the narrators have tried to provoke anger against the others (Maoist rebels) delineating traumatic experience in extreme which subsequently would not help soothe the tension prevailed even after many years of the insurgency. These narratives are written supporting one group and demonizing the other that only aggravates the tension and such upheaval would not help sustain peace. In contrast, Mohan Raj

Sharma's "A Ra and a Mo", Dhruva Chandra Gautam's "The Conclusion", Rajendra Bimal's "The Lankuri Tree will Blossom Again", Bhuvan Dhungana's "The Eye Witness", Sanat Regmi's "The Curfew", Narendra Raj Paudel's "The Bullet", Madhuban Paudel's "Now You can Return Home", Avinash Shrestha's "Monologues", Dhruva Madhikarmi's "The Meek", Mahesh Bikram Shaha's "A Constable and the Statue", Amod Bhattarai's "I Heard the Cock Crow", Roshan Thapa Nirab's "The Ambush", and Pradip Menyangbo's "The Unknown Martyr" are written keeping both fighting groups (Maoist rebels and security forces) away in distance and not aligning to either group. By doing so, both groups can accept it as their own testimony. Both can realize their past activities either forgetting or internalizing their traumatic past and purgate their pain, and finally there would be some chances of reconciliation between them. Narratives written with what LaCapra calls middle voice not supporting any group are few but they harp on coexistence and harmony.

The theoretical parameter taken for the study is trauma and its major claim is to delineate the traumatic experiences faced by the main characters of the narratives. The main trends of traumatic perspectives I am applying in this research are psychological trauma and cultural trauma. Twenty post-conflict Nepali narratives are analyzed on the basis of certain concepts of these leading theorists whose theories are considered to be best to analyze the texts written about the trauma of the war-affected people.

In bringing out the traumatic facts of the victims of the insurgency with the anticipation of peace in the war-ridden societies, this dissertation delineates a parallel between the real life incidents and the literary reproduction which is to claim an understanding of the trauma of the victims through the trauma theories propagated by

the theorists. It brings the traumatic fact of the victims and concentrates on whether the primary texts narrativize the testimony of the victims by supporting to any fighting group or independently keeping away from any kind of involvement which would subsequently help prevail peace. But if the narrators narrativize the stories with a sympathy for one group and villainize another group, in such condition, this villainized group and its supporters would never agree with the narratives as their testimony and tension aggravates forever. Literature is, thus, able to give voice to trauma because it licenses resistance toward conventional narrative structures and linear temporalities through its ability to make wounds perceivable and silences audible. Caruth elaborates on the role of literature in trauma studies:

Trauma studies, in their aim to illuminate a range of scarring experiences of aggression such as rape, abuse and incarceration, have demonstrated a tendency to turn toward literary texts that represent trauma as a way to reckon with, work through, and understand traumatic history and the altered architecture of memory the traumatized experience. (*Unclaimed* 102)

Trauma is the outcome of an individual's inability to cope with the emotions generated by experience. This dissertation is interested in understanding the manifest trauma and embedded peace in the seminal writing on the decade long the Maoist insurgency.

Literary writing on insurgency can have some dimensions that take challenge and overcome some fundamental situations like parting and separation. It is also literary writing that can grant oversimplification and generalization to trivial matter of one's life. It is also to passing of time, to taste of life, to death, to solitude, to disappointment, to dissatisfaction, to doubt and hesitation. It helps fill the gap between itself and readers, particularly in the case of separation and atrocity; and it is

inevitable and irremediable to contextualize the situation. In this context, D. Adetunji Babatunde and Oluchi C. Ikwuagwu highlight, “It must have a discussion with uneasiness and anxiety, lonesomeness, death, disappointment and hesitation, for the reason that these issues cause readers to be captive in their personality” (53). As much as one discusses and shares his or her trauma, he or she can have some relief. In such a serious situation, readers need to help know that this experience is common and it belongs to all people, not to a particular or individual group.

As part of statement of problem, when I have gone through the primary text: twenty five short stories from *Stories of Conflict and War*, I have felt an accelerating issue. Trauma in all these texts has been narrativized either villainizing one fighting group or idolizing another one. I noticed writing like this would only create problems in society because readers who have been affected by the insurgency cannot accept it their own testimony narrativized in the written form and tension would rather grow in them, consequently peace and reconciliation between both warring groups cannot be anticipated. I thought post-conflict narratives must contain the trauma of the victims written neutrally keeping both warring groups aloof not demonizing or idolizing any groups. So I decided to carry out academic research on this issue. Regarding the stories of this book, only a few articles have been found so far. Though the critics like Shantimaya Giri, Laxman Prasad Gautam, Ramesh Subhechchhu, Bishnubibhu Gimire, Govind Raj Bhattarai, Gopendra Paudel, Kumar Prasad Koirala, Geeta Tripathi and Balaram Adhikari have interpreted the stories of this book by applying other theories, none of them has done any interpretation of trauma neutrally or objectively as well as the anticipation of embedded peace. Till the date, from the best of my study I have not found any depth studies done from the perspective of middle voice presenting the testimony of the conflict victims. All in all, I have not

found any academic research completed on trauma presenting like this by applying in the selected texts under scrutiny in this study. Therefore, I have attempted to fill this gap.

Here emerge some fundamental research questions such as what extent do narratives written about Nepal's ten years long insurgency, here written as post-conflict Nepali narratives, represent the trauma of the Maoist insurgency to? Why do these narratives become the means of representing the agony of the ten-year long conflicts? And how does the trauma seen in the primary texts relieve or aggravate the tension of the victims of the insurgency? Narratives written about the conflict can become a veritable means through which people understand the tragedy of wars, most especially the ones that have ravaged the society in past and they can also be a means to the process of reconciliation.

The main objective of this study aims at examining how these narratives talk about trauma of all citizens living in the conflict-hit areas. General objectives of the dissertation include: to analyze what extent of trauma the post-conflict Nepali narratives written on conflict talk about, to investigate why these narratives become the means of representing the agony of the ten-year long conflict, and to bring to the fore the pleas for peace embedded in the narrativization of manifest trauma.

As a hypothetical aspect, the dissertation explores trauma in post-conflict Nepali narratives and brings forth the chances of embedded peace. The selected primary texts are the best one to represent the manifest trauma of the insurgency victims who are still supposed to be traumatized reminiscing those sorrowful past. And when trauma is narrated in literary writing with the help of middle voice or not internalizing any group, both warring groups can realize some deeply rooted causes of the conflict and they can forget their past perilous path and adept into peaceful living.

This dissertation assumes that relation between the conflict-affected people and perpetrators which always remained bitter and on the edge of sword during the conflict period can have some chances of reconciliatory and satisfactory condition. Literary writing written on war and conflict would inform the readers the causes, consequences and solutions of the conflicts objectively.

The rationale of selecting the texts for analysis is to delineate trauma in post-conflict Nepali narratives which were written about the ten years Maoist insurgency. The reason behind selecting these twenty texts is that they can better portray the trauma of the victims of the insurgency. Each of these texts carries pains and pathos of individual characters in their extreme points and they are eclectically purposive sampling of Nepali post-conflict narratives. The authors who wrote these narratives are Nepali and have closely witnessed what had happened in this decade long insurgency and their texts have become a testimony of the horrible past. The dissertation focuses on studying the characters of the book *Stories of Conflict and War* considering their psychological make-up similar to the real victims of the event. It relies on various real life incidents, derived from books containing the oral testimonies and official records in the form of reports of the incidents but written in the narratives. The events in the stories are placed in comparison to the authentic incidents to determine the similarity between real and fiction. The literature derived as similar to real life incidents, is then studied in the context of the literary trauma theory propounded by Caruth and others for a deeper understanding of the traumatic impact of the insurgency on individual psyche and their longing for permanent peace and reconciliation in the violent-hit Nepali society.

The research design of this dissertation is qualitative and mostly depends on content text and the analytical aspects of the primary texts. Textual evidences are interpreted and analyzed with the light of theoretical insights of trauma theory. The

dissertation has examined various traumatic aspects seen in the post-conflict narratives by using the critical insights developed by Caruth, Alexander and LaCapra as theoretical parameters. Caruth's psychoanalytical approach to trauma from her books *Unclaimed Experience* and *Trauma Explorations in Memory* has been used to delineate the concept of suddenness and belatedness. The traumatic events which would reshape human thinking about physical and mental experience must be told or heard in any condition. In the same way, Alexander's cultural trauma from his article "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" has been used in the context of establishing a harmonious society with more chances of reconciliation and peaceful co-existence after bloody and catastrophic disastrous events in past. Finally, LaCapra's concepts of acting out and working through, besides the importance of middle voice in writing history which should neither be written nor understood from victims' point of view nor perpetrators', but it should be narrated objectively not supporting either side, rather neutrally from his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma* have been used to delineate embedded peace in post-conflict narratives. The theoretical parameters of the above mentioned theorists have been used to analyze the primary texts for the delineation of how these texts present trauma and how the trauma mentioned in these texts soothes or relieves the tensions of the victims and perpetrators.

The significance of this dissertation would be a foundation for those researchers who want to study about co-existence and reconciliation after sorrowful traumatic experience in terms of conflict and its relation to peace building in the warring societies. Through its universal appeal, literary writing is expected to entertain, inform, and teach the readers with its basic tenets.

This dissertation has its own propositions and limitations. It deals comprehensively with trauma theory propagated by Caruth, LaCapra and Alexander.

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is beyond the limit of this study. The twenty narratives written in the post-conflict period during the armed conflict that continued for about ten years in Nepal from *Stories of Conflict and War* will be the area of study. These primary texts have only been chosen for study because they have best brought the traumatic facts and aspects which the victims of the insurgency had gone through with many ups and downs.

The entire dissertation has been divided into six chapters, in which first chapter contains introductory part, second chapter deals with literature review, third chapter deals with methodology, fourth and fifth chapters talk about textual analysis and the last chapter deals with conclusion.

Chapter one introduces the topic, and establishes the relationship with several subsidiary discourse of the insurgency, its impacts on the nation – trauma and anticipation for peace in the war-ridden Nepali society. It introduces the entire dissertation from different perspectives.

Chapter two reviews literature which elucidates a three-pronged process. These are reviews on the basic concepts and key variables, reviews on theoretical modality and reviews on the primary texts. As per the first process, it contains the references from those works which explain the impacts created by the insurgency on the citizenry that ultimately compels them to create the literary texts. The second process deals with the theoretical modality which starts from classical trauma theorists Caruth to LaCapra who brought some new dimension in this theory. The third process brings those research works on the issue from journal writing to dissertation.

Chapter three is the review of theoretical modality – trauma theory and its various aspects from psychological to sociological. It consists of five parts. The first

part deals with psychological approach which shows some important theoretical dimension. Caruth is presented as the first theorist for whom it is literature as testimony which is one of the ways to tell one another about aspects of traumatic experience that cannot be contained by ordinary modes of expression and that may even exceed human understanding. Bessel A. van der Kolk, Onno Van der Hart, Gene Ray, Alex Gelfert, Veena Das, Thomas Trezise, Roger I. Simon, Claudia Eppert, Geoffrey Hartman, Alexander, Edkins, Pandey, Michele Balaev, Barry Stampfl, Irene Visser, Laurie Vickroy, Lawrence Normand and Kaplan are presented together with the idea that the memory whether narrative memory or traumatic memory would be sorted out in mind, otherwise it might result in dissociation. Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman are presented with saying that the victims' narrative which clarifies the process of bearing witness to massive trauma begins with someone who testifies the events. Finally, it is the aesthetic approach of trauma from LaCapra who, delineating acting out, working through, empathic unsettlement and others, has given the importance of middle voice in writing history which should neither be written nor understood from victims' point of view nor perpetrators', but it should be narrated objectively not supporting either side, rather neutrally.

Chapter four and five deal with the textual analysis. Here, twenty short stories from *Stories of Conflict and War* have been analyzed using various prospectus of trauma theory mentioned above. It has been divided into seven parts. In these parts, stories have been analyzed in two different ways. There are seven stories in which the narrators as witnesses of the conflict have presented the testimony of the insurgency one-sidedly by demonizing one fighting group and idolizing another one. Presenting the trauma of the insurgency victims from one side only would make the situation worse than before. In this group, stories include Vikal's "A Pair of Innocent Eyes",

Pradhan's "Sitas – 23", Singh's "The Silence of Violence", Dhakal's "Mother and the Motherland", Nepal's "The Motherly Doctor", Pahadi's "The Tears of Terror" and Sharma's "The Sky was Still Overcast" which mostly deal with the trauma of the victims by defying the simple norms of narratives and demonizing the Maoists who only harm the innocent people. In contrast, in the remaining thirteen stories, the narrators have tried their best to make a balance in their narration by narrativizing the testimony of the conflict using LaCapra's middle voice which would help all kinds of readers accept as their own testimony and the tension remaining with them for a long time would be soothed. In this category, Sharma's "A Ra and a Mo", Gautam's "The Conclusion", Bimal's "The Lankuri Tree will Blossom Again", Dhungana's "The Eye Witness", Regmi's "The Curfew", Narendra Raj Paudel's "The Bullet", Madhuban Paudel's "Now You can Return Home", Shrestha's "Monologues", Madhikarmi's "The Meek", Shah's "A Constable and the Statue", Bhattarai's "I Heard the Cock Crow", Nirab's "The Ambush" and Menyangbo's "The Unknown Martyr" mostly deal with such events which are presented neutrally not aligning to any group. It would help readers accept the testimony as their own and purgate their trauma.

Chapter six is the conclusion and finding section – peace and solidarity through narratives in which the gist of the dissertation is presented with delineating some possibilities of further research activities which might be initiated in the future by literature students.

Thus, this dissertation has initiated a humble task of presenting post-conflict Nepali narratives. It has tried to show how these narratives are written either by provoking the tension or reconciling enmity and prevailing peace in the society.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Trauma with its various aspects and layers of experiences of the conflict victims and their anticipation for reconciliation and peace in those post-conflict narratives has remained much acclaimed and investigated area of research. This chapter has reviewed the literature thematically written on multifaceted trauma and embedded peace, on ten years long Moist insurgency and on primary texts.

This review has been designed to contribute to the understanding of some selected literary works which are written about trauma, the Nepali insurgency and post-conflict Nepali narratives. Further content analysis has been used to point out the wounds. The objective of this content analysis is to illustrate how the given characters of these texts were trauma-struck and living the life under mental and physical threat. For this purpose, the literary works of familiar writers have been selected in general and some fictional works – *Stories of Conflict and War* edited and translated by Bhattarai in particular.

Trauma theory which helps understand both psychology and politics has emerged focusing on the relationship of words with suffering. The event, dispersing across the time, would be experienced as shattering; as a result, it creates its full impact over the years later. In its emphasis on the retrospective reconstruction of the traumatic event, a traumatic analysis is both constructive and extensive for bringing out many historical facts which would, otherwise, be unknown for a long time. Trauma can be of great value in the study of history and historical narrative, allowing for an interpretation of cultural symptoms - the growths, wounds, scars on a social body, and its repeated actions.

In the context of talking about trauma and its long lasting effect on human being, Rau and Fanselow argue that it becomes a means to expose to a stressful traumatic event that “may show sensitized reactions to neutral stimuli that may be related to the threatening experience” (37), whereas Fierke thinks trauma differently with “a feature of political discourse” (31) that would result many dreadful events which involve the generation of very powerful emotions that help “annihilation anxiety” (Fromm 69), and “threaten to overwhelm the ego’s ability to function” (Wastell 7). It consequently helps memory overflow with very strong emotions.

Danielle Mortimer has made viable in reading narratives which contain trauma as “to understand a variety of contemporary events” (137). Not only narratives, some new directions of literary and media memory studies have been recognized to analyze presentations of war and violence in literature because “literature and film can vividly portray individual and collective memory - its contents, its workings, its fragility and its distortions by coding it into aesthetic forms, such as narrative structures, symbols, and metaphors” (Erl 2). Geoffrey Hartman, in the same way, has talked about how trauma has become a tool to represent “extraordinary historical and literary exploration” (260) with the help of fictional works in which the writers can express their own ideas too and a literary text helps readers “approach truth and acquire wisdom for human feelings – pangs or happiness” (Taras 188). Traumatic memory, thus, works as a trace, surfacing as “a ghostly presence, troubling the mainstream family history, and signaling the unknowable” (Socolovsky 188). Derrik Silove has seen this condition as “The diagnostic category, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), has attracted criticism, the key issue being the nosologic validity of that diagnosis when applied across cultures” (319) and “systematic and pervasive traumatization over several generations” (Raphael at el. 337). They all help one gauge how much

trauma and its effect aftermath impact one in life. None of the critics above has mentioned how in trauma there is some sign of embedded peace.

However, Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbin have incited how memory has tacit role to remodel the experience but “traumatic memories exist as unconscious” (67), and Polly Jones points out “how memories of terror can be remembered without gloom” (362) how traumatic memory with which the victims live a long time would be “an object of intellectual curiosity and health skepticism” (Young 358) and would remain for a long time which ultimately results in “panic, flashback, intrusive emotional state” (Briere and Lanktree 35) as post-traumatic stress disorder and “continuum disorder” (Drozdek 172) creating havoc in one’s life. These critics have only highlighted on the long lasting effects of trauma not about its solemnity in human life.

There are some other critics in trauma theory who tried to create something different in trauma theory. Among them, Catherine So-kum Tang, has opined her view on traumatic grief which is “found to associate with enduring mental and physical health morbidity” (128), but her theory remains limited to only medical field. But Terry Eagleton has intended to set the idea of terror metaphysically or theologially that “the politics implicit in this rather exotic talk” (1) and Jane Kilby has tried to produce a different political story unlike those tied to the individual and “a story told in the general terms of gender, patriarchy and power” (10) as well as “in the wake of crisis and loss” (Hunt 90) which are all traumatic.

Silvaine Finck has seen trauma “an approach that suspends chronological and geographical barriers of time and space” (iv) and Ron Eyerman delineates cultural trauma “as individual story melds into collective history through forms and processes of collective representation” (74), but Melvin Konner has extended the scope of trauma from the normal understanding – “beyond extremely severe and abnormal

circumstances” (300), which would remain meaningful. However, Lori R. Daniels and Terry McGuire have seen problematic sleep as “traumatic nightmare” (205) and “psychiatric disorders, especially symptoms of posttraumatic stress” (Renner 240). But Riki Thompson has seen trauma theory as a possibility of “healing trauma as some permanent and curable solutions” (653). Similarly, Robert Brian Wall has seen trauma as “sequel of depression, nightmares, inability to work gainfully, and panic anxiety” (106). In the same way, John Briere and Cheryl Lanktree, elucidate “high levels of avoidance appears to interfere with psychological recovery from the effects of trauma” (47). Trauma “a keyword through which clinicians and scholars from many disciplines approach the experience of violence and its aftermath” (Kirmayer 361) remains a good area of study for the researchers as a part of study either in medical or literary field.

Lisa Tsoi Hoshmand has tried to link trauma with interpersonal and socio-cultural factors and expounded on ecological influences on traumatic experiences. She further clarifies, “The collective transmission of trauma involves the historical and social – structural hat should be included in the assessment of cumulative ecological risks that perpetuate trauma” (36). One can access the level of trauma “through one’s sufferings she/he acts out a symbolic openness to her or his own mortality” (Eagleton 27) and one can have some understanding on it. These critics also talked about the effects and its consequences in human life but not its impacts on pacifying the grief.

Historical trauma related to historical loss has been envisaged by Elizabeth Fast and Delphine Collin-Vezina in the contemporary tribal devastation of Canada (131). Ricki Thompson argues that traumatic event has the power to change a person’s sense of self and safety in the world (653) and it can have extraordinary psychological, emotional, physical, and acculturative sources of distress, resulting in

an international dilemma” (Dana 91). Trauma in its any kinds has its own impacts on one’s life and his or her happiness which these critics have not focused on.

In the same way, Gadi BenEzer, while showing a relationship between trauma, culture and myth explains that traumatic memory can be helpful to obtain an identity and “a social meaning” (400). But Alexander Hinton points it as “lasting psychological wound” (447) and Boris Drozdek and John P. Wilson point out that traumatic experiences often force “a self-effacing look at personal identity and consciousness” (115). Besides, John P. Wilson is again quoted to have drawn a relationship between trauma and culture, which is an important one because traumatic experiences are part of the lifecycle, universal in manifestation and occurrence and typically demand a response from culture in terms of healing, treatment, interventions, counseling, and medical care (4). But Marian Tankink and Annemiek Richters have given the process of forgetting and remembering to undergo with the traumatic experiences (198). Likewise, Elissa Marder further argues, “Over the last fifteen years or so, the emergence of groundbreaking new work on trauma in literature and critical theory has made a profound impacts both within and beyond the field of literature” (1). Traumatic experiences further highlight attitudes commonly found in narratives of survival (Finck v). But Sivio Marcus de Souza Correa holds a different opinion about memory. He argues that memory is “a recollection of a lived experience, present and open to successive changes, usually unconscious” (92) which can be seen as an “ungraspable experience that refuses boundaries” (Yusin 453) and “unconscious, unbiddable process of inner world” (Radstone 14). But they fail to provide a good impact and resource for writing and creating a new dimension.

Here are some dissertations which mostly deal with trauma seen various texts that is worth mentioning here. Thakore Nibha A. in her Ph.D. dissertation “1947

Revisited a Study of Contemporary Partition Fiction in the Light of Trauma Theory” highlights on Indo-Pak partition literature which represents the traumatic experiences of the partition and their impact on individuals and communities. It has become no less than the historical records of the event. It has emphasized on drawing parallels between the real life incidents and the literary reproductions on partition in order to claim an understanding of the trauma of partition survivors. Besides, it has laid its emphasis on to understand the trauma of the people who experienced the partition of the country through literary representations. Each of the narratives has referred to the partition of the country either directly or indirectly and deals with both individual trauma as well as collective trauma of the entire community. The intention is to utilize the selected fictional narratives on partition as modes of testimony. It has tried to analyze the literature on partition through the literary trauma theory especially of Caruth. Though it is a study from the psychoanalyst perspective, it cannot claim to offer a complete psychological understanding of the impact of partition. The study is conducted with the awareness of social heritage and historical and political bearings moulding the experience in a definite shape. Nibha A. has not talked about how peace can be prevailed with the help of writing trauma in literature.

Patva Durga, in her dissertation, “Terror Violence and Trauma a Study of Selected Post 9/11 Novels”, analyzes how the novels written after or about 9/11 represented trauma, terror and violence in order to decouple the complexities of mourning and loss combined with asymmetries of power in global politics. The element of terror, violence and trauma after 9/11 attacks uncover the ways in which existent hypothetical and prevalent ideas of trauma have been militarized in the texts of different authors regarding these attacks. In this work, she has tried to analyze trauma, terror and violence in the 9/11 literature by foregrounding trauma as

delineated by Caruth, LaCapra, Felman, Laub among others. With their processes of working through from trauma, sense of meaning-making, physical and mental destruction, moral decrement and victim's boredom towards life brought by 9/11 attacks and its descriptions, she has identified what could be called, exploiting 9/11 unanimity. Analyzing these novels she has highlighted how the trauma, terror and violence embedded in the life of New York by and how it disturbed their daily lifestyle. Additionally, countering the notions that claim 9/11 literature as mawkish and lackluster, it is her staunch endeavor to delineate and underscore the significance of 9/11 literature as an example of ethical exercise, since it initiates from observers of the cataclysm which embodies communal camaraderie. These trauma narratives oppose the ideological universalization of the 9/11 attacks and increase the complexities of sentiments and all-inclusiveness not about the embedded peace even in traumatic narratives.

N. Mohamed Noufal in his dissertation "Listening to the Voice of the Wound: Disentangling the Trauma Conundrum in Contemporary South Asian Fiction" explores the contemporary South Asian fiction with a special attention on narratives from zones of conflict in the region from the vantage point of trauma theory. It has brought afore the idea of 'conflict zones' which means places of great strife and terror, and places where people suffer atrocities and violence on an everyday basis, as well as the places where deaths, military raids, and atrocities are not exceptional events, but everyday realities. Inquiring into the aspects in which he has illuminated trauma theory which explains the complexity of the relation between trauma and narrative, besides, the dissertation also probes into the limits of trauma theory and its applicability in the South Asian context. On one hand, it has identified different ways of representing catastrophic events in fiction, while on the other hand, it has charted

out certain terminologies to be used throughout out this work. In the same way, it seeks to suggest that there are various ways of thinking through the relation between trauma and narrative. The rise of trauma theory has provided the writers of fiction with new ways of conceiving and narrating trauma. It has shifted attention away from the question of what is remembered of the past to how and why it is remembered. This raises, in turn, the related issues of memory, history and narrative. On the whole, unlike the thesis of my dissertation, it has shown the interpretation of narratives of trauma which should be addressed by a wound telling an incomprehensible story that is highly culturally and socially specific urging a contextual specific reading.

Mandeep Kaur in her dissertation, “Madness and Muteness as Emotional Responses to the Holocaust a Study of Elie Wiesels experience as a Survivor”, examines the two emotions of Madness and Muteness as refuge for Holocaust survivors by focusing on the selected novels of Wiesel. It has also analyzed that lunatics are not devoid of reason- in reality, they are far- sighted and mystical. Similarly, the muteness of a survivor is not a symbol of his weakness but of his strength. Wiesel has lent a voice to the mute and a prophetic status to the mad, thus proving the fact that the Holocaust is an inexplicable catastrophe that can never be completely fathomed and communicated. The Holocaust, like other actions of appalling violence in countries like Turkey, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Australia, North Korea and Burma is always adjudged as a means of finding the genesis and aftermaths of discrimination, hatred and stereotyping in any community or to foster cognizance of the worth of pluralism and adoption of multiplicity. Without any doubt it shares some commonalities with other traumatic experiences but it is distinctive in its amalgamation of excruciating factors. The Holocaust can be interpreted as an intense trauma that was of extended duration and was without any justifiable reasons. Even

the liberation of survivors from the concentration camps brought no relief to them, wherever they went only indifference and callousness of society awaited them.

Swati Nanasaheb Pawar's dissertation "Feminine Psyche and Trauma in the Twenty First Century Immigrant Fiction" tries to seek to explore the traumatic experiences in immigrant fiction by women writers. She has laid her focus on the psychological trauma of immigrant female protagonist. Her work tries to give a fresh perspective of twenty-first century immigrant fiction, especially by women writers. Immigrant or diaspora writings are presented to have acquired academic and disciplinary acknowledgement throughout the literary world. Immigrant fiction is concerned with giving a voice to the displaced, oppressed characters. Pawar has focused on the immigrant women character's endless efforts to get assimilated with the new culture and at the same time maintain their own culture of the homeland. In this process of oscillation they get completely shattered and torn between two diverse cultures. But they never give up. They are in search of their identity. They gradually try to change themselves, adjusting at every level- food, clothes, a way of life, language etc. The level of assimilation varies according to individuals along with some traumatic situations which they happen to face in their regular chores. With the difficulties the characters facing in their daily life, Pawar tries to show the language problems which is difficult to adapt. Though the characters adapt to the new culture and habits, they miss their own land. They are nostalgic and found it difficult to wipe out the past completely which is completely which has also not talked about the possibility of prevailing peace in the conflict-ridden society.

Sejal Patel's dissertation "Memory and the Community in the Novels of Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker" juxtaposes the formal strategies of narration adopted by Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker in their call

for representation and identity politics. It has shown how these writers have used black dialect, memorize and rememorize old folk tales and by this they give new scope to the Black literature. Similarly it has highlighted the varying methods in which the works fight against imperialism and colonization and discussed different elements which are used by these authors in their works, to include: theme, dialogue, characters, settings, etc. Besides, it also highlights relevant criticism that directly criticizes these writers and their works and has also included comparative analysis of these writers. Her work is an attempt to provide space for the analysis of literary works, which share common memory derived from cultural and societal roots of their ancestors.

This dissertation is able to show the evidence of their struggle, their ethnic identity. By examining these writers' works, this study has depicted struggles expressed by the fictitious characters in their works, as well as the conflicts which derive from their personal lives. Similarly, it has examined the role of Afro-American people's memory and their community in Hurston, Morrison and Walker's works. Patel has basically shown how their novels' plot, themes, symbols, language reveal the value of the past memory and strengthen the community and how they establish a relationship between their community and literature through their works. Her focal point is how black identity is basically a community identity. Though Blacks came from different areas of African continent, the trauma gives Blacks the common platform and community feeling. In this way, it clarifies how the slavery day in America is the common memory of all Blacks and without collective memory there is no community. Patel has only talked about trauma and its impacts on people not about peace.

Through another dissertation, "Trauma of Partition Reflected in the Select Indian English Novels a Comparative Study", Aaklod Gangadhar Potanna tries to point out how some novelists who had written about 1947 Indo-Pak partition, tried to

explore the theme of partition and how they reflected the trauma of the sad history of the subcontinent. He has also tried to find out how they dealt with the theme of partition and compare the novels of these writers with the help of the similarities and differences among them. The whole research project is about the depiction of the partition and its consequences by these writers. These works remind everyone of the horrors of the history and make us to think about it and avoid these mistakes in the future. The trauma of partition has been a challenge to the imagination of the new writers. It has given rise to fictional explorations with an attempt to define the inner turmoil and social complexes that affected much to the whole subcontinent. He has tried to show how these fictional works faithfully record the human disaster in the wake of partition and how partition created hostility among the different religions that we still experience it many times in our own country. Besides, terrorism is said to have added fuel to the fire as it spreads hostility in the name of religion. He added that one should remind the causes, the disaster, and its effects on the political, social, economic and religious life of the subcontinent to avoid such incidents in the future, because it is not affordable for the world to face such incidents in the coming time which would not help prevail peace.

In the dissertation entitled “The Psychological Trauma in the Select Plays of Girish Karnad”, the researcher K. Saravanan analyzes the psychological trauma as seen in the chosen plays of Karnad. The aims of the study are to identify the psychological trauma in the select plays of Karnad with various characters. The research aims to analyze various psychological theories. It basically focuses on defense mechanisms in the field of psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud. Besides, it has highlighted Carl G. Jung’s the personal unconscious, collective unconscious, persona, anima and animus. It also highlights Erikson’s Psycho social theory of

Development which includes the suffering, frustration and agitation of the human. On the whole, Saravanan tries to show how Karnad expresses his psychological trauma through the suffering, frustration, agitation, displacement, anxiety, regression, personal unconscious, collective unconscious and individuation of various characters in his plays but not about the importance of peace in the war-hit societies.

Another dissertation entitled “The Portrayal of Suffering Perceptions of Trauma in the Personal Narratives of Select Dalit Writers” by Solomon Paul Raj D. focuses on understanding the purpose and power behind the personal narratives from the narrator’s point of view. It looks at how these works project the picture of the entire community through the narration of their lives. It has also highlighted the literary values of these works, and the tools that these authors employ in order to empower their stance. It reveals that these voices serve as representative voices for the socially oppressed Dalit community as a whole. These voices are actually personal narratives and therefore, are all the more powerful in appealing to international readers. The focal point of this dissertation lies in the articulation and the emotional force behind these stories the willingness to express one’s feelings in a coherent and in a realistic way. The study reveals as well as validates certain universal facts – power of truth, the life in a true human story and its appeal beyond any and all barriers including culture, religion, and language.

The dissertation entitled “Post-Apartheid South African Narratives History Violence and Counter Discourse in the Selected Novels” written by Morve Rohan Khalil proposes to analyze post-apartheid novels and their writing back resistance in the African world. In order to posit continued racism and racial segregation, post-apartheid narratives tend to be counter-discourses in the novel as dominant voices of resistance. He has selected writers which are from black, colored and white

communities. He has examined these novels along with the issues of gender, history, diaspora issues (local to global levels of migration, and diasporic experiences of the characters), identity negotiation, marginality, poverty, race, social injustice, violence, and xenophobia. Besides, he is of the opinion that to study on trauma and memory are co-operate to bring the real picture of South Africa, where South African writers write the story of the protagonist, how they are in trauma and apartheid destructs their memory where they negotiating for their identity.

For the trauma study, people argue that trauma and memory re-visiting the past experiences in the present scenario. In this way, this dissertation gives voice to the larger question of race and gender discrimination sense. In short, it shows how the post-apartheid writings deal with the similar kind of expressions in the terms of representation. This time period also helps to understand the apartheid influences in post-apartheid society and its continued presence. It has also asked question to the larger dimension of historical representation along with the socio-political changes in both apartheid and post-apartheid period. It, finally, shows the painful discovery of identity and oppressions of race, and gender discrimination which is interesting to note that migration and the struggle of natives and immigrants in post-apartheid period. But Khalil has not touched any aspects of peace in the warring communities.

The dissertation entitled “Partition Issues of India Re Examining the Trauma Turbulence and Memories in the Historical Context of Indian English Novels” by Shriya JV’n aims to use literary representations to understand the trauma of people who lived through the country's Partition. The background of the partition is historical, sociological, and economic standpoint, The researcher has chosen texts that allow for a wide range of interpretations and allude to the country’s Partition, either directly or indirectly, dealing with individual and collective trauma. It attempts to

examine Partition literature using literary trauma theory, specifically Caruth's, Kali Tal's and LaCapra's. She has carried out with an understanding of social heritage, historical and political contexts, which help to form the experience in a definite shape. Besides, it examines the various ways in which writers in the selected literature have depicted the Partition experience and aims to shed light on the background of partition, psyche of people, migration and victimization of women by examining how it is described in selected literature. It concentrates on how Indian novelists approached the theme of Partition in their novels. This research work finally provides flawless and thorough ideas regarding the background and trauma of Partition as expressed by authors in their works and portrays the dark side of Indian history in a realistic manner but not about peace which is inherently important.

Ten year long Maoist insurgency brought many changes in the country including the change in writing which remained a good spice for writing narratives. Many narratives have been created during this period and after that. Trauma created by such massive extremism and seen in the post-conflict Nepali narratives has been a topic for discussion. It is the cause of unprecedented death tolls nearly seventeen thousand ordinary citizens as Anindita Dasgupta claims, "It has brought every aspect of life in Nepal to a grinding halt and has adversely affected the development process" (9). In this way, the political gain could be achieved even halting peace.

The rebellion badly impacted on women, children, political cadres, teachers, students, clan and caste. It was also on ethnic relatives who were inclined to be in destitute with "the institutional fragility of the State" (Kumar 168) and retaliated to the Maoist Movement in the motives of taking revenge against the atrocities imposed upon them in the name of decapitating the rebellion in different remote areas. For instance, Adhikari, in his book, *The Bullet and the Ballot Box the story of Nepal's*

Maoist Revolution argues, “. . . they were mostly arrested on cooked-up charges that included murder and theft. Policemen along with Congress activists ransacked entire settlements, harassed women, and confiscated goats and chickens” (33). The reprimand became a key point to commence the rebellion. Particularly, women were victimized from either side; “be it the victims of social violence perpetrated by army personnel, children, on the other, were another worst backlash to be noticed due to this rigorous conflict” (Aryal Khanal 32). Either warriors’ mothers or ordinary mothers living in the society underwent severe pain in raising their children safely along with other menial hardships. Both critics have shown the impact of insurgency on people but not the importance of peace in the warring societies.

The rebellion engulfed in Nepali society left thousands dead and hundreds of thousands orphans and homeless. As a result, they happened to live in their own country as refugees taking shelters at different urban areas. Illustrating the situation, Deepak Thapa and Bandita Sijapati point out, “The Maoists then turned up at these women-headed and other households and threatened them by demanding free meals and forced donations” (161). The women could not refuse the Maoists for fear of reprisals and also because they had no one to turn up for help due to the lack of police or government presence in the village. Thapa and Sijapati have brought the trauma but not peace.

While bringing some horrible traumatic facts related to Nepal that caused havoc situation for a long time, some prolific critics have outlined some important facts. Anjana Shakya explicates how Nepali society was badly affected by “the conflict, torture, disappearances, and deaths of family members and friends by the State forces” (6). In the same way, Rama S. Lohani-Chalise delineating feminist interdisciplinary “induces displacement and violence impacted and shaped gender

dynamics at the local level and Nepali people's mobility at the transnational/global level" (ii). Similarly, Barbara Weyermann, while bringing out impacts of the conflict on ordinary people points out "the ongoing chronic fear and extreme suffering" (iv) imposed on them. But D. Muni, while pointing some class conflict between high and underprivileged people "particularly discrimination against and repressed by one group – the caste hill Hindu elite (Lawati 129) says it was not hoped "with the success of the first *Jan Andolan*" (4). However, the internal and external conflict remained worse and "peace process did not be complete for a long time" (Chalmers 58). The turmoil remained for a long time and the condition of victims and perpetrators could not be solved. Shakya, Lohani-Chalise, Weyermann, Lawati and Chalmers have comprehensively brought the painful facts of the contemporary Nepali society, but haven't written about how peace can be prevailed in the conflict-hit societies.

The organized and prolonged armed conflict and its aftermath brought enormous psychological and social burdens on the individuals who experience them. Peaceful and beautiful villages "are being ravaged by a conflict. Innocent villagers are losing their lives for nothing" (Lama 74), and innocent people "were arrested and brutally tortured at both police Maoist custody on the charge of their alignments" (Bartaman 30). As such, for the last two decades, Nepal witnessed the suffering and "the life threatening experience" (Subedi, *Maobadi Kabjama* 35) and "death escape time again" (Shrestha, *Gadhidarbar to iv*) that caused individuals go through traumatic reaction, which is termed as 'post-traumatic stress disorder' and 'collective trauma' in "fluid political alignments" (Manchanda 26). Tara Rai 'Anmol is the one who was a militant during the insurgency remembers, "It was nonsense to fight for the liberation of the marginalized people in spite of frail health – heart disease" (57) and associated with a conscious experience "akin to reliving the pain itself" (Eacott and

Easton 200). But Radha Paudel misses the events like this, “After sometime a bomb seemed to have been exploded in the mid part of the town. District Police Office and District Development Office were also guessed to have been demolished” (71) and most of the acts of “vandalism are directed against public property” (Bhattarai *Impunity in Nepal*, 6). People were longing to come out of this stalemate which “is likely to continue to haunt Nepal in times ahead.

Until and unless partisan agendas make room for a genuine state-building process, peace will keep faltering, ultimately jeopardizing the momentous accomplishments of the election” (Bhattarai *Conflict to Peace*, 233). The political impasse remained as usual and “inequality, systemic corruption, and weak rule of law to which the insurgency was largely a response” (Rawski and Sharma 175), besides, responsible personality remained “reluctant to commit to abide by the agreements reached in different times and to address the issues and concerns raised during 2006 April popular movements” (Upreti 219) and they seemed unable to “overcome the divisions among and within themselves to cooperate to complete the peace process” (Martin 229). These unhealed traumatic experiences may contribute to linger the ongoing cycles of violence and further thwart peace building efforts. Lama, Shrestha, Subedi, Manchanda, Eacott and Easton, Rai, Paudel, Bhattarai, Rawski and Sharma, Upreti and Martin have also brought some facts about the insurgency but not seen any solution for peace.

Meanwhile, it is also the contemporary polity which embarked the rebel to encroach the conflict at climax along with the youth facing malpractices i.e. corruption, oligarchy, coalition politics etc. which ultimately created dissatisfaction among common people. Lok Raj Baral elaborates this situation in this way:

The worst experiences of coalition politics was seen with each party flouting the norms of party discipline and parliamentary practice to come to power.

Corruption at the highest levels became a routine affair with legislators more interested in amassing wealth than in focusing on institutionalizing democracy. (256).

The uncertainty in political scenario further made the situation confused in the Nepali society and escalated the conflict further. Baral has also talked about the consequences of coalition politics but sought for peace.

There are some critics who have done some research on trauma in Nepali fictions. Among them, Shantimaya Giri in her book *Aadhunik Nepali Kathama Abhighat* (Trauma in Modern Nepali Stories), while analyzing the post-conflict Nepali narratives/stories and trauma and its various aspects, has classified all of these stories in two parts: one part shows how the stories are written villainizing the Maoists rebels whereas another part shows how the stories were written villainizing the security forces. Most of the stories are written “keeping the trauma undergone by the characters main point which would ultimately result in more tense and stress” (160). She has centralized her thesis on bringing out trauma in Nepali stories only and has not sought any aspects of peace embedded in those narratives. Writing post-conflict narratives and traumatic situation of the characters either villainizing one or another would not help to establish peace and reconciliation in the war-ridden society. To make sustainable peace and solidarity, post-conflict narratives should be written keeping foes of both group away from their writing but Giri has missed a chance to do so. Here is the gap between her thesis and mine.

Govind Raj Bhattarai in the essay “Srijanako Euta Uttar Adhunik Siddhant: Abhighat” (Post-Modern Theory of Creation: Trauma) from his book *Uttaradhunik*

Bimarsha (Post-Modern Thought) mentions for the last two decades war and conflict have taken place in Nepali literature and some new dimensions have been emerged in bringing out the truth of horrible events. The conflict that happened for a decade causing the death of more than fifteen thousand lives has been a good spice for writing stories, novels, poems etc. He further argues that as long as war makes life insecure, the pain can also be expressed in literature and conflicts and fights molestation, rape and other horrible crimes have been penetrated in narratives along with the pain endured by the people. Post-conflict Nepali narratives as seen in Nepali literature have been a mirror to the future generation to let other know what happened in the past which passed with the terrible events but Bhattarai has not written anything about how peace can be prevailed in the conflict-society.

In “Parashu Pradhanko Sitaharu Akhyan Kritima Abhighat” (Trauma in Parashu Pradhan’s Sitas), Ramesh Shubhechchhu, introducing post modernism and trauma theory, tries to show how trauma theory is a part of post modernism. He describes how trauma theory originated from the testimony made by the survivors of the Second World War and from the narratives made from those testimonies. Besides, depressed people, sexual assault, lack of safety, trustlessness, and domination are some aspects that also help trauma theory expand. One can study physical, mental and current as well as long lasting humanistic events with the help of this theory. In Nepali context, unemployment, the compulsion of going abroad for employment and the humiliation and torture they undergo in foreign land are some reasons that make one traumatized. Likewise, social insecurity, sexual exploitation, murder, rape, dishonesty, lack of trust among the family members, lack of trust in education, destruction, manipulation of law for commoners, terror among the civilians, misuse of property earned in the foreign land, lack of trust among relatives, locale, and

foreigners, and skepticism are some other factors that would make one traumatized for a long time. In Parashu Pradhan's stories, the main characters are the victims of such social, cultural and economic factors and they remain traumatized for a long time in the stories but Shubhechchu has not done anything about peace even in traumatic experience of the characters.

In the introductory part of *Yudhdha ra Dwandaka Katha* (Stories of War and Conflict), Govind Raj Bhattarai and Bishnubibhu Ghimire highlight the physical and mental suffering caused by the ten years long civil war in the country; which ultimately made many commoners suffer badly for a long time even after the end of the war. They have centralized their focus on only trauma in war and conflict stories.

In "Samakalin Nepali Kathama Dwandako Prishthabhumi ra Pariwesh" (Background and Condition of Conflict in Contemporary Nepali Stories) of his book *Samakalin Nepali Dwandakatha* (Contemporary Nepali Conflict Stories), Laxman Prasad Gautam delineates how political, social, economic and cultural factors play an important role in shaping the contemporary Nepali stories which have mirrored the then contemporary Nepali society. Besides, he brought out the difficulty and suffering people were facing that time in his writing but he has not written the consequences of peace in the society.

In "Srijanako Euta Uttar Aadhunik Sidhhanta: Abhighat" (A Post Modern Theory of Creation: Trauma Theory), of his book *Utter-Aadhunik Bimarsha* (Post-Modern Thought) Govind Raj Bhattarai talks how in the last two decades, the issues of war and conflict have become a good issue to write about. He says the outcomes and consequences caused by war and conflict have made a good space in literary writing, which has attracted the attention of the readers too. Among the crimes happened in the great wars and conflicts, sexual assaults and rape have been

presented as a severe crime. According to him, some notable works like *Sipahiki Swasni* (Soldier's Wife), *Dwand ra Yudhhaka Katha* (Stories of War and Conflict) and *Chhapamarko Chhoro* (Son of Gurilla) have been written about the trauma people underwent during the ten years long insurgency that happened in Nepal. These stories written on the context of physical and mental hardship people faced that time can have a better picture of the contemporary society.

In "Yee Abhighatka Kathale Mutu Hallauna Thalchhan" (These Trauma Stories Commence to Shake Hearts), of his book *Utter-aadhunik Bimarsha* (Post-Modern Thought) Govind Raj Bhattarai highlights the trauma mentioned in Mahesh Bikram Shaha's *Chhapamarko Chhoro* (Son of Guerilla). After reading these stories one can easily understand the loss and destruction caused by the ten years long civil war. They are considered as incurable trauma that once gripped the contemporary Nepali society. He has mentioned only the impacts of trauma but not how narrative can have some solutions.

In "Samakalin Kathama Janayudhhako Prabhav" (Impacts of People's War in Contemporary Katha), Gopindra Paudel shows how the ten years long Maoist War had badly impacted Nepali society. According to him, more than two dozens of books have been written about the war and the changes brought by this conflict. He is of the opinion that almost all these works are not able to present the pain and suffering Nepali people faced during the ten years long conflict because Nepali people went through more severe traumatic situation than they are mentioned in these works. Similarly, in "Janyudha Prabhabit Kathaka Nari Patra" (Female Characters in People's War Affected Stories), Gopindra Paudel surveys the pathetic condition of the female characters in the stories written about the ten years long insurgency. Whether they are wives of common people or daughters or lady guerilla or anyone

else, they are the real victims of the war; hence they are really traumatized. These stories have become very sensitive and emotional because of the blood and tears shed by ladies. In both articles, Paudel tries his best to illuminate the causes and consequences of conflict but has not written how these characters could come out of such horrible situations.

In “Samsamayik Nepali Dwanda ra Yudhakatha” (Contemporary Nepali War and Conflict Stories), Kumar Prasad Koirala tries to justify the intention of stories written about the war and conflict happened during the ten years long insurgency in Nepal. He is of the opinion that stories written about war and conflict are actually the stories of trauma. These stories not only show the insurgency, but also terror, horror, turmoil, pain, suffering and ultimately trauma caused by all these things. This article helps one understand the nature of war stories but has not seen any possibilities of prevailing peace in society.

In “Nepali Sahityama Abhighatko Prarambha ra Bikas” (The Beginning and Development of Trauma Theory in Nepali Literature), Rajendra Subedi highlights how trauma can be seen in Nepali literature from the beginning till now. He is of the opinion that these literary writing has been created on the sensitivity of human suffering. More or less from the very beginning, the writers have highlighted the human suffering and pain in the form of trauma. Besides, the modern era is the age of war and conflict; which would ultimately help one measure the depth of human suffering but Subedi has not talked about the embedded peace.

In “Euti Ra, Euta Mo Kathama Janyudha Prabhabit Patra” (People’s War Affected Characters in “A Ra and a Mo”), Shantimaya Giri presents pain and suffering of lower class Nepali people caused by ten years long civil war. She has shown how ordinary people struggled and sacrificed for the termination of monarchy

and restoration of democracy in Nepal amid regular strikes and curfews; which consequently brought many troubles to lower class people's lives and they become the victims of many incurable diseases. Finally they opt for the demise in the name of bringing bright dawn in the life of Nepali people. Giri could have said that both of these characters have sacrificed for sustainable peace but she didn't.

In "Samakalin Nepali Kathama Narikalamko Baicharik Ghanatwa" (Thoughtful Density of Female Writers in Contemporary Nepali Stories), Geeta Tripathi, introducing trauma theory in Nepali literature, shows how the ten years long insurgency has impacted women in war affected Nepali society. The decade long Maoist insurgency has mostly affected the marginalized people whether living in the hinterland of Nepal or in Terai, who are still supposed to have been discriminated by the unipolarized governance. But Tripathi has not said anything about how the narrative could be a means of prevailing peace.

Bal Ram Adhikari in "Cross-Cultural Awareness in Translation of Stories of Conflict and War" explores on the use of languages used in translating the stories. Almost all stories have been collected from different sources written in Nepali language and Govind Raj Bhattarai has translated and published them in this anthology. Talking about the gaps in the culture and nature of the languages and morale of translation, he argues, "The translator has to accept the inevitable cultural gaps and mould the translation accordingly. Considering this reality, the translator can resort to a number of translation procedures to bridge the gaps and compensate the loss" (39). Showing the significance of such works of translation, the researcher elaborates that this anthology as a hieroglyph of harrowing ordeal of Nepalese society incurred by a decade-long armed conflict waged and fought by both rebel and government sides. He further states, "The anthology abounds in vivid images related

to Nepalese culture, politics in general and the Maoist insurgency in particular, significance and meaninglessness of war, people's desire for socio-cultural and political change, and the cruelty practiced by both the fighting groups" (39). This anthology has ultimately presented the horrors and traumatic experiences that the Nepalese society underwent during the ten years long Maoist Armed insurgency. Besides, this article has also talked some inherent cultural diversity found in Nepali society as shown in this anthology. He finds cultural elements very specific in Nepali society, but this difference has posed vexing problems for the translator. He explores:

Some of them are: sociological assumptions related to caste hierarchy and ethnicity such as Gurungni, Achchhut, and BK, ecology such as *lankuri*, *khanyu*, and *gande*, mythological and political-historical allusions such as Sita, Ranachandi, Ganesh Man, and BP Koirala, insults and abuse such as sale, Bhotini, and besse, similes such as bhutjasto, kalo madhyarat, and ciso sanpra jasto hat, and metaphors such as hinsrak janawarharu. (39)

This article while talking about the modes of translation has also elaborated some other such factors which the contemporary Nepali society could not negate and even now one becomes very emotional but has not sought any possibilities to come out of it.

Various researchers have done their research on trauma, Maoist insurgency and post-conflict Nepali narratives, but none of them is seen doing their work on trauma and embedded peace in such narratives in which characters are victimized mentally and physically.

Despite the fact that ample works have been done in the field of trauma, traumatized people during and after the conflict, but none has done any work anticipating for peace and the post-conflict narrative written on the periphery of the insurgency has been very significant to understand trauma and its various kinds that

have been prevalent in the Nepali context. The reviews of critics reinforce the arguments about trauma in the Nepali context, and how each of the victims is seen anticipating for peace. The significance of this review is to help in developing the lenses to understand the theoretical approaches of traumas, and long lasting peace in the war-affected society. Various researches have been done on conflict and pathos and pain endured in one's life, but no one has penned dissertations showing how the narratives written about the conflict and its horrible effects on society can also be interpreted as a way to advocate the importance of peace after war and importance of peace in the narratives which are written after the armed conflict. So with the help of narratives written in this time, I want to discover the plea for peace and its rhetoric in the post conflict narratives and this review shows that this research project treads the untrodden ways in this field.

Research Gap

A lot has been written about trauma and its impact in literary works from the political, sociological and economic viewpoint but there is a lacuna in the field of embedded peace and manifest trauma experienced in post-conflict Nepali narratives. The limitation of the study is the dearth of reports of the real victims of the insurgency. The social taboo attached to the poor mental health of an individual stopped people to take help except in cases of complete insanity. The one method to study the impact of trauma on the psyche of an individual is to understand the mind of the victims through its depiction in literary works. The present research work is to understand the trauma of the people who experienced during the ten-year long Nepali Maoist insurgency of the country through literary representations. The selected texts, plurivocal and yet with much in common, offer rich multiple interpretations. The narratives refer to the trauma experience during the ten-year long insurgency either

directly or indirectly and deal with both individual trauma as well as collective trauma of the entire nation. The intention is to utilize the selected fictional narratives on insurgency as modes of testimony. It tries to analyze the literature through the literary trauma theory especially of Caruth, Alexander and LaCapra. Though it is a study from the psycho-socio-analyst perspective, it cannot claim to offer a complete psychological understanding of the impact of the insurgency. The study is conducted with the awareness of social heritage and historical and political bearings moulding the experience in a definite shape.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework: Trauma Theories

3.1 Origin and Beginning

The main research design of this dissertation is qualitative and it mostly depends on content text and the analytical aspects of the primary texts. Besides, textual evidences are interpreted and analyzed with the light of theoretical insights of trauma theory.

The dissertation has dealt with their psychological make-up similar to the real victims of the event. These narratives are mostly related to real life incidents, derived from books containing the oral testimonies and official records in the form of reports of the incidents but written in the narratives. The events portrayed in the stories have been designated in comparison to the authentic incidents to determine the similarity between real and fiction. The literature derived as similar to real life incidents, should then be studied in the context of the literary trauma theory for a deeper understanding of the traumatic impact of the insurgency on individual psyche and their anticipation for permanent peace and reconciliation in the violent-hit Nepali society.

I have taken trauma theory and its major claim as the theoretical parameter for the study to delineate the traumatic experiences faced by the main characters of twenty narratives. I am applying the main trends of traumatic perspectives like psychological trauma and cultural trauma propagated by leading theorists like Caruth, Alexander and LaCapra. These narratives have been analyzed on the basis of certain concepts of these leading theorists whose theories are considered to be best to analyze the texts written about the trauma of the war-affected people.

Trauma theory is a discourse of the unspeakable of the event or object that has destabilized language in elucidating the painful past. These discourses, often blurred

into each other, would create a traumatically sacred sublime, in which historical complexity and pain are effaced or redeemed. Besides, trauma theory can help demystify different sorts of narrative complexities; and it is not only indicative, but also occurs in different literary forms with a means of relieving pain. It throws a light on figurative or poetic language, and perhaps symbolic process in general, as something other than an enhanced imaging. Many such experiences are represented artistically with the help of images. The theory has contributed very specifically to an analysis of human time as flashbacks, but also revived beacons from a period of greater intensity.

Through trauma, one can view individual experience as embedded in cultural phenomena and historical context. It is the means of an engagement with history for those who have suffered its direst effects. Both victims and perpetrators can have their own traumatic narratives in its fullest forms. By so doing, one can trace an aesthetic dimension of the trauma within the work of art i.e. literary works to a cultural emphasis which can help one interpret the consequences of the past events. Trauma as a psychological approach can reshape one's mind about mental and physical experience undergone in past by telling, retelling, sharing, and presenting it in the written forms.

3.2 Psychological Approach to Trauma Theory

The word "trauma" comes from the ancient Greek meaning "wound" referring to what Caruth states, "wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (*Unclaimed* 3). In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Caruth turns to literary forms of interpretation of traumatic events and belated experience. Literature, she argues, enables one to bear witness to events that cannot be completely known and opens one's ears to experiences that might have, otherwise, remained unspoken and unheard. It has

been taken as a response to very unexpected or overwhelming violent events of what she says, “repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors” (4), which cannot be grasped totally but they recur in different forms i.e. repeated flashbacks, amnesia, latency, nightmares and other conditions.

Hence, trauma as an interruption of consciousness by something comes too soon to be expected. In such condition one can approach to death, but as human nature he or she cannot exterminate the possibility of death, and lives with the stroke of painful trauma of what Caruth argues, “the silence of its mute repetition of suffering” (9). A traumatic event not only affects an individual personality, but the whole society – “deeply tied to our own historical realities” (12), which leads him or her to disturbed state. It is always good to counsel with the psychiatrists about whom she says they “have begun to reshape their thinking about physical and mental experience, including most recently the responses to a wide variety of other experiences such as rape, child abuse, auto and industrial accidents” (11). Sometimes, recurring and counseling the previous traumatic events one can get relief.

Caruth is in the opinion that history which is always written about the victorious events ignores the trauma of other people of what she says “their history is repression” (14). Along with illustrating the glorious events happened in past, history must bring those traumatic events which badly impacted the contemporary society and many ordinary people became victims of “overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events” (11). There must be the description of trauma and other painful events happened in ordinary people’s lives along with the events of developments and glories. She further illustrates, “Historical memory is always a matter of distortion, a filtering of the original event through the fictions of traumatic repression, which makes the event available at best indirectly” (15-16). Writing only about glorious events, history would become partial, and

many people would not accept it from heart. She states, “The experience of trauma would, thus, seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself” (17). History, she says, “may speak through the individual or through community, which may not be the site of its disruption, but the locus of a wisdom of all its own” (156). It is a mixture of both rise and fall, good and bad, and victory and defeat. It should bring out all the facts happened in past as an “attempt to bring the experience to light” (22). According to her, history like trauma is never simply one’s own; rather it is precisely the way everyone is affected in each other’s traumatic experiences (24). While bringing out such facts, both victims and perpetrators would take them positively as “a necessary point of departure” (24); there would not be more or less. She further says, “For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence” (18). Trauma and history, in this way, can have a certain kind of link.

In her introductory essay to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Caruth shows that the onset of traumatic pathology (post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD, “a response to an event outside the range of usual human experience” (3)) which cannot be fully determined by given traumatic events which consists of “not only both human and natural catastrophes but also rape, child abuse and a number of other violent occurrences” (3). Caruth proposes that trauma compels one to imagine that traumatic events do not simply occur in time “the fact of latency” (8) and if such events remain in mind for a long time, the victims might have stroke of any kinds of amnesia or “intrusive hallucinations, dreams, flashbacks, thoughts or behaviors” (4). The converting trauma into narrative can help the story to be verbalized and communicated, “to be integrated into one’s own and others’ knowledge of the past”

(153). It should accept the pain that has affected the victims. Then, he or she can feel relief.

The traumatic events would not make the victims able to face the challenges, and they remain in trauma even more as she says, “. . .while the images of traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control” (151). The trauma, in such condition, remains in between amygdale. Whenever the victims see the same events which had traumatized them in past, such events would come in their conscious mind and their behavior would be abnormal and they may realize the trauma. She states, “The traumatized carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess” (4). It finally would create a big problem in them. A traumatic event is, therefore, a strange sort of an event because once it is understood as a belated consequence of a missed encounter, trauma itself must be understood in terms of absence, that is, the absence of something that failed to become located in time or place rather than as a positive presence. She argues, “The flashback, it seems, provides a form of recall that survives at the cost of willed memory or of the very continuity of conscious thought” (152). This absence at the heart of the traumatic event lends it its constitutive ghostly quality.

But as paradoxical as it may appear, this absence does not necessarily produce purely negative consequences. Indeed, one of Caruth’s insights about trauma is that to the extent that trauma opens up a breach in experience and understanding, it also opens up new possibilities for experience and new modes of understanding. For her, the very structure of repetition inherent to traumatic belatedness compels the traumatized person to survive the trauma by finding ways of bearing witness to it—both belatedly and in relation to others. Toward the end of her introduction to *Trauma*:

Explorations of Memory, Caruth explains why and how trauma is not only a form of absence or departure but also a call to survival through new forms of contact with others. She further says, “The inherent departure, within trauma, from the moment of its first occurrence, is also a means of passing out of the isolation imposed by the event” (10-11). The history of trauma even in its belated condition can only be possible along with listening to another which can help the victims soothe their inner tension.

Reflections on trauma can make an important contribution to a way of thinking about history, politics, and even ethics. To help soothe tension caused by trauma speaking and listening would inherently be meaningful. She states, “This speaking and this listening – a speaking and a listening from the site of trauma – does not rely, I would suggest, on what we simply know of each other, but on what we don’t yet know of our own traumatic pasts” (11). It is trauma which may provide a link between cultures within the traumas of contemporary history that ultimately would create an ability to make a departure from the grief. Here, one can assert that Caruth’s invocation to “our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves” (11) might well serve as a powerful description of the essential role that literature can play in human experience.

For Caruth it is literature as testimony which is one of the ways to tell one another about aspects of traumatic experience that cannot be contained by ordinary modes of expression and that may even exceed human understanding. But, memory whether narrative memory or traumatic memory would be sorted out in mind, otherwise it might result in dissociation.

Van der Kolk and Van der Hart in “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma”, while outlining narrative memory and

traumatic memory – a way to “the nucleus of psychopathology” (159), state how memories are sorted out in mind which affect the “day-to-day perception and interpretation of reality” (159). In such condition, when there is lack of integration of emotionally arousing experiences in memory system, there result in “dissociation and formation of traumatic memories” (163), which would influence current perceptions, and affect the condition, and behavior of the victims. Such memories always remain overwhelming experiences which should be integrated with existing mental schemes and transmitted to narrative language. To come out of such “reappearance of traumatic memories in the form of flashbacks, reenactments, and so on” (176), one has to narrate the memories, to look back at what happened, which he or she “has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his personality” (176). Narrating such painful stories can bring relief to the traumatized and while unfolding the plot, it induces their pain.

The post-traumatic state normally consists of living in the “unremembered past, reenacting in contemporary reality past traumatic experience” (177), which can be relieved by sharing the story of traumatization mixing painful experiences of past with present. Memorializing is a way of relief because once it is done, traumatic memory starts losing its power over current experience and many victims are “able to soften the intrusive power of the original, unmitigated horror” (178). Following this therapeutic approach, they can focus their attention to the future: and their traumatic experiences would be “activated in the form of irrational perception and fears” (179). So reconciling with the horrible past with the current situation and alluring future one can have better peaceful life.

Sharing and unfolding the knots about the past traumatic experiences can have some soothing features in reconciling with the warring sides and coming in meeting

points, so that both sides can live together. Traumatic experience can be sublime and this aesthetic category would be seen as a process to open to history and change. Gene Ray in his “HITS from Trauma and the Sublime to Radical Critique”, highlights trauma is a damage, which suggests that sublime pertains to artistic and cultural representations of traumatic damage. He further explains, “Certain artworks seems to bring us to the borders of traumatic encounter in ways that are disturbing and provoking, even painfully so, but also at the same time aesthetically enjoyable” (135). This feeling of enjoyment would be made possible by the semblance in the artistic representation.

Sublime work, here, would be the representative of the wound and trauma of the real incidents which would open the aesthetic aspect of literary works by presenting them even after a long time and sublime would carry with it a demand to politicize the notion of mourning as seen in many narratives and read events. And traumatic events have given many analysts a source for writing and memories of trauma are a mode of resistance to a language.

Traumatic events which would reshape human thinking about physical and mental experience must be told or heard in any condition. Either in the form of simply counseling or bearing witness of testimonies or accumulating memory in the form of narrative language, one can find a better resolution which can help the victims or the perpetrators relieve their inner tension. As literature is considered as a substitute for the scientific analysis of the consequences of trauma, it is useful to convert such horrible experiences and memories in writing so that concerned people who are affected badly would know and realize the facts later. In elucidating the traumatic facts that happened in past, testimony would play an important role in bringing out the painful events as testimony which one has witnessed with his or her own eyes. Narrating painful experience in the form of testimony of what one has witnessed,

which would remain in mind for a long time, can reconcile the conflicting groups, too. The depth of trauma can be understood by presenting the significance of witness and testimony in the preceding paragraphs which will unfold the basic tenets of trauma in the writing forms which would help one understand painful traumatic past, which, otherwise, would not have been deciphered.

3.3 Two Key Concepts: Witness and Testimony

In recent epistemological development, one exciting term “testimony” – knowledge based on what one tells another, of what Gilfert states, “Testimony stands alongside perception, memory, reason and inference as one of our main sources of knowledge”(1), as a philosophical term intends to capture a diverse array of sources and forms of communication. To justify the testimony, even the witness is asked to “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” (14) as a legal testimony of what once again he says, “It is an elegant procedural solution to the problem of integrating and comparing various sources of information, before arriving at a final verdict” (77). It can be a source of knowledge for the hearer as it is a way of transmitting the relevant features of a belief from the speaker to the hearer.

Here, the speaker would be offering to assume responsibility for the hearer’s belief which would be formed on the basis of his or her testimony. The assurance view of testimony can be thought of as an attempt to give more precise features of both aspects of testimonial exchange – “that is, of the speaker’s specific responsive to the hearer, and of her offer of assuming responsibility for any of the hearer’s beliefs that are directly based on her testimony” (172). It signifies the specificity of the testifier-addressee relationship.

It is inherently important about witnessing the truth as testimony which is related to horrible past events. The victims’ narrative which clarifies the process of

bearing witness to massive trauma begins with someone who testifies the events.

Bearing witness to testimony would help one relieve the tension of mind.

Laub in his “Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle” talks about witnessing to truth in relation to past events; it would be “the quest of testifying and of witnessing . . . the process of the testimony” (61) to begin again the plausibility of the past and to “build anew its linkage to, and assimilation into, present-day life” (62). In past events, the survivors should not only survive so they would tell their past memory, but they would have to share their stories, for their survival too. He says, “One has to know one’s buried truth in order to be able to live one’s life” (63). It becomes inherently imperative to share the victim’s stories for relief. That’s why, it is very important to “tell and to be heard can become itself an all-consuming life task” (63). If such painful experience is not shared in time, it would be very difficult for the survivor to remain good in life. The untold events would become very distorted in one’s unconscious memory that one would believe that he or she was responsible for the atrocities he or she witnessed, not the perpetrators.

In the context of talking about the importance of testimonies and witnessing, Laub emphasizes the human desires to live and the human will to know even in the most “radical circumstances designed for its obliteration and destruction” (69). The process of the testimony is to hold out the promise of the truth and it does recapture the lost truth of reality, which would “allow for a reconciliation with the broken promise and makes the resumption of life, in spite of failed promise, at all possible” (73). It cannot bring back all what has been lost and destroyed but it is a “dialogical process of exploration and reconciliation of two worlds – the one that was brutally destroyed and the one that is – that are different and will always remain so” (74). So it is a process of encountering the loss and also of going through the severe pain which had been endured quite long ago. Following its process, one can realize that what the

life is about and how one should live with unfulfilled hope as one's companion that would know and live with him or her.

In "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening", Laub stresses on the process of the testimony to trauma in which one wants to know what the victim tells him or her because "what is important is the situation of discovery of knowledge – its evolution, and its happening" (62). Knowledge in the testimony is genuine advent which unfolds the truth. The act of telling about the past might become very traumatizing or even retraumatization. According to Daub, the poet and other writers who "have broken their silence" (66) must have paid with their lives. So, testimony can become a return to the trauma or "a re-experiencing of the events itself" (67). And the witnesses would be talking to somebody whom they would have been awaiting for a long time.

Similarly, in "An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival" Laub points out that the testimony is a process of facing loss and of going through the pain of the act of witnessing and of the ending of the act of witnessing that entails another repetition of the experience of the loss. He states, "It reenacts the passage through difference in such a way, however, that it allows perhaps a certain repossession of it" (91). It is also considered to recapture the lost truth of the bitter reality.

Sharing one's grief to other is a way of living life with peace because unshared stories would create a massive distortion in the form of trauma in human mind. But the testimony being shared with others can be taken as a voice of someone who would be a witness and willing to communicate the truth which otherwise remains hidden until or unless not taken with the positive insight.

Lawrence Normand in his “Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History” points out that true witnessing becomes overcoming the shame that would ultimately help the victims silence of what they had gone through. For victims, speaking is not just the recording of memory, but an activity which rebuilds the chances of speaking and being shared with others. Speaking like this helps “the events knowable, perhaps for the first time, to the speaker and others. Through this route, testimony is released into history” (136). Here, victims or survivors if speaking from the very sites where they were supposed to be suppressed can reconstruct and undo the actions of the past; besides, “recover the power of testimony in the voice of someone who was there” (136). The artistic and testimonial achievements of the particular events can help one overcome the silence which has been giving pain.

Keeping pain within can cause trauma to the victims or survivors, sharing the grief with others sooner or later can have some relief in mind, which can also help offer new meaning and the testimony can be a source of forming and reforming the understanding. In the same way, trauma and testimony seem to be related to political background because political events such as riots, genocide, pogroms etc. would reflect the points at which the body of language becomes the language of such horrible events.

Das, in her “Trauma and Testimony Implications for Political Community”, explores how testimony can be constructed from the new way in which the victims occupy the space of symbolic representation. The way of creating oneself as a victim taken as a symbol of subjection can give a new direction to the meaning of being a victim. Such victims who would be able to show would not be a standardized narrative of loss and suffering, but a project that “can only be understood in the

singular through the image of reinhabiting the space of devastation. Along with the differences between the experience of violence as a victim/survivor and that of subject, it can help “craft the symbols and genres of mourning that made them active in the highly contested domain of politics” (301). Such situations can create an ability to engage a wider public on the meaning of such violence. Testimony of the survivors as those who spoke would be “best conceptualized not through the metaphor of writing but rather through the contrast between saying and showing” (300). For victims, testimony would be a possible landmark which they can occupy the space of devastation not through the gesture of escape but by occupying it in its presentness in a condition of mourning.

Testimony in the form of writing self may refer to the making of a future community, then, its meaning can't necessarily be clear because some new forms of self would “emerge in the practices of war that in the African sense is now part of the everyday reality rather than constituting a state of exception” (299). Such forms of writing as testimony would play an important role in recovering the memory in the form of writing in the literary form, which would help reform the lost identity which must at all costs be found again.

Thus, the performance of such discourse can help relocate the narratives of violence and anchor them to judicial-political discourses which would subsequently plead for the identity of subjects. The testimony of the victims historically contextualized in reading and writing can be articulated between ethics and aesthetics of what Thomas Trezise opted, “suffering demands the continued existence of the very art it forbids” (5). The writers use these testimonies in their writing as a source for making a good work of art.

Treize stresses on dismantling as the means by which art resists the illusion and pleasure or spurious understanding art may afford at the expense of victims. Besides, with the way of reflections on community and subjectivity, he opts for testimonial memoir and examines the first person singular voice from both linguistic and narratological point of view discussing the fundamental historical questions faced by survivors. It is also noticeable that testimony can't be limited to any generic boundaries, hence it exceeds to drama, fiction, and poetry, but "this extension is limited by historical consideration that do not necessarily pertain to art" (64). Art either related to conflict focuses as a synecdotic stand-in. The artistic mediation of experience in the form of testimony is considered tantamount to moral betrayal to silencing of victims.

Treize puts forward that witnessing is fundamental and indispensable tension between its participants though every time, there would not be face-to-face encounter with survivors, but still it can be done by recording of some kind, so that, one can "unbeknownst to survivors themselves, act as trustees of their testimony by ensuring its continued reception . . . whether as listeners, readers, or viewers, with the reconstruction of a sense of self and community" (223). This trusteeship may serve socially, politically, historically while receiving testimony which would be an ethical exigency that can test one's ability to empathize.

While facilitating the traumatic testimony one must differentiate between survivors and the tension, which alludes one's witnessing of his or her witnessing that must ethically and aesthetically be navigated anew. But there are still some people who assume that traumatic historical events can be made meaningful through hearing, reading or viewing accounts which make apparent personal engagement with history.

Roger I. Simon and Claudia Eppert, in their “Remembering Obligation: Pedagogy and the witnessing of Testimony of Historical Trauma”, state that such traumatic accounts can be seen in the form of diaries or eye-witnesses statements, documentary photographs or films, novels, poetry, stories, and other fictionalized films or theatres. The main purpose of such accounts is to provide testimony – “to convey through multiple expressive forms the historical substance and significance of prior events and experiences” (1). Thus, testimony comprises representations either by those people who have lived through such horrible events or by others who have been told or shown such bitter realities directly or indirectly. Such details as testimony which are pedagogically used as modes of instruction for transmitting information about the past and keeping specific event in front of one’s eye would be moved to convey to others what have been impressed upon them, thereby “foregrounding the events’ significance for current and future generations” (1). These details would carry an injunction “listen and remember” (1) as how listening should be accomplished is a matter of noticing the facts. Dealing with such concerns not only clarifies the comprehension of a testimonial account but also ground one’s witnessing in a commemorative ethics. Such ethics should be “open to the claims of past generations on practices of remembrance and to the interweaving of these claims within the texture of one’s current daily commitments” (11). So these re-telling opens prior ‘said’ through saying that attempts to get new idioms which should welcome the proximity of the past.

This way, re-telling initiates its own testimonial address to another, which unfolds the queries like when, how, and where a testimony would be told. On the other hand, many testimonies related to horrible past catastrophes which have shaken

the foundation of the human society can help to strengthen the reception, acknowledgement, and fuller understanding of the terror undergone.

Geoffrey Hartman in his “The Humanities of Testimonies: An Introduction” elucidates how the testimonies in the form of viva voce too can present challenge, however they can have values which would “reach beyond the factual historical yield of witness accounts recorded at a considerable temporal remove from the event” (249). He further argues that there is a performative as well as an informative dimension in each testimony. Oral documents should be “carefully compared with other sources when it comes to positivistic data: dates, names, exact sequence of events, also certain types of judgment, as in identifying perpetrators after the passage of many years” (254). The testimony places each one in the presence of an individual, communicates something of the original impact of what was experienced, “retrieves in the spontaneous flow of the interview forgotten episodes, and is generally unafraid of the emotional aura” (254). Consequently, a core memory of feeling and experiences play a crucial role. Testimonies speak to a variety of audiences because they are able to touch heart as well as mind, which appeal to a human commonality that implies singularity.

Besides talking about oral testimonies, he alludes it as crucial role because they do not subject one to atrocity, intolerable and repetitious details of massacres projected by an artificially impersonal mode of narration. He further states, “Loss must become legacy. The shattered or isolated self of the victim is given a chance to reenter, through the interviewing process and however provisionally, a personal bonding that is also a social bond and which is necessary for the transmission of memory” (257). So, it can be a proactive ingathering designed to create a living monument of retrieved voices.

A catastrophe as severe as seen or read elsewhere is meant has been transmitted in the form of art which would show historically sanctified events and their legacy for the generations in the years to come. Testimony can have a common ground between literature and ethics, meeting point between violence and culture and witnessing and events. It can unfold many facts with different literary genres.

In “Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching”, Felman argues that contemporary works of arts can use the testimony both as the subjects and as the medium of the literal transmission. She further states, “Testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge” (5). Psychoanalysis and literature can enrich testimony as primarily events of speech and testimony found in both can be understood as a mode of truth’s realization beyond what is available as statement as transparent truth.

Testimony should be understood as a mode to the truth. In literature, psychoanalysis and history “witness might be – as the term suggests – the one who witnesses, but also, the one who begets the truth, through the speech process of the testimony” (16). His testimony can be a source of writing literary works. She is quoted as saying about the relationship between literature and testimony that literature can give one a voice, right, and necessity to survive. “Literature has had a performative value: my life has suffered a burden, undergone a transference of pain. If I am to continue reading, I must, like David Copperfield, read as if for life” (56). Reading literary works specially written about the conflict can soothe the pain of the victims.

In “In an Era of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah*”, she further says that to bear witness is to take responsibility for truth. Bearing witness is to testify of what is “more than simply to report a fact or an event or to relate what has been lived,

recorded and remembered” (103). For that, memory plays important role to address another, to impress upon the listeners, to address the community, which would ultimately lead each affected ones to a reconciliation. She further states, “To testify is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative, to others: to take responsibility – in speech – for history or for the truth of an occurrence” (104). That is why, the essence of testimony should be very impersonal to enable an objective reconstruction of what history was like.

The impact of testimony, thus, always remains meaningful with a relation between words and voice, as well as the interaction among words, voice, rhythm and melody which would help carry the certainty of the occurrences neutrally without taking any side. Testimony has been a source of survival for those who had survived from the fatal events and the victims remain alive telling others what they had witnessed in past. But the same testimony may provoke the political impasse with the linguistic perspectives. And the testimony of the victims of what they had witnessed, if presented in the forms of reading and writing can elucidate the feelings of ethics and aesthetics. It is also witness which would bring testimony whether in written or spoken form; that the recipient knows the facts happened quite long ago. Besides, testimony and witnessing have been a source for making a common ground for literature and ethics which can unfold many historical facts in different genres. In the context of presenting painful past experiences, one should be careful in expressing their testimony whether it would impact the present society positively or negatively. To put it succinctly, traumatic testimony should not be cultural.

3.4 Sociological Approach to Trauma

When a community is subjected to any kinds of horrendous events leaving its members with indelible marks on their consciousness and making their memory

active for a long time even creating future identity in irreplaceable ways, here cultural trauma emerges with a feeling of togetherness sharing pain and suffering in group. To explain it, the innovator of cultural trauma, Alexander highlights, “Cultural trauma is the first of all an empirical, scientific concept, suggesting new meaningful and causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions and actions” (1). It incorporates the domain of both social responsibility and political actions. Besides, social groups, national societies, the whole civilizations would witness human suffering also take some responsibility for it. They would identify “the cause of trauma, and thereby assume such moral responsibility, members of collectivities define their solidarity relationships in ways that, in principle, allow them to share the sufferings of others” (1). It would not be good to underestimate the existence of others’ trauma and refuse to accept their responsibility for their suffering, which only propagates the tension.

Alexander explores the trauma experience occurs when the traumatizing events interact with human nature. Similarly, traumatic memory residues with free association in psychoanalytical treatment as they may appear in public with the help of writing literary work, which has been taken as a kind of academic counterpart with its hermeneutic approach. Many scholars in different disciplines and humanities have taken this kind of memory as a significant achievement. Its main purpose would be “to restore collective psychological health by lifting societal repression and restoring memory” (7). To bring the traumatic memories in reconciliation, these scholars have stressed on public acts of commemoration, cultural representation, and even public struggle. Besides, some collective means for undoing repression and allowing the pent-up emotions of loss and mourning should be followed up to restore the tension.

Enhancing self-esteem, promoting public discourse and lauding in moral terms are some denouements which can help the victims restore the emotional phenomena.

Traumatic feelings of the victims can be understood as an unmediated, common sense reactions to the repressions which have once battered the situations. It is also good to recognize the reality of traumatizing events and experiences along with the “denials of the perpetrators and their conservative supporters, the denials that insist on looking to the future and forgetting the past” (7). The voices for commemorations, remembrance of the disappearances and the torments, and of denunciation of the repressors are some factors which would remain very landmarks for recovery.

While talking about “experiencing trauma” Alexander points out that it is a way to sociological process which would define a painful injury to the collectivity; which gradually sets up the victims, provides responsibility and formalizes the ideal and material consequences. He is in the idea that as much as trauma is experienced and felt, the collective identity can become “significant revised” (22). Doing this identities can be constructed and secured by reconstructing the collectivity of past life. Subsequently, the elements of trauma process can be taken as social structures as all such elements can be seen as the process of social construction and deconstruction of traumatic event. Either war is lost or won, people get badly affected; but later a new regime would come in power and hegemonic publics can be empowered and enthusiastic with social conflict and stalemate. Such contingent historical factors can play a “powerful influence on whether a consensus will be generated that allows the cultural classification of trauma to be set firmly in place” (24). A new and powerful regime can be formed with the consensus of commoners.

Alexander has delineated the importance of cultural trauma in the context of establishing a harmonious society with more chances of reconciliation and peaceful co-existence after bloody and catastrophic disastrous events in past. Painful past is not only an issue of collective trauma, it can also regenerate a new regime of hope and bright future. On the other hand, Edkins highlights on the importance of traumatic events which would bring some good sides to writers.

Edkins in her “Remembering Relationality Trauma Time and Politics” states that the memory of the organized violence of genocide, slaveries, wars, famines, and terrorism has been an important site for political and literary investment. Writers whether in cultural studies, comparative literature, sociology or others have done their best in analyzing not only commemoration of such events, but also the practices of redistribution, recovery and reconciliation for their reawakening (100). Each one would bring forth important tenets of writing trauma.

In bringing out the facts of cultural trauma on the basis of its significance of creating literary works, traumatic events can be a source of creative works. In the same way, Pandey, while bringing out the importance of cultural trauma, points out that its presence in narrative would function as a memory to illuminate the traumatic past and also a possibility to settle the hostility which had led to the violence triggering the trauma. He takes the latter function as a drawback from the perspective of the aesthetics of trauma (128), about which one can easily elucidate its main purposes.

According to Pandey, codifying traumatic events by domesticating the unspeakable can also help settle dominant culture, but while bringing out unspeakable past along with favorable present can be cultural-political force which can solidify feeling of communalism (130). It ultimately embarks the rise of identity politics, “the exploration of which exposes the performative nature of testimony” (130), which can

subsequently evoke even more unspeakable atrocities; maybe related to identity of particular communality.

The language of presentation of traumatic events should be outshining through the use of metairony. The language of narration should underwrite violence and capture “specificity of the partition violence from the perspective of morality, interrogates the ideological underpinning of the state-centred national histories” (131). Such morality should emphasize human relations with the attribute of being human. Mentioning Saadat Hasan Manto and his writing about the Indian-Pakistani partition and its trauma, Pandey further explores that one should experience trauma and transmit it through the use of metairony in order to shock his readers into a responsive awareness so that an actual moral community would come through retraumatization and help ensure cathartic empathy to the victims – “an identification which morally guards them against perpetuating a horrendous act” (131). As a counter to the prose of otherness in much of partition literature, Pandey presents the partition prose of Manto, in which he locates the writer’s metairony, as a welcome alternative (130-1). It is again the morality which would function as a way for disqualifying ethics related to personal and communal relationships. Morality can provide “a threshold test for the assessment of ethical relations – which favor a community or nation over others with equal moral claims” (131). As one should not use the prose of otherness on the other, it can better measure the depth of human emotion to each other. But, if the language of revenge and sacrifice is used, writing literary works about trauma would turn into redemptive, fetishistic narrative, which, sooner or later embarks hostility and enmity.

Pandey is of the opinion that the politics of language of violence should not be chauvinistic; and the writers of trauma should employ the language which should neither reduce the specificity of the experience nor should nullify the possibilities of

co-existence. It should rather develop a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial feuds, hatred; not the notion of separation and partition (136). Trauma caused racially or nationally should be cured or healed; not retrieved of the past. The literature of trauma, however, should not necessarily offer “a means of overcoming instability, contaminated as it is with the ideological contours of the dominant culture to which the trauma belongs” (137). It should also be implemented to pacify the warring groups with their feuds. On the one hand, it forces one remember the past, on the other hand, it conduces to forgiveness; which sooner or later leads the conflicting parties to the way of peaceful co-existence.

To build a co-existed and reconciled society it is always important to learn an important lesson from the traumatic past which once degenerated the human value and social norms and condition to establish a harmonious society. Similarly, to set up a new regime out of painful past, forgetfulness and forgiveness would play a vital role to make each stakeholder to realize and live differently from what they once lived. Writing about the past should not ensue the hostility; rather nullify the tension prevailing among the stakeholders. As sociological trauma has brought some cultural aspects of traumatic experiences, there are other approaches which help one understand many other things related to trauma.

3.5 Other Approaches to Trauma

Apart from analyzing trauma from classic model regarding the processes of mind and memory, while interpreting it from psychological framework, some critics like Michelle Balaev points out the impacts of trauma upon language, associations and symbolization along with “semiotic, rhetorical and social concerns that are part of the study of trauma in literature and society” (2). By focusing on the rhetorical, semiotic and social implication of trauma, she tries to show pluralistic model of

trauma addressing “rhetorical components of trauma explore both how and why traumatic experience is represented in literature by combining psychoanalytic theory with postcolonial theory or cultural studies” (3). This model suggests that literary works can explore trauma as a subject that leads to the study of language, psyche and behavior without assuming the classic definition of trauma which says “an unrepresentable and pathological universalism” (4). She further states literary trauma theory leads one beyond a restrictive analysis by showing trauma’s different representations. It shows how it impacts on individuals and communities; besides the role of literature in a violent world and the role of language to convey extreme experiences would be very new and different from what previously noticed.

Balaev, while highlighting pluralistic approach in understanding trauma, shows linguistic relationship with trauma. In doing so, everyone can be seen as victim of trauma as well as perpetrators, which subsequently leads to universalizing the experience of trauma as well as collectivizing the instigator of violence, of which both “implications serve to make anonymous the actor and recipient of violence” (7). This approach is likely to acknowledge both neurobiological and social contexts of painful experience, equal responses and narratives along with the possibilities that language can convey the variable meaning of trauma. She further states, “Paying attention to the specificity of trauma does not exclude the fact that social, semantic, political, and economic factors are present in the experience and recollection of trauma” (7). Trauma is a lived experience which is identifiable to a greater or less degree.

It is language which carries the fundamentally rooted trauma inherently found in human being, which texts can cultivate a wide variety of values that bring out individual and cultural understandings of the self, memory and society. In the same

way, Stampfl shows the status of trauma in literary works and the abductive process of thought to understand traumatic experience in semiotic terms.

In his “Parsing the Unspeakable in the Context of Trauma”, Stampfl presents the situation of unspeakable as “the explicit admission of the inadequacy of language in a given case” (15). While defining unspeakable as a trope – a particular kind of linguistic expression, he says that the unspeakable is only a phase in the “process of traumatization” (16). The rhetorical evocation of the limitation of language in the context of describing the extreme atrocity is simply an expression of solidarity with the suffering of victims.

The unspeakable situation in the context of atrocities would be cognitive category; and it imparts to the victims an aura of righteousness. He further says, “The presence or absence of rhetorical gestures deferentially acknowledging the limits of language becomes the criterion which determines the moral authority, or lack thereof, of commentary upon atrocity” (18). It can be understood as an instrument for connecting with history remaining firmly with the domain of literary works with an honor of claims of both hearts and mind along with “relief – verging, perhaps, upon joy – attendant upon escaping from a potentially imprisoning psychological low ground” (20). Even describing more about this situation, Naomi Mandel says ahead, “the survivor’s inability or unwillingness to speak, on the one hand, and the rhetorical work of the unspeakable, on the other” (qtd.in Stampfl 20). The survivor’s acute silences and epistemological gaps would reflect the impacts of his traumatic experience. It would show the limitation of language, representation, and thought which can be the objective qualities of the subject matter.

In many cases, the victims and survivors insist that words would not convey the enormity of experiences as they are assigned to “bearing witness to their own

victimizations” (21). It can have some positive function as an enabler and enlarger of cognitive/affective response in the aftermath of trauma. He further states, “Evocations of the unspeakable often give rise to paradoxical attempts to speak the unspeakable” (22); which is important in the evaluation of unspeakable in the context of trauma; and helps one see the moment of unspeakable and also the “real possibilities of recuperation and growth” (36). Then, one can see how trauma and unspeakable would be interrelated.

The situation of unspeakable opens the doors of hope in a place where darkness reigns and which should be capable of doing justice to all possible and impossible vagaries with a positive potentiality in the context of trauma. In the same way, anthropological and sociological theories which parse cultural-historical specificity allow for a differentiated understanding of collective trauma in indigenous narrative traditions.

Visser in her “Trauma and Power in Postcolonial Literary Studies”, while employing postcolonial, sociological and anthropological theories is in opinion that collective trauma enables social solidarity and cultural identity rather than inherently fracturing the self. According to him, in postcolonial literary studies there is a clear call for a new model for reading, understanding, and interpreting trauma which would enable more differentiated and more culturally and historically specific notations and would provide ways of reading collective trauma (108). The theories developed in sociology and anthropology in conceptualizing to trauma theory, social fractions and alienation may cause decisiveness, which eventually leads to a stronger sense of belonging and can create strong and unified community.

While conceptualizing collective trauma, feelings of hurt may move one to the centre of other people’s being and make him or her feel marked, caused or even dead.

This sense of belongingness can make one feel “similarly marked, and in this way can serve as a source of community just as a common language or a common cultural background” (109). Besides making divisive fractures in society, in postcolonial studies, trauma can have positive impact on individuals and communities by “consolidating a sense of belonging, of kinship, and mutual trust” (109). So it can also create a stronger social cohesion and a “renewed sense of identity” (110). The narrative written on colonialism can have a common function to provide expression to collective responses to the immensely “destructive acts of colonialism, material as well as immaterial such as the depression or profanation of sacred indigenous rituals and values” (111). It, thus, enables to make visible the creative and political rather the pathological and negative in trauma literature.

Vasser demonstrates that trauma can function as a source of strong and unified community after undergoing with severe pain in colonialism and decolonization when traumatic wounding is situated in relation to mechanisms of power and authority. But, while exploring the social and political contexts of traumatic experiences along with the narrative strategies the writers employ in their respective books, they manifest in trauma fictions as much as they can to engage readers in the ethical dilemmas of trauma.

Vickroy in “Voices of Survivors in Contemporary Fiction” while showing trauma in social contexts to emphasize the narrative and expressive aspects of severe circumstances and silence to manifest the survivors’ experience, states fiction provides many perspectives which allow readers to meditate on the variety of human responses to shock. It depicts “many avenues for expressing the voices of trauma through the survivor’s narrative” (130). Besides, it incorporates different “responses and survival behaviors within the characterizations of survivors” (130). Survivors’

responses to shame, guilt, doubt etc. as feeling and remembering traumatic events can have cause and effect because social environment, severity of the event and individual's sense of control can help one cope trauma. She states, "The social environment influences the causes and outcomes of traumatic experiences" (132); which subsequently provides the "needed support for healing" (132). Fiction's capacities providing immense description of traumatic experience and representing the interweaving of environment and human responses show the "creation of emotional and cognitive patterns arising out of trauma that in turn shape social attitudes and structures of living" (137). To draw the attention of readers to the characters' trauma, the writers must engage readers' cognitive and emotional responses in their depictions.

It is also writers who should stimulate the readers to "envision these mental states" (138), and provide reasons and motives of characters' actions by showing their mental functioning and dispositions. Following it is useful to interpret trauma because "trauma makes us confront how the individual mind is situated in larger contexts and its causes and consequences are rooted in the social world" (139). Doing this, readers can link the consequences to the causes of traumas.

There are some fictions which elucidate the capacity of trauma in literature to engage the readers' empathy by analyzing closely the personal and community contexts of trauma and its psychological ramifications. Vickroy points out that such works provide "narrative means to articulate trauma's effects even when dissociation may occur or when victims face denial and hostility in the social environment" (148). This way, fiction shows trauma as an important factor for human survival and growth. It can represent trauma beyond the unspeakable and repetitive with the help of survivors' deeply rooted social networks which can "cause trauma, limit expression,

or offer resources that provide avenues toward healing” (148). It, eventually, help provide many types of experiences which maintains protective survival patterns.

Vickroy shows trauma in fiction produces three types of effects: first an awareness of multidimensionality of extreme experience and the social influences which mark the survivors’ personality second textual modeling for shaping individual’s mind, and third the ethics of reading which embarks relation between the reader and the survivors. Kaplan, on the other hand, lays impacts on both individuals, entire culture and nation along with the need to share and translate the traumatic experiences.

Kaplan explores the experience of catastrophe shows the difficulties of generalizing trauma and its impacts on how one reacts trauma depends on his or her psychic history, memories mixed with fantasies of prior catastrophe, and on “cultural and political context within which a catastrophe takes place, especially how it is managed by institutional forces” (1). Such catastrophes can produce new subjectivities through the shocks, disruptions and confusions which accompany them, and how a “new catastrophe reactivates emotions associated with prior ones in both the individual and the nation” (20). From such events, painful memories would expose the complex interrelatedness of the subject with the powerful and inevitable historical and political forces. And the victims of such catastrophes would inscribe their traumatic experiences in writing to “organize pain into a narrative that gives it shape for the purposes of self-understanding (working their trauma through) or with the aim of being heard, that is, constructing a witness where there was none before” (20). The disturbing remains of memories outline the effect of social disaster on persons.

According to Kaplan, talking about traumatic situation, instead of speaking about trauma, would help one understand the etiology of suffering – one’s “environment, specific institutions involved, the state of her community, its politics” (39) along with the sequential development of the situation. The impact of trauma is allied with the “overreaching social, political, and cultural condition” (65) of the events. With the help of writing, one would like bring out “fragmentary, virtually unspeakable, and striated with fantasy constructions” (43), as a way to communicate something powerful that happened in the past or something that she or he remembers. She has distinguished “aesthetics of trauma” (43) which embodies “belatedness” (43) from dissociation; with a meaning that the sufferers would arrive at writing about the emotions and traumatic experience as testimony.

Kaplan has opined that writing about traumatic experience that once traumatized life in past would make one feel reflecting the project of “working through” (44) as motivating the memoir whereas Vickroy explores how social contexts of traumatic experiences and narrative strategies would affect readers to understand ethical dilemma of trauma. But, Visser has outlined how anthropological and sociological theories are very suitable to analyze postcolonial literature. Adding this, Stampfl has focused his idea on rhetoricity of trauma and abductive reasoning for the signification of trauma along with non-punctual model of trauma which emphasizes the “retro determination” (8) at work in a traumatic experience. Finally, Balaev has laid emphasis on language, perception and society while defining trauma to let the readers interpret trauma as part of literary works. These critics have illustrated trauma from various theoretical approaches, whereas critics like LaCapra, discussed in the following paragraphs, have focused on aesthetics of trauma that it should always be presented through middle voice.

3.6 Aesthetics of Trauma

In exploring theoretical and literary critical attempts in the context of trauma as well as post-traumatic testimonies, LaCapra is in opinion that in elucidating trauma and its aftereffects in culture and people, psychoanalytic concept is perpetuated with historical analysis and sociocultural as well as political critique. In talking about truth claims of which he opines of gathering evidence and making referential statement based on “that evidence which constitutes necessary and sufficient conditions of historiography” (1). While showing relationship between historiography and fiction, narratives in fiction may involve truth claims on structural or general level by providing “insight into phenomena ... by offering a reading of a process or period, or giving at least a plausible feel” (13). He, subsequently, states truth claims are relevant to works of arts on the levels of general structure or procedures of emplotment.

In the context of elucidating middle voice, he says, it is to take writing as “intransitive or to see it as self – referential, thereby bracketing the question of reference and focusing exclusively on the relation of speaker and discourse (or signified and signifier)” (19). Ronald Barthes takes it as a “new status of writing for the agent of writing” (qtd.in LaCapra 19) and its goal to “substitute the instance of discourse for the instance of reality” (19). It is taken as undecidable with respect to the opposition between “transitive and intransitive, so it is the in-between voice of undecidability and the unavailability or radical ambivalence of clear-cut position” (20). Here, the system of history or narrative can be adapted to the recounting of past events without any intervention by the speaker and it is deprived of present and future.

‘Acting out’, a post traumatic situation which is haunted or possessed by the past and caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes – “scenes in

which the past returns and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop” (21), elucidates how tenses implode and how one feels as if he or she is reliving the traumatic scenes. On the other hand, ‘working through’ as an articulatory practice enumerates how one works through trauma and how he or she is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory “that something happened to one back then while realizing that one is living here now with openings to the future” (22). The procedures of working through consist of mourning and modes of critical thought and practice; and of developing articulations which are “recognized as problematic but still function as limits and as possibly desirable resistances to undecidability” (22). Working through for those traumatized extremely and later empathized can be termed of what he terms a fidelity to trauma is a feeling which one would keep faith with it.

Though this feeling may be melancholic sentiment, it, in working through, enables survival or a reengagement in life, he further states, “one is betraying those who were overwhelmed and consumed by that traumatic past” (22). This also shows one’s bond with the dead or dead inmates, which delineates trauma with value and make its reliving a painful but “necessary commemoration or memorial to which one remains decided or at least bound” (22). It can create unconscious desire to remain within trauma. Those who are found mourning would understand not only isolated grieving or endless bereavement, but also a social process which would be effective in returning one to the demands and responsibilities of social life.

There has been a tendency to convert trauma into the occasion for sublimity and to transvalue it into an entry into the extraordinary. In explaining trauma and sublime, LaCapra explores, “The excess of trauma becomes an uncanny source of elation or ecstasy. Even extremely destructive and disorienting events may become occasions of

negative sublimity or displaced sacralizations” (23). This may help create founding trauma which paradoxically becomes the valorized or intensely cathected basis for identity. Modern arts and writings involve the feeling of keeping faith with trauma which subsequently “leads to a compulsive preoccupation with aporia, an endlessly melancholic, impossible mourning, and a resistance to working through” (23). Here, one can be involved in secularized displacements of the sacred and its paradoxes.

In the context of trauma and middle voice, sacrifice is another condition which can help one reenact traumatic scenes in which “victimization is combined with oblation or gift giving, a type of activity which, in its undisplaced or unsublimated form, involves actual killing” (24). Various modes of writing can be a symbolic displacement of sacrifice.

Middle voice as a proper way of representing realistically modern experience, is an affirmation, which would prescribe an “insufficiently modulated rhetoric” (26) or any other forms of discourse. It can undermine the necessity of third person referential statement, direct quotations and summaries or paraphrases. It is implied as a way of presenting “insufficiently differentiated treatment” (26) of victims and perpetrators. It would seem to undercut or undo systematically any distinction between victims and perpetrators. It would accord with a scene beneath or beyond ethical considerations and calling for representation in the middle voice. To go ahead, an account of relations of the middle voice to other uses of language as well as a subtle exploration of actual and desirable modulation in discourse addressing various topics is required. The middle voice designates the types of action where the agent remains enveloped in the released actions. LaCapra, while elaborating further on middle voice, delineates that it harbors an affirmative or even utopian dimension and it would be desirable to explicate that dimension as clearly and fully as possible in

order to facilitate informed attempts to evaluate it and submit it critically to reality testing without which affirmation would become empty and utopianism is tantamount to wishful thinking (32). Here, it is able to provide viable indications of desirable social and cultural articulations including institutions and practices which may induce indiscriminate hyperbole and undecidability.

Transference, a psychoanalytic term LaCapra has introduced to indicate how one tries to understand a middle voiced position shows how he or she engages in various ways to repeat or reenact performatively in his or her own discourse or relations processes active in the object of study. It can achieve, in Massey words, “an identification with another or the enigmatic experience in which the economy of displacement transfers affective formations from one unconscious to the other” (119). It occurs in any way she or he wants or not, but it shows how he or she comes to terms with it in ways of “involving various combinations, more or less subtle variation, and hybridized forms of acting out and working through” (36). Historiography must be related to such an objectifying strategy which can help one understand the phenomenon of numbing in trauma. Then, empathy as a counterforce to numbing can help him or her “recapture the possibly split-off, affective dimension of the experience of others” (40). So objectivity needs checks and resistances to full identification, whereas, empathy as a form of virtual experience.

While going through the critical task of situating the traumatic access, LaCapra contends fascination is a fixed attention at the extreme pole of experience. It is the experience inherent repetition of structural trauma brought on by what is traumatic in historical loss. Christopher S. Massey further explains, “It is also a way of characterizing the experience of transference, a thinking of approaching to trauma” (123). It resides in every traumatic event that can be taken as a positive step.

Being responsive to traumatic experience of others, here victims implies empathic unsettlement, which can have stylistic effects in writing about the past painful historical events; that cannot be reduced to formulas or rules of methods. In a sense, even perpetrators can also be traumatized along with their past experience. Empathic unsettlement can pose a barrier to closure in discourse and it places “in jeopardy harmonizing or spiritually uplifting accounts of extreme events from which we attempt to derive reassurance or a benefit” (41-2). It can be characterized as a transference in which empathy is the effective bond between that what exceeds the individual’s conscious awareness and those affective dimensions that exceeds the historical context. Doing this, historiography can help one to come to terms with the wounds and scars of the past. Working through traumatic events would involve the effort to articulate the effects and representation of such events.

Historical events which have made absence an important cause can be worked through in the sense that one can learn better to live with it and “not convert it into loss or lack that one believes could be made good, notably through the elimination or victimization of those to whom blame is imputed” (65). As per mourning, LaCapra in his essay “Trauma, Absence, Loss” insists that it brings the possibility of engaging trauma and achieving a reinvestment in life or recathexis of life that allows one to begin with any other ways. Loss should be understood as a direct result of particular events or actions and “the degree of loss becomes a way of measuring the enormity and influence of such event and actions” (Massey 103). Once anything is lost, it is lost and one must move on to other objects to function normally within the social structures. Mourning can be seen not only as individual or quasi-transcendental grieving but as a homeopathic socialization or ritualization of the repetition compulsion that attempts to turn it against the death drive and to counteract

compulsiveness by re-petitioning in ways that allow for a measure of critical distance, change, resumption of social life (66), ethical responsibility and renewal of the past events.

Along with such memory works, one would be able to distinguish between past and present and to recognize something as having happened to him or her back then that is related to the present. It is the mourning, a symbolic provision of a proper burial, with which she or he attempts to assist in restoring to victim the dignity denied them by their victimizers (66). Here, melancholia and mourning would be acting out and working through concepts whose applicability must be considered with the different subject positions in the context of trauma. He further states that mourning would seem to merge with endless, quasi-transcendental grieving which may be indistinguishable from interminable melancholy (76). Then, one can see how pain can be measured and taken differently.

LaCapra, delineating acting out, working through, empathic unsettlement and others, has given the importance of middle voice in writing history which should neither be written nor understood from victims' point of view nor perpetrators', but it should be narrated objectively not supporting either side, rather neutrally. On the other hand, Kate Schick is in the opinion that to make a deeper understanding of traumatic events happened in past, one should work through the emotional and psychological undercurrents operating in the lives of communities and the ways histories influence their current realities.

In her essay "Acting Out and Working Through: Trauma and (In) security" she has also advocated the process of working through traumatic experiences: "a process that is visibly present in theoretical or empirical International Relations (IR) on violence and trauma" (3). It may enable one and his or her communities to mourn for past and present

suffering. Besides, a political work of mourning can encourage its actors to consider how things would be different in different circumstances. Trauma demands the witness without which it will never be fully known or understood; “memory does not and cannot record the event in full” (4), so suffering cries out to be known.

The tension created by trauma makes estrangement which can be the basis for communality; that seeks out others “who have had similar experiences and thus understand one another’s numbness and pain” (4). It is the communality which help all the victims and perpetrators come together with positive or therapeutic and corrosive feeling of the past enmity. She further opines, “Its members are united by a sense of being set apart from those who have not suffered, sharing a distinct set of perspectives as a result of their experiences” (40). Common suffering can create a mutual perpetuation of which Kai Erikson points out, “Traumatized people calculate life’s chances differently . . . they can be said to have experienced not only a changed sense of self and a changed way of relating to others but a changed worldview” (qtd. in Schick 4). Meeting together and sharing each other’s past painful experience can help one understand and realize the pain; which ultimately leads to the path of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among the warring people.

Schick has expressed that meeting opponents and sharing their sorrowful past events with each other can help establish a reconciliatory medium; that would perpetually lead to peaceful coexistence in the society. Similarly, LaCapra states in bringing out the historical events in present, one should be neutral while writing about past events; not aligning to either side, hence, middle voice would be proper way of delineating the painful life of the past which would, otherwise, leave the victims or perpetrators in dilapidated condition.

Traumatic events which would reshape human thinking about physical and mental experience must be told or heard or even written in any condition and it is literary works or other works of arts in the form of testimony which is one of the ways to tell one another about aspects of traumatic experience. Narrating painful experience which would remain in mind for a long time can reconcile the conflicting groups too. As literature is considered as a substitute for the scientific analysis of the consequences of trauma, it is useful to convert such horrible experiences and memories in writing so that concerned people who were affected badly would know and realize the facts later. Testimony, as a form of expressing trauma, can have a common ground between literature and ethics, meeting point between violence and culture and witnessing and events. It can help unfold many facts with different literary genres. Writing about the painful past would not be only an issue of collective trauma, it can also regenerate a new regime of hope and bright future and its presence in narrative would function as a memory to illuminate the traumatic past and also a possibility to settle the hostility. Delineating acting out, working through, empathic unsettlement and others, has given the importance of middle voice in writing history which should neither be written or understood from victims' point of view nor perpetrators', but it should be narrated objectively not supporting either side, rather neutrally.

Different approaches of trauma and its basic tenets have been discussed for identifying the causes, consequences and solutions of the conflict between the warring groups, so that both victims and perpetrators would realize their past mistakes and consequences which once instigated the tensions and ultimately help both groups sustain relationship to each other as earlier and live with reconciliation forgetting all their previous enmity and developing a new relationship. Elucidating some important tenets of trauma theory such as acting out, psychological trauma, cultural trauma,

acting out, working through and middle voice propagated by Caruth, Alexander and LaCapra, this study has tried bring out traumatic facts of post-conflict Nepali narratives written on the context of ten years long Maoist's insurgency. Thus, when trauma is narrated in literary writing with the help of middle voice or not internalizing any groups, both groups can realize the deeply rooted causes of the conflict and they can forget their past perilous path and agree to move to prosperous lands.

Chapter 4

Textual Analysis I: The Politics of Trauma in the Nepali Post-Conflict Narratives

4.1 Terroristic Trauma and Politics of Repression in Vikal, Nepal and Srijana

Sharma

Stories of War and Conflict consists of stories written by various Nepali writers on Maoist insurgency (1996 -2006). The decade-long insurgency brought to the fore the cases of extreme horror and crime from both the Maoists and the security forces. Each of the stories talks of terror and its extension to all the civilians in several parts of the nation and reveals very miserable condition such as grief and pain, fear and terror, and scenes of deaths as well as psychological horror and trauma which many people felt and became the greatest of all shocks, unforgettable in their memory. During the time, people no longer felt safety, justice, order and peace in their lives. If anything was there during this decade, it was only terror and trauma which some Nepali writers have tried to narrativize in the form of stories.

This selection of stories on the trauma of the victims of the Maoist insurgency depicts how the whole of the society became a dark place where any kind of ferocity and terror would be unleashed on the people either in the name of securing a revolutionary change or in the name of maintaining law and order. By showing the seamy sides of this insurgency, these stories seek to manipulate the readers and victims from such frightening sport and try to turn the world into beautiful place which is mostly free from all sorts of fear, coercion and compulsion, so that everyone can live peacefully. The society would, subsequently, lead to a better place.

This insurgency helped many people write their experience; most of which is autobiographical in intention. The experience of violence can have different aspects. But at the same time, some stories written about such experience give voice to the

break down of signification. Whereas other stories remained inauthentic if they try to reduce the violence to the language of hostility in which violence from one side was equally balanced with violence from the other. They suggest that a portrayal of the full scale of violence could not be a matter of symbolically balancing the scales of violence.

In this context, three stories from this book, “A Pair of Innocent Eyes” by Vikal, “Daktarni Ama” by Nepal and “The Sky Was Still Overcast” by Srijana Sharma emphasize on the need to live in peace and harmony even as they narrativize the searing trauma, but none of them succeeds in making an authentic balance in the representation which makes the undertone of peace and harmony sound genuine.

“A Pair of Innocent Eyes” was written when the Maoist’s movement was at its peak and the whole Nepali citizenry remained in panic. People neither in town nor in village could feel safe let alone at night time. Looting, kidnapping, murder and extortion were common issues for the news during this decade that witnessed “the wound of the mind – the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4). Vikal is able to bring such situation along with “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events” (11), narrativizing the trauma of an innocent child who is the only witness of his family’s catastrophe while negating “others’ traumas” (18) with full assertions. Narrativizing the traumatic situation aligning with one while othering another group would not make the situation better rather aggravate the tension.

This story, an account of a terrific event that might have happened within a few hours of an evening, has brought out a dark side of war and conflict in which parents have been murdered and looted in front of an innocent terrified child, whose “two innocent eyes numbed with terror” (Vikal 32), and who has been crying for food with his mother. This situation is very painstakingly terroristic trauma for the child

who would hardly forget this event that would remain to him as “nightmares and repetitive actions” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4). Vikal has brought out this fact as an integral part in the form of a literary work. Writing trauma in literary form can help people know the historical facts even after many years. But he is not neutral in bringing out such facts in literary forms because the way a writer should write about the war and conflict, he seems to have missed it by bringing a fore only one side of the extremism by villainizing one group. The Maoists are presented as villains, “At the very moment entered two gunmen, pushing the door open. All at once, one of them knocked Birkha Bahadur down and put the *khukuri* – knife on his throat” (Vikal 29). This story has also brought traumatic facts of the insurgency like this, “this ominous sound struck the terror in the hearts of people” (33). So literature can be taken as a response to very unexpected or overwhelming violent events of what Caruth states, “repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors” (*Unclaimed* 4), which cannot be grasped totally but they recur in different forms i.e. repeated flashbacks, amnesia, latency, nightmares and other conditions. In the context of the story, “Bhunte cried with fright, to see his father being knocked down and to hear his mother’s helpless scream. Another gunman cowed him. Out of fear, he took shelter quietly in the bed” (Vikal 29). He would be traumatized like this for a long time, besides, the readers would also have same condition for some time.

The catastrophe befallen on this lower class family has been narrated in this story by othering the Maoists. Here, they are shown as villains who kill innocent people without any serious reasons. The narrator presents how they would not hesitate to commit murder to innocent people:

The murderous beast celebrated their cold-blooded beastly feast between two corpses and the pool of blood. As they were preparing to go off, looking at

Dilmaya's senseless body, one of them asked, 'What to do with this? Should she be spared?'

'No. Why should we spare the risk? Let's send her to her husband's,' the other spoke in a cruel voice. Then he took the gun from his shoulder and shot at her senseless body, making her completely dead. After this they came out of the hut and disappeared in the dark. (30)

Vikal presents this from one side by othering another group, which would not be considered a good narrative to bring out the actual facts of what had happened in past as it should help both groups to reconcile their previous enmity. It should "speak through the individual or through community, which may not be the site of its disruption" (Caruth, "Recapturing the Past" 156). The story which brings out historical facts from the past must be a mixture of both rise and fall, and victory and defeat.

This story is unable to bring out the facts happened in past as an "attempt to bring the experience to light" (*Unclaimed* 22). According to Caruth, while bringing out such events, both victims and perpetrators should take them positively as a necessary point of departure (24) to the point of peace and reconciliation as there should not be more or less. The story has tried to misguide the readers from the historical facts by supporting one group while villainizing another. They are presented as committing heinous crime like gang rape:

'There is a pleasure in wrestling with a stout like this.' The first one spoke wiping the bloodied *khukuri* with the *lungi* hanging from the nail. Then they caught hold of her arms, tied her hand hard, gagged a piece of cloth into her mouth, and knocked her down on the floor. They quenched their beastly passion one after another. (Vikal 30)

Presenting the rebels committing such inexcusable crime, the story would not help both fighting groups reconcile together forgetting their previous enmity, rather it would aggravate the tension prevailing for a long time in the society.

The writer is unable to locate the language of presentation of traumatic events which should be outshining. The language of narration should underwrite violence and capture “specificity of the partition violence from the perspective of morality, interrogates the ideological underpinning of the state-centred national histories” (Pandey 131). Such morality, which Vikal has not given proper attention while bringing out the facts of civil war, should emphasize human relations with the attribute of being human. As the writer should not use the prose of otherness on the other, it should better measure the depth of human emotion to each other. The narrator presents them like this, “After their beastly pleasure, they stood up with a sense of satisfaction. The first with his contemptuous laughter spoke filthily, “Brother, the wrestling with this stout woman has driven me hungry. I wish I could get something to eat” (Vikal 30). The language the writer has presented here is itself provoking anger in the rebels which the narrator presents:

This ominous sound struck the terror in the heart of the people keeping vigil in the town. Out of terror, the doors and windows were slammed shut. The next afternoon, a female news-reader’s lifeless voice echoed on the F.M. radio – ‘Last night in a small village nearby the headquarters of the western region, some gunmen from the jungle entered the hut of an old couple forcibly at midnight and murdered them in a cold blood, and escaped with their property and gold ornament. A boy of about four, delivered virtually senseless at the sight of the incident, has been delivered to the orphanage. Later two of the looters were killed in the encounter with the security force on petrol, says our local correspondent.’ (33)

But, undermining the possible feud in the war-ridden society, if the language of revenge and sacrifice is used regularly, writing literary works about war and conflict would turn into redemptive, fetishistic narrative, which, sooner or later embarks hostility and enmity; that would never help reconcile in the society.

Because of the massive scale of the violence and a complete inability to find within it a single motivating source, the writer's attempts to represent the insurgency break down, as Nandi and Das have already observed, into either an essentialization of violence as natural and inevitable, or as a complete collapse of signification altogether. The narrator presents the situation of complexity in narrativizing the testimony very indifferently to the rebels which can be seen in these lines, "An air of sheer terror spread among the public after the radio, T.V., local and national papers exaggerated this news in an overblown language. Who knows by the time of broadcasting the news of next killing and violence, the news-reader herself might have fallen prey to them?" (33). The narrator's language itself is provocative to those who disagree to the narrativization of the traumatic testimony of the insurgency which ultimately creates the terroristic situation in the mind of such readers. Das and Nandi further point out, "Overdetermined scene and undefined silence seem to be the only ways to approach the tragedy so as not to assign blame unjustly or minimize suffering" (189). Literary works written about war and conflict which once happened in the society, however, should not necessarily offer "a means of overcoming instability, contaminated as it is with the ideological contours of the dominant culture to which the trauma belongs" (Pandey 137). The writer of this story is not able to concentrate on this; rather it exacerbates the tension by othering the rebels like this, ". . . the first gunman had already separated Birkha Bahadur's head from his body as though a butcher was slitting the throat of a buffalo or a goat" (Vikal 29). To bring

both warring groups in reconciliation, literature written about war and conflict should also be implemented to pacify the warring groups with their feuds. On the one hand, it forces one remember the past, on the other hand, it conduces to forgiveness; which sooner or later leads the conflicting parties to the way of peaceful co-existence.

“A Pair of Innocent Eyes”, though written about the Maoist insurgency to show how terroristic feud between the Maoists and security force actually was, is not written neutrally, rather it aggravates the tension between the warring groups. It should have helped one understand the civil war as it was in reality while narrativizing the events that once happened in Nepal. But the writer has narrated the story from one side and villainizing another which would not help both fighting groups reconcile their enmity and pacify the tension, but would create more problems alienating both.

“The Motherly Doctor or Daktarni Ama” is a story written during the decade when the Maoists insurgency had panicked Nepali citizenry. It shows the people who were indifferent to any political alliances or were serving the people or the nation. However they were badly scared and sandwiched between two fighting groups, “bearing witness to the past” (Caruth, “Trauma and Experience”³). This would often be repeated in different circumstances along with “the enigma of the otherness of a human voice that cries out from the wound, a voice that witnesses the truth” (3), but would hardly be able to appeal either side in pacifying the enmity. This story, written from third person point of view, is not able to bring the facts of the war as it was; rather alludes the situation villainizing one group, which would make the situation worse.

Pradip Nepal, the writer of this story, has not written it neutrally; rather villainizing the rebels who are said and still believed to have been doing this armed struggle for the rights and privileges of common people who are deprived of their

inherent rights. Relimai, the protagonist of the story who, from an indigenous community, has been presented as a victim of the conflict is a representative of all those people living in the village and facing challenges from both sides. Such people remained true victims during the insurgency; but the murder of Relimai is presented by othering the Maoists and it seems to be one of what Caruth states, “the silence of its mute repetition of suffering” (*Unclaimed*, 9). A traumatic event not only affects an individual personality, but the whole society, which is “deeply tied to our own historical realities” (12), which leads innocent people to disturbed state, and affects or misguides the readers, too, negatively to destructive consequences. The state of her disturbed mentality can be seen like this in these lines:

Relimai was startled. After looking at the faces of those seven people’s liberation army one after another she said, ‘Dear children, I live on my own earning. I am not concerned with others’ earning and expenses. They say my son has built a house in the city. I have not even seen the house yet. I have no desire to see it either. You happen to demand tax on my earning. If you demand the tax on my earning, I will pay you. I will even give the treatment in the troubled situation but I cannot pay a tax on others’ earning.’

She was dumbfounded. For a moment she could not utter a word. Her face might have turned pale. (Nepal 123)

The mentality of Relimai is clear here while facing the Maoists’ cadres who were inclined to disturb her mentally which she could not take lightly and happened to suffer mentally.

The terror which overruled her mind created trauma in her mind permanently.

Caruth is in the opinion that history of the past conflicts and wars which is always written about the victorious events, normally ignores the trauma of other people – here those who have been marginalized for a long time - of what she states

“their history is repression” (*Unclaimed* 14). Their voice and suffering have always been ignored and they have been compelled to be rebels; later writing about them negatively would rather lead them to destruction or more violent activities. The abusive and detrimental addressing to her can be seen in these lines:

Night descended in the village. Relimai closed the shop. She heard the footsteps of men in her yard. Relimai turned towards the yard, inserting the bunch of keys by her waist.

‘Hey Bhotini (an abusing or derogatory term addressed to females of some ethnic communities), putting our comrades to death, you came back to receive the prize, right?’ (Nepal 125)

Her mentality and the derogatory language makes the situation even worse than it usually would be in normal condition. Along with illustrating the glorious events happened in past, history must bring those traumatic events which badly impacted the contemporary society and many ordinary people became victims of “overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events” (Caruth, “Trauma and Experience” 11). The writer of this story is unable to bring justice to such people, rather they have been criminalized. The writer has completely ignored the sentiment of the readers who might not accept the motives and intention of the narration which has villainized the rebels as atrocious wicked who only abuse and harm common people serving other ordinary people in the very hinterland of Nepal like this. He describes her situation:

Relimai had never heard so contemptuous, abusive words in her thirty-five years of social life. She turned stunned. From the clear sky a star fell to the highlands of Sailung and disappeared. The abusive words hurled at her mother by the Upreti, the landlord of the Mali village forty-five years ago, struck into her head like the star darting toward earth, ‘Hey Bhotini, do not step on the dooryard.’

‘You criminal, whore, you think you can hide your crime, keeping your mouth shut?’ The next girl’s voice spewed up her contempt. Relimai looked into the sky. The moon was yet to shine. (Nepal 125)

There must be the description of trauma and other painful events happened in such people’s lives as well as the condition why they were compelled to live such life countering the foundation along with the events of developments and glories.

It is also good for the writer to recognize the reality of traumatizing events and experiences along with the “denials of the perpetrators and their conservative supporters, the denials that insist on looking to the future and forgetting the past” (Alexander 7). To make the literary writing readable for all kinds of readers for a long time, it is always important that the voices for commemorations, remembrance of the disappearances and the torments, and of denunciation of the repressors are some factors which would remain very landmarks for recovery. The story writer has not given prior notice while narrativizing the situation and narrated the testimony here:

‘Hey sister, the terrorists do come to your shop to take medicine, don’t they?’

It was difficult to say whether he has chiding or requesting her.

‘It is only the first time, the fear of the gun happens to disappear once you come across it.’ Relimai had said to the villagers in the evening after she returned to the village. Even at the moment she spoke fearlessly. ‘Brother, no one comes with a name sticking on his forehead. Sometimes someone comes from some distance, unheard of village as well.’(Nepal 125)

The story writer does not notice this fact and ignored the reality which would have played very important role in soothing the tension; rather has exacerbated the tension between both fighting groups.

The language of writing such stories should not be one sided or supporting one group while villainizing another group. Pandey is in the opinion that the language to bring violent events of conflict and war in written form should not be chauvinistic. The writer of this story should have employed the language which should neither reduce the specificity of the experience nor should nullify the possibilities of co-existence (136). But he is not able to do anything like this and the rebels are presented as murderers of innocent people like Relimai, which can be seen at the end of the story when they are presented to be murdering the main protagonist of the story who had been serving the villages in their hard times:

Rage-ridden bellow and heart-breaking cry reverberated in the dark.

‘Long live jungle!’ Now the heart-breaking cry had turned into sheer hiccups.

The village had to keep vigil. The girls, who had got the education of life from Dactarni Ama, said – ‘now our, Daktarni Ama is no more.’

A lantern was brought from the nearby shop. In the light of the lantern the village saw the horrific body of Relimai. She had recovered two blows of the *Khukuri* on her neck. Three bullets happened to piece her chest.

Two young boys moved to the city by night.

The village was mourning. (Nepal 126)

Presenting the rebels as heinous criminals who keeps on collecting donation from such serving people and murdering them brutally with *khukuris* and guns has villainized them and used the language of otherness which subsequently helps the situation aggravate even more and tension would rather erupt.

The language of such writing should rather develop a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial feuds, hatred; not the notion of separation and partition. Living in hatred and negation or othering the opposite group, one cannot

live happily for a long time in peace; which ultimately leads to further seclusion.

Nepal has presented the rebels as villain and jungles who don't let health workers like Relimai to work in the hinterlands and terrorize them all the time by asking donation or by threatening them to be ready to be killed. Her husband, Bal Bahadur who was determined to take her to the town for safety is presented to be criticizing the rebels:

But, this time Bal Bahadur had come with single-minded determination not to return without her. Therefore Relimai's reply did not tire him. He kept moving around Relimai for three day. No, nothing melted her. Finally, Bal Bahadur tried to alarm her – 'Look, Dile's mother! These days, the time has turned bad. The jungles have been rampant....' He continued, 'The jungles cannot be relied on. Whom they take as their enemy for what reason, you never know. If something happens to you, just imagine what will happen become of our family.' (121)

Nepal is unable to maintain a balance and neutrality to bring a fore the fact of the Maoists insurgency which has also some political reasons to wage the conflict, but they are presented as terrorists who keep on terrorizing the ordinary people.

In such condition, LaCapra's concept of middle voice would play an important role in writing the stories about the war and conflict which once happened and battered the society. The middle voice designates the types of action where the agent remains enveloped in the released actions. Talking about middle voice, he delineates that it harbors an affirmative or even utopian dimension (32). It is middle voice in writing about war and conflict; which should neither be written or understood from victims' point of view nor perpetrators', but it should be narrated objectively not supporting either side, rather neutrally; which the story writer, Nepal has missed and written from one side only.

“Daktarni Ama” a story written about the Maoist conflict that happened between Maoist rebels and security force, has portrayed a beautiful picture of a remote village and a struggle of a lady in health service until she is murdered. But the writer is unable to bring this issue being neutrally rather villainizing one group and exacerbating the feud that would remain between the fighting groups for a long time. Nepal, who has written stories about war and conflict, does not seem to have concentrated on reconciliation and pacification of the aggravated enmity.

Similarly, “The Sky Was Still Overcast” a story of psychological terror and trauma of the security forces who were deployed in the rural areas and scared every moment not only in police station but also while taking shelter in villagers’ homes, has shown the agony of only one side ignoring that of another side. The story writer has narrated the story villainizing the Maoist rebels who are presented to be killing innocent people and security forces even by invading the police stations, which is not good to pacify the tension. Narrativizing the traumatic situation of the insurgency or emergency while the conflict was going on, supporting one while othering another group would not make the situation better rather aggravate the situation.

The story is written from one perspective – how much security force during the Maoist insurgency was scared while performing their duty sincerely by patrolling the village. They never have peace in mind and they anticipate the possible attack by the Maoists. Every time they are in trauma missing their family and being afraid of their death in the battle with the Maoists. One policeman, Ekram is quoted saying his traumatic experience like this, “My wife is due to give birth any day now. Mother also has grown old. In this present situation, the resignation will not be approved, either. If I run away from the service, I have no other way to live from hand to mouth. And, you never know when we will fall prey to these Junglese” (“The Sky Was” 153). The

compulsion of the policemen to perform the duty in spite of several mental and physical hardship in every step is seen from their inextricable hope for the amount their family would get if they get martyrdom in the battlefield. Another policeman continues his indignation of doing such duty with a reluctance:

Now what can we do? God willing. Here goes the old saying that when death comes, one dies even of tripping over anything else. At present if we are killed, the state will pay seven-hundred- thousand rupees to our survivors in the family. Such a huge amount can be sufficient for them to live a comfortable life. Why should we worry? Everyone has to die one day. It is said that if you die for your country, the door to the heaven is open. Then if killed, we may go to heaven. There is nothing else to worry. (153)

The compulsion and reluctance of the security personnel would be one aspect to deal with the traumatic experience which one who is responsible to protect people is not safe and detrimental to his duty.

The nightmares they see while sleeping indicate how much they are terrified with the rebels and their compulsion to perform the responsibilities. They are seen being terrified with the dreams and look for the way to devoid of its effects on their lives. They suppose, “The poor things are drawn in the eddy of troubles” (153).

Neither villagers let them stay in the village nor could they stay at their office. They regret getting married too. Ekram is quoted saying, “I should not have married. Not a solitary moment did we sit together and love each other” (158). Living every moment with the shadow of death approaching to them, their life has become hell – neither could they live freely nor could they live peacefully with their family. Every moment during emergency they are seen “staring and tears trickling down their cheeks” (158).

By missing their family and longing for meeting them as soon as possible they do their duty.

This story which is an account of terrific events that must have happened in different parts of the country when it was reeling over the insurgency has brought out a dark side of war and conflict in which the security personnel who are supposed to defend villagers from the rebels are found helpless and looking for refuge at someone's home instead of their own police stations. The narrator has described the helplessness of the police:

The shaft of her question pierced the breasts of the policeman. The pangs of the deep wound was written all over their faces. The faces drenched with self-abasement replied – “Sister, you are right. It is the station where we are supposed to stay, but what to do? These days the rebels have changed the station into a large wooden death-cage. The nearby stations have been destroyed. Many of our friends have been turned into ashes. We know, the duty of the police is to give security to the people, but if we are not secure ourselves, how can we safeguard others?” (155)

This situation is very painstakingly terroristic trauma for those who would hardly forget such events that would remain to them as “nightmares and repetitive actions” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4). Sharma, as a story writer, is successful in bringing out this fact as an integral part in the form of a literary work.

On the one hand, writing trauma in literary form can help people know the historical facts even after many years. But on the other hand, the writer is very neutral in bringing out such facts in literary forms because the way a writer should write about the war and conflict, he or she seems to have missed it by bringing a fore only

one side of the extremism villainizing one group. Sharma has tried to villainize the Maoists as much as she could, which can be seen from the extract below:

After a while, the policemen lying on the bed began snoring while some of them stayed vigil out of the terror of rebels' attack. During the midnight, the flashes of a dream began reeling in the eyes of one of the policemen lying dead sleep: the people suffocated by the odor of gunpowder are stampeding. The mutilated corpses are scattered all over the battlefield. On a nearby ground a mourning assembly is going on. Thousands of people have joined this assembly. They are bowing their heads and are maintaining silence in the honour of the dead. Amidst the assembly there happens to lie the corpse of the policeman himself – tightened onto a cane and covered with a sheet marked *Ramnam*. 'Oh, I also happened to die' the policeman was startled. (Sharma, "The Sky Was" 156)

She should have shown dark sides of the security force. Literature, Caruth argues, should enable one to bear witness to events that cannot be completely known and opens one's ears to experiences that might have, otherwise, remained unspoken and unheard. It can become a good platform to illuminate the hidden fact to readers (*Unclaimed* 9) which all readers would accept by hearts, but Sharma is failure in this attempt. This story has also brought traumatic facts of the insurgency like this, "the radio might broadcast the news of the security personnel being killed by the rebels" (Sharma, "The Sky Was" 156). So literature can be taken as a response to very unexpected or overwhelming violent events of what she says, "repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4), which cannot be grasped totally but they recur in different forms i.e. repeated flashbacks, amnesia, latency, nightmares and other conditions in the context of the story. Ekram

and other policemen are traumatized like this for a long time but the story teller has not talked anything about the pains and suffering of the rebel groups who might be in painful condition.

As many people expect, the language of post-conflict narratives like this story should not be one sided or sympathizing the security force while villainizing the Maoist rebels who are terrific to people as well as police. Pandey is of the opinion that the language which brings violent events of conflict and war in written form should not be chauvinistic (137). The writer of this story should have employed the language which should neither reduce the specificity of the experience nor should nullify the possibilities of co-existence. But she has used the language which would support intensify the tension by writing the story from the security personnel's perspective which would never settle the problems, rather aggravates badly and which is described:

However, as the dawn broke over the village, that horde was nowhere in sight. It was a cold day; today the sun did not shine, either. After having the food, the policemen came out in the front yard and spoke, 'We had to stay vigil all night. Sergeant, I am dog-tired. Let me lie flat for a while....' After getting the permission, he entered the room and lay on the beg covering himself with a sheet. The other one followed him. Burying their hands in the armpits, the somber-faced policemen outside expressed their doubts stuck in their minds – This village has never been veiled by ever so thick haze before in recent memory. What an awfully overcast sky! Sir, even a storm might brew today. Right? (Sharma, "The Sky Was" 158)

Her writing should rather develop a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial enmity and hostility. Living in hatred and negation or othering the

opposite group, one cannot live happily for a long time in peace; which ultimately leads to further seclusion. In such condition, LaCapra's concept of middle voice would play a crucial role in writing post-conflict narratives. The middle voice designates the types of action where the agent remains enveloped in the released actions. Talking about middle voice, he delineates that it harbors an affirmative or even utopian dimension (32). It is middle voice in writing about war and conflict; which should neither be written or understood from victims' point of view nor perpetrators', but it should be narrated objectively not supporting either side, rather neutrally; which the story writer, Sharma has not given proper attention while writing the story, as a result, it might help intensify the tussle among the fighting groups.

A text like that of Sharma cannot foster peace because indirectly it stokes feelings of revenge and therefore a vicious cycle of revenge whereas restraint shown by Bhattarai in keeping to just a psychological impact due to the disruption in people's normal life makes the confinement look horribly monstrous. In short, Sharma's story as readers expect that reading post-conflict narrative one would feel relieved and purgate their foe or enmity, does not seem to be able to pacify the tension among the people involved in the war. Sharma's language is failure to bring the actual emotion of the militants who involve in the conflict.

In short, "A Pair of Innocent eyes", "Daktarni Ama", and "The Sky was Still Overcast" though written about the consequences of the insurgency and very atrocity of the forces, are unable to present them in keeping the writers' personal indulgence at a bay. Both have tried their best othering or villainizing one group. Bimal's story is appealing for peace, whereas the latter would aggravate the tension even more. Both, showing the trauma of the victims, would be responsible for aggravating tension between the fighting groups.

4.2 Trauma and Peace in Dhakal, Pradhan, Pahadi and Singh

In this book, there are some stories which reveal other facets of Maoist insurgency and violence: detaining innocent people, abducting and forcing them to pay a huge amount of money as donation and meeting with various arbitrary punishments. Likewise, arresting innocent people while having meal or lying in bed after the whole day's hard labor or returning home tended to resort to extreme tactics to spread fear those days. They were beaten to death on the charge of being spied or informers. The victims had nowhere to go and question and appeal for justice. Mostly male were the target, however, their wives, mothers and small children, being desperately helpless, were all exploited and harassed mentally and physically. These innocent people undergoing with traumatic experiences and being terror stricken became insane, lost memory or went mad. But these grief-stricken people still anticipated for better life in future in spite of several troubles they were facing in their life which some Nepali writers have tried to narrativize in the form of stories.

Many political, cultural and social upheavals that have left a lot of victims in trauma can be good resources for writing narratives. Their painful traumatic experience of violence would be an instrument and purpose of the narration which can be represented as new genre of Nepali literature. Literary depictions of trauma tend to bear witness and testify to traumatic experience, since they break the silence and also redefine discourse, challenging memory and identity. It is in the engagement with writing that the unspeakable emerges from the aporia in consciousness and releases its repressive energy. The narratives written about such atrocities, in contrast, might become very meaningless because they try to reduce the violence to the language of conflict, which would rather create a problem in establishing a peaceful society and help escalate the full scale of violence.

In this context, four stories – Dhakal’s “Mother and the Motherland”, Pradhan’s “Sitas – 23”, Pahadi’s “The Tears of Terror”, and Singh’s “The Silence of Violence” though written about unspeakable pain, arbitrary abduction, murder, rape, molestation, and trauma of innocent people due to the Maoist insurgency inflicted by the then Nepal Communist Party, Maoist for about ten years mostly in the hinterlands of Nepal, show the bitter pictures of Nepali society. These writers have narrativized the unspeakable trauma of the victims very distinctly by bringing the horrific pictures of the insurgency. However, they are not able to depict the stories very objectively neither aligning nor opposing any conflicting forces. They, weaving the plot on the periphery of the insurgency and its impact on the lives of innocent people, have brought a fore the very traumatic situation of these working class people by othering one group, rather they seem to be aggravating the situation. But still they anticipate for peace and harmony in the country.

A text like that of Dhakal cannot foster peace because indirectly it stokes feelings of revenge and therefore a vicious cycle of revenge. Trauma seen in these stories is what the people experience as “unsupportable, horrifying, or overwhelming” (Humburger 4). As a part of social fact, it “points to some underlying social experience which can be sociologically reflected” (4). But, on the other hand, the restraint shown by Shrestha in keeping to just a psychological impact due to the disruption in people’s everyday life makes the atmosphere look morally monstrous. A compelling moral appeal as available in the story augurs well for peace.

“Mother and the Motherland” (Janani Janmabhumischha), a story which shows pitiable condition of a soldier who is very patriotic to the nation, but at the same time confused with the terror created during the curfew in the area, shows how much the security force were frightened while performing their duty and how much

darkness is filled in their mind that they see only terrorists in everyone or everything. The shadow which is a symbol for creating a terror in the soldier's mind and also appeals for peace has been destroyed, which indirectly symbolizes how much the contemporary Nepali society was far from peace and stability. The writer, while bringing the traumatic facts of the soldier, has used the language of 'other' by villainizing the rebels, which would not help establish peace in the society.

The story is full of trauma of the soldier who represents all the security force during the emergency of the Maoist insurgency. On the one hand, he has to bear responsibility by heart believing "Janani janmabhumischha swargadapigariyasi that is mother and motherland are greater than heaven" (114) ignoring the responsibilities towards his wife and children whom he has not met for many years, on the other hand, at every moment he cannot feel relief even seeing a shadow, he is mentally disturbed. He supposes he has heard a shrieking sound from a shadow, which is only his illusion but he supposes this shadow is of a Maoist terrorist who has come during the curfew; and he has been instructed to shoot at sight at anyone. The shadow's claiming himself as Buddha, Mahakavi Devkota and Pashupatinath is only his illusion due to continuing duty without proper rest and food in time. His timid and fatigued mind's anticipating all these figures symbolizes how much traumatized the soldier has been going through for a long time. His mind is encroached with patriotism and nationalism and forced to ignore the responsibility towards his family; which seems to have made him go through such illusionary figures. Shooting at the shadow which was claiming Buddha, Devkota and Pashupatinath and whom he supposes to be a Maoist and taking it to "the desolate area" (116) by an armored vehicle would signify the end of chance of prevailing peace and stability in the disturbed society, which every Nepali citizen has been longing for a long time. With the help of this instance,

the writer has tried to show “an intellectual stand of peace and mocks at the situation that tries to worship non-violence or peace shooting at humanity and Buddhism” (Bhattarai, “A Glimpse into Stories” 16). It is a great satire that everyone anticipates for peace and the security force shoot at the Buddha, the Mahakavi and God Pashupatinath, which indicates the chance of end of peace in near future.

How much the soldier is traumatized while remaining on sentry for three nights stand up on duty without blinking his eyes can be seen from his mentality of judging the illusionary shadow which “could even frighten any devil more horrific than the black night itself” (Dhakal 112). Remembering his wife at fourteen past two at night “in the light of the armored truck” (113) is a way of consoling his timid and fatigued mind so he could have some relief and time could be passed. Missing her looking at the watch which he had bought at Hong Kong bazaar, he thinks his wife would be happy with the watch he had bought to her at the same time. He smiles at himself “in the dark but his smile turned sour in no time” (113). His missing of celebrating Dashain with his wife and children is a way to relief and it is many years “they have not celebrated Dashain together” (113). These instances can be taken to justify the traumatic condition that every security person has been going on during the conflict with the rebels or during emergency period.

The writer with the help of traumatized characters like the soldier mentioned in the story is seen narrating their painful condition and they “see and relive the insistent reality of the past” (Caruth, “Recapturing the Past” 152). Such memories always remain overwhelming experiences which should be integrated with existing mental schemes and transmitted to narrative language. To come out of such “reappearance of traumatic memories in the form of flashbacks, reenactments, and so on” (Kolk and Hart 176), one has to narrate the memories, to look back at what

happened, which he or she “has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his personality” (176). Coming out of the traumatized condition by shooting at the shadow, the soldier gets relief to the condition, which has induced his pain, and he is able to face the challenges awaiting ahead of him of which the narrator describes:

As per the natural law of war, the curtain of the event of that night fell. That is to say, as soon as the sergeant in the post two hundred meters down heard the sound of firing, he reported it ‘up.’ Following his report there came an armoured vehicle and then the corpse of the shadow was dragged along and was taken into the desolate area. The dawn broke. (Dhakal 116)

The symbolic death of an unknown person as supposed ‘terrorist’ by the dutiful soldier penetrates the panic of all common people who were on the verge of death any time during the emergency period.

The story, written on the background of the curfew imposed during the second democratic movement, is about an important event of history which is always written about glorious events ignoring the trauma of ordinary people of what Caruth says, “Their history is repression” (*Unclaimed* 14). History should bring the traumatic events that happened in the life of ordinary people who become the victims of “overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events” (11). In this context, the story is successful in bringing a fore the real experience of ordinary people like the soldier who is dutiful, patriotic and always ready to sacrifice to maintain law and order in the society at any condition. There must be the description of trauma and other painful events happened in ordinary people’s lives along with the events of developments and glories to be true testimony of real victims of a good cause. In this

context, while narrating the compulsion of an ordinary person, the writer describes the situation:

He was searching for the shadow flitting about just a moment ago in the north of the road, lying like a dead python. For the soldier, it became a moment of great happiness. Firstly, his meaningless questions vanished from his head; secondly, his fear disappeared all at once and thirdly, it was proved in that imported light that the earlier shadow was a sheer illusion. Rather, there appeared in its place the vivid and clear cramped buildings, standing like helpless beheaded devils. On the one hand, the colorful curtains hanging inside the windows became the matter of his speculation; on the other, it was not too difficult for him to speculate about the magnitude of stillness imprisoned there. (Dhakal 112-13)

The traumatic situation the soldier is undergoing with a representative situation of all those dutiful security personnel who remained alert during that time in the name of maintaining peace and security in the pointed area. For this, Dhakal is successful.

The story is successful in bringing out the trauma of the soldiers whether on duty or outside who are presented as true victims of the war but the Maoists have been presented as terrorists who “blast the transformers” (113) so there would only be dark and they could easily break the curfew and attack on the security force. Maoists are in every soldier’s mind as terrific figures and they don’t hesitate to kill them even if they claim themselves as Budha, Mahakavi and God Pashupatinath. The writer has pointed the Maoist rebels responsible for the soldiers’ difficult life of which the writer describes:

The shadow moved more ahead. No one could figure out whether he was with or without arms, but his way of speaking resembled exactly that of the

terrorist. One could see clear contradiction in his words. First, he called himself Siddharth, then the Mahakavi. Now there is not a shade of doubt that he is a deceiver. Is not this evidence sufficient to prove it? All of a sudden the captain's words came to his head. (115)

One can find the story to have been written understanding the sentiment and supporting the feeling of the security force while othering the Maoists, but with the help of middle voice “the appropriate way to write trauma” (LaCapra 19), the story could have been written showing some dark sides of the security force and good sides of the rebels too, which the writer is failure. While weaving the plot of the story about one night of emergency period how a dutiful soldier was seen doing his duty, the writer has brought out the historical facts of ten years long insurgency that killed more than fifteen thousand lives and many others displaced as well as millions have badly been injured mentally and physically. A soldier whose duty was to maintain peace and security has been presented to be eyeing on his duty throughout the night keeping in mind the terrorist (Maoists) who might attack him anytime from anywhere. In this context, the narrator exposes:

The night was pitch black like a ghost. A soldier on sentry shrunk all of a sudden. Moreover, he was immobile and rigid like a cement pillar.

Maybe he was overwhelmed by the great sense of duty.

‘Halt!’ He let out a shriek, pointing the gun.

On the quiet road the echoes of his fearful and harsh roar spread. The waves of the sound floated far away like the forked lightening streak in the sky; but not a response came from anywhere else. In the nearby houses darkness lay imprisoned and their balconies were absolutely quiet. As no response had

followed the shriek, it became obvious that he looked more terror-stricken than ever. (Dhakal 111)

Dhakal, as a writer, has brought the fact of the emergency narrativizing the sentiment of only one group (security force) by completely othering another group (Maoists) which would ultimately ignite the tension rather than pacifying it. While bringing out the facts, the writer does not seem very conscious in describing the event supporting one while villainizing another side, which would never help establish peace in society. The writer is able to ignite the rebels' emotion to conflict.

Many political, cultural and social upheavals that have left a lot of the war victims in trauma can be good resources for writing narratives. Their painful traumatic experience of violence as “the collective memories of the involved groups” (Hamburger et al v) would be an instrument and purpose of the narration which can be “represented as new genre of Nepali literature” (Hutt 111). Literary depictions of trauma “function to bear witness and testify to traumatic experience, since they break the silence and also redefine discourse, challenging memory and identity”(Barrette et al. ix). The narratives written about such atrocities, on the other hand, might become very “inauthentic because they try to reduce the violence to the language of feud” (Das and Nandi 189), which would rather create a problem in establishing a peaceful society and help escalate the full scale of violence. It, ultimately would not help establish a peaceful society out of such rigorous atmosphere.

“Mother and the Motherland” has brought out the trauma of the security personnel who remain devoting themselves on their duty whole day and night ignoring their responsibility towards the family and are always ready even to sacrifice themselves to maintain law and order in the country. Their life is always at stake that anytime they may be killed. The life they are living is not easy in itself, but on the

other hand, the curfew during the emergency period to impose law and order against the threats caused by the Maoists and the order by their seniors are some great challenges to them. The writer is successful in bringing out this painful facts. But, by showing the only dark sides of the Maoists who were also devoting themselves for the betterment of the society, the writer seems to be one-sided in maintaining the balance in bringing out the facts of the insurgency, which would not help establish peace and stability in the society.

Pradhan's "Sitas-23", written on the background of the People's War that caused the death and disappearance of thousands of Nepali people living in different parts of the country, shows a helpless wife and mother who has lost her husband and two children. The story is a testimony witnessed by this miserable lady who is seen expressing her traumatic experience of how her husband has gone missing for three years, how her son has become drug-addict and left home, and how her daughter has become call-girl. Despite many mental and physical hardships, she is seen wandering different places looking for her lost husband and appealing to all concerned authority to end the conflict so all such missing people would come back. But Pradhan has presented the issue from one side villainizing one group – here the rebels, while bringing the traumatic facts, which would ultimately not help the warring groups come to the table of peace and reconciliation.

The whole story is a testimony or telling "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" (Gilbert 14), which Sita is expressing in front of a police officer or the narrator and she is telling him how her husband was kidnapped by the Maoists. The narrator has presented this testimony villainizing the Maoists how they used to come to the village and bothered the innocent people who served them very delicious food. She is seen describing her testimony:

You are a police officer, aren't you? Aren't you responsible for the security of this district and relieving the pain and suffering of the people here? I know nothing about his whereabouts. One night some boys with slit eyes came and took them away, saying they had some business with him. That evening, a goat was butchered in the house opposite and I cooked meat and rice. I asked them politely, "What sort of work do you have with him? May I also know it? Well, the foot is ready. Go after having the food, will you?" No – they weren't human beings the real monsters. "We are ordered to take him immediately." They dragged him along forcibly saying this much. Me and my children stayed vigil all night long crying. (Pradhan 48)

She is trying to make him believe on what has actually happened to her and other family members and she tries to begin the plausibility of her past and to "build anew its linkage to, and assimilation into, present-day life" (Laub, "Bearing Witness" 62). In past events, she should not only survive so she would tell her past memory, but she would have to share her stories, for her survival too. Laub states, "One has to know one's buried truth in order to be able to live one's life" (63). It becomes inherently imperative to share the victim's stories for relief. That's why, it is very important to "tell and to be heard can become itself an all-consuming life task" (63). If such painful experience is not shared in time, it would be very difficult for the survivor to remain good in life. The victim of the story, Sita states here:

Look, my son of about 13 has fallen in the grip of drugs. The pangs of his father's abrupt missing has drawn him into the vicious eddy of drugs. I could do nothing. And, my daughter left not only school but home as well. She says, she works in a restaurant somewhere in the town. She comes home for a moment once a fortnight or a month. I ask – *Nani!* Where do you work, huh?

She gives me no answer. Handing me *two elephants* from her gaudy wallet, she says – Ama, my job is to keep elephants in my wallet’. (Pradhan 48)

As a form of testimony the untold events would become very distorted in one’s unconscious memory that one would believe that he or she was responsible for the atrocities he or she witnessed, not the perpetrators.

For victims, speaking is not just the recording of memory, but an activity which rebuilds the chances of speaking and being shared with others. Speaking like this helps “the events knowable, perhaps for the first time, to the speaker and others. Through this route, testimony is released into history” (Normand 136). The pains and suffering Sita is expressing to the narrator would be a way to get relief. Keeping these pains within her would not help her get relief. She is seen expressing her pain:

Next morning, I knocked on the doors of neighbors and inquired about him.

But nobody had seen hide nor hair of him. All suspected the jungle. Later in the afternoon, I hurried towards the garment factory where he used to work, and inquired about him. Nobody could say anything. Time flew like waves, counting the days and nights. We gave the news about his missing in the papers, called on many NGOs, but in vain. Now look here! Before me appears his face while it is time for eating. No morsel of food can I swallow in. The children ask – ‘Ama, when will our father come back?’ What answer shall I give to them? We can’t get a wink of sleep. His face appears and keeps on asking – How are you? Are the children fine? Send them to school at any cost. (Pradhan 48)

Expressing her pain to someone, here the police inspector, she is trying to “recover the power of testimony in the voice of someone who was there” (Normand 136). The

artistic and testimonial achievements of the particular events can help one overcome the silence which has been giving pain.

While bringing out trauma in social crimes to emphasize the narrative and expressive aspects of severe circumstances and experiences of the victims, Vickroy says writing fiction about such pains and sufferings provides many perspectives which allow readers to meditate on the variety of human responses to shock. It depicts “many avenues for expressing the voices of trauma through the survivor’s narrative” (130). In spite of several difficulties, Sita has got a way to survive as she states, “Now I have learnt how to survive in this society. Inspector sahib! . . . Please do tell me, how you think I have been managing to survive – there is neither any news of my husband nor of my children” (Pradhan 49). Besides, it incorporates different “responses and survival behaviors within the characterizations of survivors” (Vickroy 130). Survivors’ responses to shame, guilt, doubt etc. as feeling and remembering traumatic events can have cause and effect because social environment, severity of the event and individual’s sense of control can help one cope trauma. Sita narrates how she is able to cope the situation:

Thinking that it would be better for me to die than to live such a life, I left home one night. I reached at the edge of nearby pond, some distance down my home to hurl myself into it. As I was standing at the edge looking into the water, it occurred to me that all the waves were calling me. I chanted the name of the God. I chanted the name of my husband and children and I tried to forget myself completely. All at once, it occurred to me that a male voice was coming from somewhere afar – ‘Sita, you’re committing an unpardonable sin. Your seven lives may fall into the vicious eddy of hell. Who shall I call Sita

when I came back home one day?’ I could not commit a suicide. I could not die, Inspector, Sahib! (Pradhan 49)

People can have some relief from their grief too as Sita has relieved herself from the idea of committing a suicide. One should cope with any kinds of suffering at any condition which can be seen from Sita’s determination.

Such catastrophes can produce new subjectivities through the shocks, disruptions and confusions which accompany them, and how a “new catastrophe reactivates emotions associated with prior ones in both the individual and the nation” (Kaplan 20). From such events, painful memories would expose the complex interrelatedness of the subject with the powerful and inevitable historical and political forces. In the same way, Sita is seen presenting her traumatic testimony:

Before my eyes, his face changes into venomous snake. I am stunned – that snake is ready to bite me, raising its poisonous hood. The more I run away, the more it follows me. I am running away – that keeps on hounding me. All of my senses wilt. All at once I sink to the bottom of a pond. . . I have no idea, Inspector Sahib, whether I am dead or alive. Suddenly, I wake up; suddenly, I go to the bathroom; suddenly, I take a shower; suddenly, I eat food. I don’t know what I am eating: rice or stone, something like a robot, something like a doll. (Pradhan 51)

The victims like Sita could inscribe such traumatic experiences in writing to “organize pain into a narrative that gives it shape for the purposes of self-understanding (working their trauma through) or with the aim of being heard” (Kaplan 20). Inscribing their memories would have some positive effects on healing their trauma.

Pradhan has brought out the traumatic facts of the victims of the insurgency, but he is unable to locate the language of presentation of traumatic events which should be outshining through the use of metairony. The language of narration should underwrite violence and capture “specificity of the partition violence from the perspective of morality, interrogates the ideological underpinning of the state-centred national histories” (Pandey 134). But Pradhan is unable to give proper attention while bringing out the facts of the insurgency. He should have emphasized human relations with the attribute of being human. As a writer, he should not have used the prose of otherness because it should better measure the depth of human emotion to each other. Pradhan seems to undermine the possible feud in the war-ridden society because he has villainized one group and has narrated the atrocities of one side only:

All I want is my husband. Sometimes I shudder to imagine that they might have beaten him unconscious and his body smeared with blood may be lying somewhere else! They may be electrocuting him every day! They might be piercing his fingers with pins and his wounds may be oozing blood. He may be lying senseless for ages! I cannot think beyond this, Inspector Sahib! Well, if his death was confirmed, we could perform his last rites according to our tradition. There is neither life nor corpse. Does it ever happen in any country?
(Pradhan 50)

If the language of revenge and sacrifice is used regularly while writing literary works about war and conflict, it might turn into redemptive narrative, which would not help the warring groups come to the table of reconciliation, rather create hostility and enmity; that would never help them reconcile in the society.

“Sitas-23”, a post-conflict narrative about the Maoist insurgency, shows a helpless mother or wife’s traumatic testimony of how her husband was abducted by

the rebels and remained unknown for a long time, and how her children left her alone for wandering here and there looking for each of them. The story shows her trauma of how her life has become just like a hell. She is in such condition that neither she can live nor she can die. Even the person she is sharing her trauma, a police officer seems to be helpless as he can't do anything except listening her traumatic testimony. But the writer is unable to bring Sita's trauma balancedly. He, by othering one group, does not seem to be a neutral observer of the catastrophe, which would ultimately worsen the situation and would not help bring peace in society.

Similarly, Pahadi's "The Tears of Terror" also written on the same background of the Maoist insurgency when looting, kidnapping, extortion, murder, rape etc. were prevalent in Nepali society and everyone was terror stricken physically and mentally, shows the trauma of a retired school teacher by othering the Maoists. In those days, once one was kidnapped from the home and manhandled bitterly, he or she, after release, could hardly remain in normal condition, rather he or she would be in trauma and see the kidnappers in every stranger. The story centers on the old retired school teacher, Chet dai whom the Maoists brutally beat until he loses his sense. Then, he can't speak well, and is afraid of every stranger. The story is able to narrate the possible event that normally happened that time, but while narrativizing the event, he has villainized the rebels by othering them badly, which would not help the affected people soothe their tension, rather aggravate it terribly.

The incidents narrated in this story used to be very common in every part of Nepali society. It was even more rigorous when the Maoists insurgency was on climax with "massive escalation of conflict" (Einsiedel et al. 21) and the life of the people either living in town or hinterlands was badly crippled from both sides. Neutral people like Chet dai could not live their life peacefully because "the escalation of

violence had polarized communities and strained social cohesion to breaking point” (Thapa 31), but there was only terror in everyone’s mind and they were badly traumatized and panicked even seeing any strangers. People could not welcome any unknown guest at their home against Nepalese belief ‘athiti devo bhawa’. They were “living under siege and hesitated to get involved in the affairs of other, to help neighbors in need, as they once would have” (31). Chet dai and people like are seen living under the threat of unknown terror which could come from any sides.

The trauma of Chet dai is psychological and social because he is not in the condition to identify whether the people he meets are his foes or friends and encountering any strangers “a doubt springs up to his mind” (Pahadi 146) and his mind would “fail to distinguish between reasons and causes” (Bloom). He would lose his mental strength and feel “the situation would be more menacing and his legs would shudder even at the thought of it” (Pahadi 148). His condition would be more pathetic and he “loses his appetite and sleep, and can’t concentrate on anything. He would go as white as a sheet even at the sound of mice scuttling about in his house” (148). His traumatic experience seems “a distortion of reality” (Caruth, “Trauma and Bearing” 5) which he would not help him identify whether the person he is meeting is friend or foe. His meeting with a man whom he had once taught in school is really painful traumatic experience “accompanying terror of death” (Fromm 71) which is an instance of “chronic pain syndrome and anxiety” (Krystal 76), because he is escaping from him supposing him Agni – the Maoist commander who had once badly breached him. He could not “even reply his greeting and stood defeated and with the eyes welled with the tears of terror, he kept on staring at his student” (Pahadi 149). He looks as if he has lost all mental strength to identify to whom he is encountering,

which clearly indicates how much traumatized he has been. His running away from the terror is an escape from the self which would not help him soothe his tension.

Chet dai's psychic weakness to observe the ongoing event – here guessing the bag with bombs in it and detonating them planting in toilet, also delineates his “masochistic patterns of life and chronic anxiety” (Krystal 77) which would only aggravate his mentality and would not help him reconcile with the situation prevailing in Nepali society by then or even now too. Writing about the people like Chet dai – representatives of all conflict- affected mass would not help reconcile the conflict, rather it would help intensify the tension even more and those who have forgotten the agony of the war may take refuge to armed conflict once again. Pahadi is successful in bringing out the trauma of war-affected people as an integral part but writing traumatic experience in literary form can help people identify the historical facts even after many years. But he does not seem to be neutral in bringing out such facts in literary forms because the way a writer should write about the war and conflict, he seems to have missed it by bringing a fore only one side of the extremism villainizing one group and sympathizing another one.

The post-conflict narrative, for Caruth, should enable one to bear witness to events that cannot be completely known and opens one's ears to experience that might have, otherwise, remained unspoken and unheard. It can become a good platform to illuminate the hidden fact to readers (*Unclaimed* 4). So literature can be taken as a response to very unexpected or overwhelming violent events of what she says, “repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors” (4), which cannot be grasped totally but they recur in different forms. But the Maoists are shown as villains who beat and manhandle innocent people without any serious reasons, which is seen from this extract:

‘It’s all right comrade,’ the man named Agni replied. Then two of them seized him by the arms and the one called Agni grabbed his hair.

He began shuddering with fear. He remained silent hanging his head.

‘We spared you considering you as an old man, but some days ago we spotted you on the chautara talking merrily with the soldiers of the Durga battalion.’

‘Comrade, he spoke no words! He must be the real culprit,’ following this voice, he felt someone else punched him. That blow made him feel dizzy.

After he felt a severe blow on his leg, he fainted dead away. (Pahadi 147)

The stories written from one side by othering the opposite group would not be considered a good narrative to bring out the actual facts of what had happened in past as it should help both groups to reconcile their previous enmity.

The story which brings out historical facts from the past must be a mixture of both rise and fall, and victory and defeat, then all readers can appreciate and tension would be relieved. But this story is unable to bring out the facts happened in past as an “attempt to bring the experience to light” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 22). According to Caruth, while bringing out such events, both victims and perpetrators should take them positively as a necessary point of departure (24) to the point of peace and reconciliation as there should not be more or less. As a story writer, Pahadi does not seem to be successful in bringing out the historical facts objectively, and it would only exacerbate the tension even more than what it used to be earlier.

Pahadi, a prolific story writer for a long time in Nepali literature, and his stories mirror the contemporary Nepali society, seems to have written this story to villainize the Maoist rebels as antagonists who would only kidnap and murder innocent people and loot and destroy the individual property without any serious reasons. This is only one side of the picture. In the conflict, security force was also

equally responsible for creating panic in the society, which Pahadi fails in bringing out and ultimately would not help establish peaceful society henceforth. But on the other hand, both Paudel and Nirab who have written the stories about the insurgency and its trauma on ordinary citizens, have brought these traumatic experiences keeping both forces away from being blamed and responsible for creating the terror in war-affected Nepali society. Both the civil servant and the retired school teacher are in trauma badly not because of any particular militant group, but of the ongoing situation which had badly disturbed all citizenry. So, both have tried their best to soothe the tension, whereas Pahadi seems to be aggravate the escalating tension which all Nepali citizens want to forget and wish it would never come back again.

As a result, a text like that of Pahadi cannot foster peace because indirectly it stokes feelings of revenge and therefore a vicious cycle of revenge whereas restraint shown by Paudel and Nirab in keeping to just a psychological impact due to the disruption in people's everyday life makes the strikes and closures look morally monstrous. A compelling moral appeal as available in Paudel and Nirab augurs well for peace.

But Singh's "The Silence of Violence", though written on the background of the Maoist insurgency instigated by the then Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) when it was in climax and everyone was grief-stricken, shows the war victims, mostly female being traumatized and living in rehabilitation centers. Each of them is in trauma and scared of any strangers and their traumatic experience is beyond the description. Many of them have gone mad and lost memory. Many victims are "disappeared and not found or still missing" (Bhattarai, "A Glimpse into Stories" 10). While bringing out the trauma of the victims, the narrator has not narrated the story being the middle

voice, rather narrated the events of the war one-sidedly villainizing one group, which would rather worsen the situation.

The story, an account of terrific events of war victims who were forced to live a hateful life which they were nor responsible for, has brought out a dark side of war and conflict in which innocent people were victimized and their kin were brutally maimed and their property was burnt. They had “nowhere to go and question, sue or appeal for justice” (10) and they were physically and mentally exploited. This situation is very painstakingly terroristic trauma for such people who would hardly forget this event that would remain to him as “nightmares and repetitive actions” (Caruth, *Unclaimed 2*). Singh is successful in bringing out this fact as an integral part in the form of a literary work. As the story is written on the background of the People’s War, writing trauma in such narrative would help people know the historical facts even after many years. But the writer of the story, Padmavati Singh has not written this story objectively or neutrally, rather has brought out the events only one side of the extremism villainizing one group and not showing the dark sides of another group. While narrating the traumatic condition of Nirmaya alone at home awaiting her police husband who has been missing for a long time at night, the narrator describes her condition villainizing the rebels because of whom he still missing:

The night is still. The stillness of the night has wrapped the village in a blanket of terror. The stream roaring down in the gorge has made the night more formidable. Nirmaya keeps tossing and turning in bed, getting extremely worried and restless with stark fear. This is not the first night, she has been enduring many such nights, writhing in agony like this. She is distinctly tormented by fear and a sense of foreboding. The cause of her vexation is her

husband Bam Bahadur who has gone missing in the class with the rebels. His whereabouts is all unknown, whether he has been abducted or killed or he has escaped and is hiding himself somewhere else. No authority has confirmed whether he is dead or alive. She is writhing alive like a fish in the glowing heat of fire. (Singh 79)

The trauma Nirmaya is undergoing with is narrated from one side which would not please all the readers who cannot accept the testimony of Nirmaya as their own, which ultimately aggravates the situation even worse.

The Maoists are presented as rapists who come at night knocking the door and forcibly ask people to cook for them and once their hunger is satisfied, they do not hesitate to rape the women of that house too. The narration as this aggravates the condition and the situation worsens even more. Singh has described the Maoists negatively and is not able to maintain a balance in presenting the trauma of the war-affected people. She has presented two Maoists rebels who come and stay at night. Nirmaya cooks food for them, but they would be eyeing something else which the narrator has described:

As she was about to turn round to go from there, one of them said with lewd gesture, catching her hand suddenly – ‘Where is your police husband? He might often come to sleep with you, right?’ The gale of lewd laughter echoed in the room looking at them with contempt. Nirmaya, full of contempt, opened her mouth – ‘You might have killed him, he has gone missing since the last clash.’

‘Gone missing Poor little fellow?’ One of them clicked his tongue. ‘If gone missing, what happened then? Suppose we are your husband ...!’ Saying this, one of them knocked her down, gagging the hems of her sari into her

mouth and the other stripped her naked and raped her. Having played coarsely with her body, these two friends took to their heels. (81)

The heinous crime loaded upon this innocent lady who has been in trauma for her missing husband and making the Maoists villains would not help sustain peace and stability. By othering them, the situation would rather worsen. On one hand, it might be an authentic testimony, but it cannot be accepted by both warring groups.

Literature, Caruth argues, can enable one to bear witness to events that cannot be completely known and opens one's ears to experience that might have, otherwise, remained unspoken and unheard. It can become a good platform to illuminate the hidden fact to readers (*Unclaimed* 4). So literature can be taken as a response to very unexpected or overwhelming violent events of what she says, "repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors" (4), which cannot be grasped totally but they recur in different forms i.e. repeated flashbacks, amnesia, latency, nightmares and other conditions. In the context of the story, people like Pawankali, Nirmaya and Malkhamai would be traumatized like this for a long time because "the unfathomable pile of sufferings of victims of killings, violence, abductions and rapes leave them shattered" (Singh 83). Besides, the readers would not come out of this feeling for a long time and they would have same opinion towards the rebels, the oppressors of these victims.

Caruth is in the opinion that history written about the past conflict, which is always about the victorious events of great people not about the ordinary ones, normally ignores the trauma of other people – here those who have been exploited and dominated for a long time in society - of what she says "their history is repression" (*Unclaimed* 14). The voice and suffering of ordinary people, all of whom "are with their own stories – each is a heart breaking tale" (Singh 83), which has always been

ignored and underestimated, hence, they have been compelled to be rebels raising weapons against the state. Moreover, writing about them even more negatively and igniting their aggression would rather lead them to destruction or more violent activities. History should be an authentic record and must bring out painful events of ordinary people as well as glorious events happened in past which would badly impact the contemporary society and many ordinary people became victims of “overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 11). Consequently, like the situation mentioned above, Singh is able to bring justice to such people, who have been brutally exploited and dominated physically and mentally which she has described:

Some of them were perpetrated by the rebels while others had fallen prey to the oppressive acts of the police. Most of the people crushed in the conflict are the women and children. In their competition of demonstrating power, the state and the rebels both are running blindly along the road of heinous crimes of killing, violence, abduction and rape. It is the women who are tormented from all sides. (Singh 83)

There must be the description of trauma and other painful events happened in such people’s lives as well as the condition why they were compelled to live such life countering the foundation along with the events of developments and glories. In this condition, she seems to be successful in illustrating the situation of conflict-hit society.

But she is failure in another side – the use of language in narrativizing the traumatic events and experience of the victims because she has not brought the fact objectively by othering the rebels. The language of post-conflict narrative should always be balancing which should not support one group while igniting another group’s aggression by writing about them negatively or villainizing them. Pandey is

of the opinion that the language which is to bring violent events of conflict and war in written form should not be chauvinistic (136). The language Singh uses in this story looks one sided because it is used to bring the negative side of the rebels, which cannot help soothe the tension. She has spent more and more description on the pathetic condition of Nirmaya caused by the Maoist rebels, which does not suit to an objective written narratives. She describes:

Drenched with sorrows, Nirmaya cast her eyes brimmed with tears on her husband, no difference has occurred in his ever bright lively face and stout physique. The only difference is his unfamiliar look, which does not have the feeling of warm intimacy.

Indifferent to her look, Bam Bahadur walked away with no words at all.

She remained silent and kept on looking blankly as if in her silence, the fire was burning inside her which will one day erupt like a volcano to back up those citizens who have forgotten to laugh, whose smiles have been snatched away and who are burnt alive and crushed in the violence. (Singh 85)

Actually she should have employed the language which should neither reduce the specificity of the experience nor should nullify the possibilities of co-existence. But she is failure in this attempt.

The narrator's language should rather develop a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial feuds, hatred; not the notion of separation and partition (Pandey 136). Reading such narratives one would be forced to live in hatred and negation or other the opposite group, no one can live happily for a long time in peace; which ultimately leads to further violence and destruction. In such condition, the concept of middle voice would play an important role in bringing out the events of the war and conflict which once happened and battered the society. The middle voice

would designate the types of action where the agent remains enveloped in the released actions. Talking about middle voice, LaCapra delineates that it harbors an affirmative or even utopian dimension (32). It is middle voice in writing about war and conflict; which should neither be written nor understood from victims' point of view nor perpetrators', but it should be narrated objectively not supporting or opposing either side, rather neutrally. But the storyteller, Singh is unable to do as mentioned above and has written this story for one side only while othering another side completely.

These four stories, though written about how the Maoist insurgency was destructive and painful for ordinary people like Sita, Chet dai, Nirmaya and Pawankali and how much traumatic life they were going through, seem to have been written one-sidedly not objectively, which would not help either victims or perpetrators come to the table of peace and reconciliation. Reading such post-conflict narratives, the actual victims would not feel better, rather get disturbed and the tension would escalate further. They have not brought out the facts neutrally by othering another group, which would definitely not help both groups come together and live in peace and reconciliation forever. Such texts would not help each one related to the insurgency feel better and forget their trauma. Ultimately, they would not help establish peace and harmony in the society.

Chapter 5

Textual Analysis II: Trauma and Searching for Peace in the Nepali Post-Conflict Narratives

5.1 Trauma and Peace in Gautam and Madhuban Paudel

In this book, there are some stories which reveal other facets of the Maoist insurgency and violence: detaining innocent people, abducting and forcing them to pay a huge amount of money as donation and meeting with various arbitrary punishments. Likewise, arresting innocent people while having meal or lying in bed after the whole day's hard labor or returning home tended to resort to extreme tactics to spread fear those days. They were beaten to death on the charge of being spied or informers. The victims had nowhere to go and question and appeal for justice. Mostly male were the target, however, their wives, mothers and small children, being desperately helpless, were all exploited and harassed mentally and physically. These innocent people undergoing with traumatic experiences and being terror stricken became insane, lost memory or went mad. But these grief-stricken people still anticipated for better life in future in spite of several troubles they were facing in their life which some Nepali writers have tried to narrativize in the form of stories.

Many political, cultural and social upheavals that have left a lot of victims in trauma can be good resources for writing narratives. Their painful traumatic experience of violence would be an instrument and purpose of the narration which can be represented as new genre of Nepali literature. Literary depictions of trauma tend to bear witness and testify to traumatic experience, since they break the silence and also redefine discourse, challenging memory and identity. It is in the engagement with writing that the unspeakable emerges from the aporia in consciousness and releases its repressive energy. The narratives written about such atrocities, in contrast, might

become very meaningless because they try to reduce the violence to the language of conflict, which would rather create a problem in establishing a peaceful society and help escalate the full scale of violence.

In this context, four stories – Gautam’s “The Conclusion” and Madhuban Paudel’s “Now You Can Return Home” though written about unspeakable pain, arbitrary abduction, murder, rape, molestation, and trauma of innocent people due to the Maoist insurgency inflicted by the then Nepal Communist Party, Maoist for about ten years mostly in the hinterlands of Nepal, show the bitter pictures of Nepali society. These writers have narrativized the unspeakable trauma of the victims very distinctly by bringing the horrific pictures of the insurgency. Both are able to depict the stories very objectively neither aligning nor opposing any conflicting forces. Being neutral witnesses of horrific past events that once engulfed the whole Nepali citizenry, they seem to succeed in making an authentic balance in the narrativization which makes the undertone of peace and harmony sound genuine.

Gautam’s “The Conclusion”, written about a war (the Maoist insurgency) that continues for a long time without any significant sign of ending, shows uselessness of war and its impact on the ordinary people. It also shows how people lose their relatives in such wars and conflicts and try a lot to find them in spite of several difficulties. They simply want the war to end and everything to go back to normal. But the terrific consequences of the war would never let them live peacefully. The traumatic memory keeps them alive with many seen or unseen wounds. Still, they hope for better days ahead and don’t want to fight anymore by anticipating peace and reconciliation among the warring groups.

The story does not identify which war the narrator is narrating and where both brother and sister are looking for their lost one. But one thing which the story has

shown is that every war is destructive and many people are lost and die. The war would not have any name and identity except its destructiveness. Either it is “the Mahabharata, or the First World War or the Second World War, or even the war of Water Loo” (53), every war is faceless. The warriors can use different kinds of weapons e.g. A.K. 47, clubs, swords and *khukuris*, and smash each other by themselves. People are engaged in fighting continuously without considering the value of time and space. People would be traumatized. Nobody would be sure “how long this situation lasted. Even time itself vanished. Timeless space? Timeless time? Both time and space were in the premise of definitionlessness” (56). The story has elaborated the futility of the war and its worthlessness to humanity and indirectly pleading for peace and stability for all human being to live together without any hostility.

The story, from the beginning, talks about the war and its impact on common people – here the young boy who has lost his sister and looking for her. He is traumatized and expecting “overwhelming violent event” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4) which might have happened to her. The narrator of the story describes the young boy’s trauma like this:

Sometimes it occurred to him – did she fall prey to rape? Nowadays there is no age bar in rape. The world has become so evil that people have even forgotten to say something is immoral. He consoled himself. Let my sister be found without being raped. Let she be recovered sound and safe. It is said that what happens in rape is thousand times more terrible than what happens in war. In such situation, they say, the war outside thrusts inside and simmers, shaking the very foundation of one’s being. (Gautam, “Conclusion” 55)

It is literary writing which brings such event that might happen to any individuals, otherwise, it would have remained unspoken and unheard for a long time. The young boy is “repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions i.e. repeated flashbacks, amnesia, latency, nightmares” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 6). His mentality to get his sister in solitary places which would be far from the battlefield and rape is seen like this, “Weeping... does not matter. Getting fever... does not matter. May she be found in a lonely place? Nowadays, lonely place is safer than the crowd for a man” (Gautam, “Conclusion” 55). His longing for meeting his sister safe and sound would rather be a way to peace and solidarity for all war affected people.

His meeting with both sides of warriors inquiring his lost sister would not hurt him. Both sides of warriors are engaged in harming to their enemies, and he visits and asks them if they have seen her. Being an observer of the war, the young boy remains safe and unwounded. The narrator says, “He was unarmed. He thought simply, I might not be hurt. Or even if he might be hurt or whatever the consequence, he should trace his missing sister” (55). Somebody’s attack from his backside and bleeding from his boy would be symbolic because as his blood falls on the ground, the pillars also get collapsed. But the war continues about which the narrator says, “The war is waged for war’s sake, or even for peace we need to declare the war” (58). The war is presented here to bring peace in the disturbed society, so people would get their loved lost one.

Gautam, as a writer and neutral observer of the war and conflict, has presented the context and consequences which are prevalent in every part of the human society, very objectively neither aligning nor opposing any warring groups. The young boy, while wandering both sides looking for his sister, does not get wounded and even the warriors don’t give any consideration to his presence. He is not seen commenting

their actions, rather only “worried about his sister and sometimes grew angry with her for her going out” (55). Presenting the consequences of war and its impacts upon the commoners, on the one hand, would appeal neutrality of what LaCapra states truth claims by “providing phenomena, by offering a reading of a process or period or by giving at least a plausible feel for experience and emotion” (13), and narrating the sequence of events with the help of middle voice, “the appropriate way to write trauma” (19), on the other hand, would rather appeal both victimized and perpetrators to accept the truth claims of which LaCapra highlights “the most important consideration in art and its analysis” (13). Gautam has applied this method in bringing out the facts of the war and conflicts and as a post-conflict narrative, this story is successful in eliminating feud between the victims and perpetrators and establishing peace and reconciliation in the war-ridden society. The narrator has presented the conclusion of war:

No sooner had the young boy dripped blood onto the ground than the so called invincible pillar happened to collapse by itself. We cannot say what relation was there between the pillar and the boy’s blood. They said the pillar rocked as the first drop of blood fell on the earth. Nobody could count how many drops of blood had fallen in on the ground before the pillar was uprooted. Some said that though the pole was of stone, it had far reaching roots and they were not all uprooted. The pillar crumbled down, that much is true. (Gautam, “Conclusion 57)

The war has never given any constructive way for lives grow up, how this war would make the life meaningful for the people living in the war-affected society in which everyone is badly impacted by it. The narrator further delineates:

Despite this, the war was not over. The warriors said, 'There are other pillars as well, this war is to break them down.'

Someone else asked – 'Where are these pillars then?'

'These pillars are within man,' laughed the warrior. The questioner didn't get it. Wherever they are, why do we need that sort of war for them?

The warrior said – 'What can we do? We have no choice at all. Had it been a symbolic war, we would have done so.' In other words, no matter however much ferocious it is, the war of the picture never changes into the real war.

The war should be waged for war's sake, or even for peace we need to declare the war. (57-8)

The abovementioned lines clearly show how the narrator has presented the context of war and embedded peace even in the narration. Being a neutral observer, the narrator has shown how doing one after another war, the significance of war is dwindling one after another and expectation of peace is overheard.

In short, "The Conclusion," illustrating the consequences of destructiveness of war and conflict in human society, has clearly shown the futility of such events and appeals for peace and solidarity. The use of middle voice in bringing the truth claims propagated by LaCapra would help one read and understand the theme of the story though it has brought the traumatic facts of a young brother and sister looking for each other's brother and sister. War has never given anyone's live back, rather has taken many people's lives, which should be stopped sooner or later.

Madhuban Paudel's "Now You can Return Home", written on the background of time when the Maoist insurgency was in peak and people were forced to leave home on the charge of being spy or informer and to spend their life in foreign land remaining away from family for a long time, shows how such people would be in

trauma and expect for peace as soon as possible. Weaving the plot in this situation, Paudel as a neutral observer of the conflict has tried to make a balance in bringing out the facts. He has not villainized any groups, rather has objectively described the situation because the victims as presented in the story are the victims of the war not of any particular groups, and always hope for the end, so they can return home and get united with their family members after a long time.

The story is able to bring out the true picture of Nepali society when Nepali society was sandwiched between government force and Maoist rebels, and neutral people like Sarad had to flee away from home and spend a long time in abroad away from his family. It has brought out the trauma of war victims “whose traces cannot be effaced and haunt like a ghost” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 20). These people, having fled away from the country, always remain in trauma longing for better days to come, so they can return home safely. Trauma of such people can have relief of some “wounding experience in daydreams and nightmares, flashbacks and hallucination, and in a compulsive seeking out of similar circumstances” (Erikson 184) and they would withdraw “into a kind of protective envelope, a place of mute, aching loneliness” (186). Being traumatized from the situation, Sarad settles in the attic and granary and could no cough loudly “for the fear that his daughter would hear that” (Paudel, “Now You Can” 98). The outside world for him would become “the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self and the world” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 3). His fleeing away from the village and reaching abroad would be a relief for sometimes, not a solution because he remains feeling “giddy at the very thought of gruesome past” (Paudel, “Now You Can” 98), and his past gruesome traumatic life would always would come back “repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions” (Caruth, “Trauma and Experience” 4). Sarad has been going on with such condition which

resembles the commoners living in the hinterlands of Nepal where they were sandwiched between two forces.

The flashback of the “gruesome past” (Paudel, “Now You Can” 98), Sarad is going through, can give him “a form of recall that survives at the cost of willed memory or of the very continuity of conscious thought” (Caruth, “Recapturing the Past” 152), which would help him get relief. Sharing painful past to others can help the people like Sarad and Mukunda “move away from the experience of shock by reintegrating it into a stable understanding of it” ((154). Narrating it to someone or narrativizing it in written form would make the event “to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one’s own, and others’ knowledge of the past” (153). And one would have capacity to elide the past and return to normalcy.

The story has been written not showing the condition of supporting one and villainizing another. Characters in the story are not seen living in hatred with antagonistic feeling to others or othering the opposite group. While describing the pitiable condition of Sharad, the main character of the story, the narrator has maintained a balance keeping himself away from both fighting groups:

Sharad feels giddy at the very thought of his gruesome past. Now and then, he would hear that after he left the village, so and so’s frequented his house and threatened his family and even brandished his brother! Sharad, ordinary school teacher, had been tagged both as a spy and terrorist at the same time. He was very helpless. (Paudel, “Now You Can” 98)

In such condition, there would be some chance for one to live in peace; which may ultimately help all live in mutual solidarity and reconciliation. The writer is seen as a neutral observer keeping himself aloof from both warring groups. In this story, LaCapra’s concept of middle voice can be taken as way to make a balance while

writing the story about the conflict. He further states, “. . . the middle voice does indeed harbor an affirmative or even utopian dimension” (31-2). Paudel, as a neutral observer of the conflict has brought out the fact of the Nepali society neither supporting the security forces nor opposing the Maoist rebels who have raised the weapons against the foundation.

While bringing out the traumatic facts of Nepali society, Paudel does not use the prose of otherness on the other alienating either group, it has become successful in better measuring the depth of human emotion to each other. The language of revenge and sacrifice has not been used and writing literary works about trauma neutrally has turned into factual narrative, which would not embark hostility and enmity in the society. Pandey is of the opinion that the politics of language of violence should not be chauvinistic; and the writers of trauma should employ the language which should neither reduce the specificity of the experience nor should nullify the possibilities of co-existence. It should rather develop a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial feuds, hatred; not the notion of separation and partition (136). This story is ultimately able to help establish a peaceful and co-existing society even after the blood-shedding rebellion in Nepali society at the end as the narrator mentions:

The headings and sub-headings such as ‘he End of People’s War, All have Made Themselves Public, The Weapons Are Yet to Be Laid Down, The Restoration of the Parliament’ and so on had covered half of the page. In front of his eyes were reeling his brother, sister-in-law, their children, his wife and his daughter as well as the ancestral house in Dandagaun. (Paudel, “Now You Can” 100)

The language is not offensive to readers who try to ensemble with the message it is delivering. Despite several obstacles faced by Sarad throughout the narrative, the

story ends with a very good message that the country prevails with peace and reconciliation and once again it would return to normalcy.

“Now You Can Return Home”, in short, seems to be a documentary of the conflict-hit Nepali society of around 20 years ago, highlighting the bitter picture of youths’ compulsion whether to join the force or flee away to foreign land. It is able to bring out the fact objectively without aligning to any groups, but presenting the situation with the help of middle voice propagated by LaCapra, the story teller is successful to establish a balance to keep both sides’ principle of fighting. The story ends not mentioning who won or who lost, but simply illustrating some headlines of a newspaper. Though written about the trauma of the conflict victims, Gautam’s “The Conclusion” shows the ultimate outcome of the Nepali politics – restoration of democracy for peace and stability. Both stories, needless to say, written about the war, conflict and victims and their painful traumatic life: fleeing away from home, hiding from being kidnapped or shot, escaping from opposite groups and wandering here and there looking for their lost relatives and better life, have brought out the facts neutrally neither aligning one nor othering another group, which would definitely help both groups come together and live in peace and reconciliation forever. Such texts would always help each one related to the insurgency feel better and forget their trauma. Ultimately, they would help establish peace and harmony in the society.

5.2 Trauma during People’s Movement for Peace and Stability in Madhikarmi, Dhungana and Shaha

During the Second People’s Movement (2006), not only the rural life remained crippled by the extreme degree of violence and terror, but the urban life also did not remain untouched from the pains and sufferings due to week/ month long *banda*(strike) or closure. The nineteen day long strike made the life of workers,

democratic activists, students, freedom fighters and even security personnel very painful as the agitation, demonstration and movement had truly paralyzed the towns and cities. Common people like cart pullers, security personnel etc. could not do their duty and remained hungry for many days. As the Movement was on climax, nothing worked; the government had no command over it, no curfew worked, no prohibited zone could bar them from participating or burning effigies of the king or his cohorts. The victims of the movement could hardly bear the pains of such long strike. But these grief-stricken people still hope for a better life in future in spite of several troubles they were facing in their life which some Nepali writers have tried to render in the form of narrative of short stories. Writing trauma in the form of narrative of short stories would be bearing witness of the past events that once crippled the ordinary people's lives.

Literary depictions of trauma tend to bear witness and testify to traumatic experience, since they break the silence and also redefine discourse, challenging memory and identity. The narratives written about such atrocities, on one hand, should deal with the past events objectively not aligning with any particular groups. Such stories can help both fighting groups come together forgetting their feud. But in contrast, they sometimes might become very inauthentic because they try to reduce the violence to the language of feud, which would rather create a problem and help escalate the cycle of violence, thereby coming in the way of reestablishment of a peaceful society.

Narrating the stories of war and conflict as testimony in the form of short stories becomes inherently important for the survivors to tell and to be heard that can become itself an all-consuming life task. The writer would narrate the events as a neutral witness objectively keeping both sides away from his or her personal and

emotional attachment. The untold events would become much distorted in one's unconscious memory that one would believe that he or she was responsible for the atrocities he or she has witnessed. Sharing the testimony objectively would help one understand the past events neutrally; which would ultimately bring both groups close together.

In the above context, Madhikarmi's "The Meek", Dhungana's "The Eyewitnesses" and Shaha's "A Constable and the Statue" deal with the consequences of the People's Movement and its impact on ordinary people. They bring out the bitter facts of the outcome of the Movement upon the common people who remain jobless and hungry for many days. These stories show how painful and traumatic life people have to live in the urban area. While bringing out the trauma caused by the Movement, the writers, as neutral observers of the consequences of the event, have presented their testimony neither aligning one nor othering another group. Bringing such facts objectively, the narrators have helped establish peace and reconciliation in the society which had once been in turmoil for a long time.

"The Meek", as a post-conflict narrative written about the consequence of the second People's Movement upon the ordinary people who have fled the village due to "extreme degree of violence and terror" (Bhattarai, "A Glimpse into Stories" 10) in search of job in town, portrays the picture of children, displaced citizens and the poor ones who "have been turned into unknown martyrs due to terror and consequent violence spread in the country" (18). While talking about one innocent boy who "flees his village to escape the horror of the conflict" (18) and about the trauma of the victims, Madhikarmi has delineated a true picture of such people without aligning to any sides and he seems to have used LaCapra's middle voice to portray the consequence of the second people's movement.

The story written on the background of the People's Movement, centralizes on the trauma of a small innocent boy, who "flees his village to escape the horror of conflict" (18) and has come to live in the town. He has nowhere to go and nothing to eat. He is "of ten or twelve, with slit-eyed whitish complexion and a scar on the forehead, in the dirty shirt and threadbare shorts . . . named Harke, Shibe, Dhane or Rame" (Madhikarmi 176). The narrator notices "his face was drenched with the sense of innocence, meekness, and ignorance" (175). He asks him why he came to the town, he doesn't replies. The condition goes on even more traumatic when "some sporadic outbursts of the movement began in the city" (175) and the *banda*, a nation-wide strike, public gathering and general strike begin in the city and normal life gets paralyzed. The glimpse of police remains a matter of terror because "the atmosphere seemed rather terror-stricken and edgy" (177) to common people. The situation gets worse, when the demonstrators try to destroy a statue, police interfere as "a volley of shots was ringing out and the people were falling one after another like trees in the storm" (177). Many people get badly injured while some die too. Among them, the narrator finds this innocent boy "collapse abruptly onto the floor" (177) and dead. The Movement brought the change in the country with the help of many innocent people who even didn't know why they were participating in the Movement.

The background of this story is the Second People's Movement which started in 2006 and "turned out to be a nationwide phenomenon" (Adhikari, *The Bullet to* 199). The life of ordinary people was badly crippled due to regular demonstrations which "were held in almost every district capital, and outside major urban areas as well" (199) and in the inner parts of the streets, people "staged rallies, canvassed door to door, and filled the streets with scratchy loudspeakers" (Thapa 173). Their life remained traumatized as they became unable to resume the regular activities due to

“arrogance of power cushioned by the force of violence” (Kumar 173). The story has brought out the testimony of this movement and trauma also pertains to the study of literature on and about the painful events and violence showing some connections between theory and practice which has been narrated:

Some sporadic outbursts of movement began in the city. Sometimes, the *banda*, which is a nation-wide strike, sometimes the public gathering while sometimes the general strike close in on the city. The life in the city almost lost its normalcy. Unlike before I did not stay outdoors late in the evening. I began returning home early instead. I would take my way home immediately after my office hour. Sometimes I faltered whenever my eyes fell on the movement of some of the policemen walking along the street. Then I dragged myself faster to return home. (Madhikarmi 176-77)

Trauma has been taken as a response to very unexpected or overwhelming violent events of what she states, “repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 14), which cannot be grasped totally but they recur in different forms i.e. repeated flashbacks, amnesia, latency, nightmares and other conditions which the narrator mentions “The atmosphere seemed rather terror-stricken and edgy” (Madhikarmi 177). This is because, as Caruth argued, literature like psychoanalysis is interested in the complex relation. Different texts explore and speak about and through the profound story of traumatic experience. The texts engage with a central problem which emerges from the actual experience of a specific crisis (“Trauma and Experience” 8). For Felman, the witness of art is no less important than the witness of history so writing narratives has a testimonial potentiality (“Education and Crisis” 56). She sees that “literature and art are a precocious mode of witnessing - of accessing reality- when other modes of knowledge are precludes” (8). Writing

stories can even help many historians understand the actual events happened in past. Madhikarmi in this story has tried to create a panicked scene of the Movement not aligning with any groups rather objectively which can be seen from these lines:

That day I was preparing to return home a bit early. Most of the shops were shut down. In most of the places, the police force were placed on full alert.

The street was not so much crowded. At the very moment, I saw a huge mass demonstration marching towards me. I could not help it. I stood on the side of the road and began looking at it. The people looked excited. The demonstrators were jumping at their feet and chanting slogans. The sky-piercing clamor of the people was trying to erupt something inside. (177)

The narrator has presented a clear picture of the movement that once happened in the country which has been an important landmark for change. In presenting this testimony, this story as a form of literature is able to create a picture in readers' mind.

The boy presented in the story of about ten or twelve may be Rame, Shibe, Harke or anyone who has fled to the town because of insecurity in the village due to the crossfire between the Maoists and the security forces. He is seen hungry, alone, homeless and aspiring to go to Balaju for shelter. The narrator takes him to nearby restaurant and feeds him. He has left his village, parents, friends and other chores behind him to escape the terror which was deeply rooted in his mind. Because of traumatic feeling, "his face was drenched with the sense of innocence, meekness, and ignorance – the face that stirred you to ask something else; the facial appearance that pricked your conscience" (Madhikarmi 175). He looks confused even to speak, rather "amazed, terrified and apprehensive like someone who had come to the city for the first time" (175). He is the representative of all such people who used to flee the village and destined to live a miserable life in town missing their family each time.

The second part of the story is the depiction of the demonstration and its consequences in which the boy loses his life innocently for the sake of restoration of democracy. The traumatic experience as seen in ordinary people is narrated here:

Somewhere in the corner of my heart there would lurk a small bundle of terror. It would occur to me that these policemen might be searching for me. The plainclothes might be hard on my heels. There would ever flow a rivulet of doubts and suspicions in my heart. I was apprehensive to the speeches delivered by political leaders like Ganeshman. (177)

The atmosphere is very apprehensive to all people including the security personnel too; and a volley of shots is presented as a sign of terror in the people. The martyrdom of the boy can be seen as a sacrifice of “the people’s movement’s success and the restoration of democracy” (178). Subsequently, “public life’s return to normalcy” (178) is a way of beginning a new life – peace and reconciliation for sustainable democracy.

Madhikarmi has written this story neither supporting one and nor villainizing another group. Characters and the events are not presented with any kind of antagonistic feeling to others or othering the either group. Moreover, the story ends with the end of autocratic monarchial regime and with the restoration of multiparty democracy – the long and much awaited aspiration of all people, and the boy who became martyr doesn’t belong to either groups too. Further the narrator delineates:

I could not completely move with the demonstration. I moved along the side of the road, as I could not help it. It as an eerie atmosphere. On the on hand, the people were full of astonishing vigor; on the other it was a giddy atmosphere obscured by a veil of apprehension. I looked as if the demonstration were flowing along with two forms of existence together.

I was left behind. The atmosphere ceased to flow. I was thinking whether I should move forward. Meanwhile I heard an eerie uproar. The people dispersed and began stampeding. I saw a bit far away – a volley of shots was ringing out and the people were falling on after another like trees in the storm. After a while I turned senseless. (177)

The writer is seen as a neutral observer and the story seems to have been written with LaCapra's concept of middle voice - an affirmation, which would prescribe an "insufficiently modulated rhetoric" (26) and can be taken as way to make a balance while writing the story about the conflict.

"The Meek", showing two sides of Nepal's socio-political life in the contemporary society – one fleeing away from village's traumatic life in search of secured life in town during the insurgency and uprising the movement for peace and stability, has left a staunch mark for those people who want to understand how innocent people also sacrificed for a good cause and they became responsible for peace and stability. On the other hand, the narration of the story shows that the writer is neither in support of demonstrators nor of the security forces, rather he has depicted the whole of the events objectively, that would subsequently help one understand the historical event neutrally not having any biased details.

Dhungana's "The Eyewitness", in the same way, a story written on the background of the Second People's Movement, has used a ripe tomato an eyewitness of a whole day's activities of the movement. It shows how demonstration started and how in the twilight the tomato got crushed under a policeman's boot. It has also used the tomato – a visual image and representative of all eyewitnesses who have come to witness the event from outside and happen to die in the crossfire between the security forces and the demonstrators. The scenes and activities presented from the perspective

of the tomato signify the violent events which are brought a fore objectively not aligning to any sides. The narrator with the help of this personified tomato is able to bring the testimony of the movement showing both sides' activities neutrally, which would subsequently help them take this post-conflict narrative as "a remedial quality and healing process" (Felman, "Education and Crisis" 16) and a true record of the event which a non-living object being humanized is presenting his testimony.

The story, in the same way, is a testimony of an eyewitness who has closely witnessed the bloody demonstration of a political movement to bring a change in the country for the people who had been sandwiched between the cruelty of the rulers and poverty created by the situation. The situation of these people as signified by a ripe red tomato which "wishes to be the sole eyewitness of this demonstration" (67) is traumatized when people "had to go hungry and sleep in the open and there was the ever present fear of injury, torture and death" (Adhikari, *TheBullet* 94) from both sides during the movement. They were forced to witness "the heap of the red clay and tomatoes accumulated on this pavement on their TV screen in the evening and will be startled" (Dhungana 69) which is "the greatest confrontation with reality as an absolute numbing to it" (Caruth, "Trauma and Experience" 6). It signifies to one of the historical truths conferring to trauma and it "locates its ultimate origin inside and outside the psyche" (8). In the form of testimony, referring to the subsequent metaphorical use of color – red also pertains the change which confers the blood for essential transfiguration in the society.

Truth and past events, similarly, are two parts of testimony – "a privileged contemporary mode of transmission and communication" (Felman, "Education and Crisis" 17) which an eyewitness presents to make the history plausible as witnessing would be "the quest of testifying and of witnessing . . . the process of the testimony"

(Laub, "Bearing Witness" 61) to begin again the plausibility of the past and to "build anew its linkage to, and assimilation into, present-day life" (61). The narrator in this story is trying to narrativize the historical event as a testimony for those who witnessed the events closely "from the pyre in the solitary burial ground" (Dhungana 69). As the events would rather be grave, one has to know one's buried truth in order to be able to live one's life" (Laub, "Bearing Witness" 63), and it becomes inherently imperative to share the one's stories for relief "embodying some remedial quality and healing process" (Felman, "In an Era" 116). Writing about the movement, Dhungana is able to make a balance in bringing the fact. That's why, it is very important to "tell and to be heard can become itself an all-consuming life task" (67). If such painful experience is not shared in time, it would be very difficult for the survivor to remain good in life.

The consequence of the Second People's Movement as outcome of the violent events which made one victims and another perpetrators and "crafted the symbols and genres of mourning that made them active in the highly contested domain of politics" (Das 301). This situation may create an ability to engage a wider public on the meaning of such violence which may "break up into tumult" (Dhungana 68). Testimony of the survivors would be "best conceptualized not through the metaphor of writing but rather through the contrast between saying and showing" (Das 300). For victims like the tomato, testimony would be a possible landmark which they can unfold the hidden truth which even the historians have ignored for a long time.

The witnessing of the tomato – a personified agent to bring the truth a fore is fundamental and indispensable relationship among other witnesses can be understood by recording of some kind, so that, one can "unbeknownst to survivors themselves, act as trustees of their testimony by ensuring its continued reception . . . whether as listeners, readers, or viewers, with the reconstruction of a sense of self and

community” (Trezise 223). The presentation of a non-living object to witness of an important historical event can be taken as a neutral testimony which the narrator has presented:

The tomato has heard a lot about the ongoing street demonstrations from the time when he was green, hanging in the vine to his ripening, then to the time when he got mixed with the heap of the tomatoes accumulated in the vegetable market. Popping out of the heap, he wishes to be the sole eyewitness of this demonstration. He stands still on the pavement of the road. He glances all around. (Dhungana 67)

This trusteeship may help people related socially, politically, historically come to the table of reconciliation while receiving testimony which would be an ethical exigency that can test one’s ability to empathize.

Dhungana’s narration of the historical event with the help of metaphorical illustration of tomato signals LaCapra’s use of the middle voice “as distinguished from the active voice and the proper way of representation of the Holocaust” (25) to bring the fact to “represent realistically the modern experience” (25). As a neutral observer of the movement, the storyteller presents it realistically which constitutes factual representation to take account of experiences. Here in this story, the writer, Dhungana’s use of language of violence is not chauvinistic; and as much as possible she is able to employ the language which has neither reduced the specificity of the experience nor nullifies the possibilities of co-existence appealing both sides’ sensitivity. In this attempt, the storyteller has brought a fore actual facts of the historical event, which are described here:

The tomato is hearing the taps of the police’s boots. In the darkness he sees nobody else, just the sound is approaching. All at once, in the dark, the boots

of a policeman happen to stamp on his head. His life ends before he got a single moment to cry “Ouch”. The seed and juice from the crushed tomato happen to be oozing at one of the corners of the pavement like the blood cells from the broken head. (Dhungana 70)

It has rather developed a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial feuds, hatred; not the notion of separation and partition (Pandey 137). Trauma resulted either from local level or national level must be cured or healed; should not be repeated in any time in the past. Here, one can argue that trauma seen in the story should not necessarily offer “a means of overcoming instability, contaminated as it is with the ideological contours of the dominant culture to which the trauma belongs” (137). In bringing the traumatic fact, the storyteller has maintained a balance to show how the demonstration during the Movement happened not aligning with any group, which can be seen from these lines:

The people of this city will see this heap of the red clay and tomatoes accumulated on this pavement on their TV screen in the evening and will be startled. Just a while ago, this place looked like a battle field. At the moment, the clouds of dust are raising in place of the smoke rising from the pyre in the solitary burial ground. A black dog wounded in the leg by the stone is wailing, curling itself on the pavement. For the tomato, the wailing of this dog is suggesting something ominous. The solitary tomato along with the dog on the pavement is dead tired of looking at the scene of the demonstration. The turban of the four-starred green flag wrapped round his head has fallen on the ground. Now his head is bald. (Dhungana 69)

It should also be implemented to pacify the warring groups with their feuds.

Dhungana is successful in bringing out the fact and settling the feud if still remained in the disturbed society.

Unfolding the unnoticed fact of the second People's Movement that caused many people's lives and thousands other badly injured with metaphorical use of personified tomato as an eyewitness of the event, "The Eyewitness" has been understood as a testimony to testify the violent activities during the movement. The narrator from the perspective of the red and ripe tomato has embellished the facts with truthful details not assigning with any warring groups, but as a neutral observer she has weaved the plot very objectively, which would ultimately help all concerned groups live peacefully.

Shaha's "A Constable and the Statue" explores the internal conflict of a constable while guarding a statue – an image of powerful ruler who might brutally have dictated the people in his autocratic regime. His duty is to protect it from the demonstrators who might destroy it during the curfew of 19th day of the Second People's Movement. The story shows how police officers, in spite of several physical and mental hardships while performing the duty honestly obeying the orders from the 'above', like to live in democratic society, want peace from conflict in the country, support the demonstrators' slogans and finally appreciate their step of dismantling the statue into pieces. On the other hand, the storyteller, needless to say a security officer while the movement was going on, is a neutral observer of the events and is able to narrate the events objectively without othering any groups, which would subsequently help all accept the story as a true account.

The story has been presented from the perspective of a security officer who has been deputed at the square for the safety of a statue of a dictator who might have

killed many innocent people once a time has brought out his trauma. Remaining alert stamped at the square from dawn to dusk through hunger, thirst and sleeplessness; missing his family members every time; while on duty, upheaval raging in his mind feeling dumbfounded every time; a dreadful lull and giddy stillness around him and feeling dejected in spite of restraining himself many times; feeling strenuous exertion of night and day duty for about three weeks at the same place etc. are some instances of his trauma found in the story. His condition is what Caruth outlines as “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (*Unclaimed* 57-8). The constable is seen being overwhelmed anticipating what would happen to him every moment. He runs his eyes and finds “the square looked deserted within a few minutes and not even a single person other than those deputed on duty was there” (Shaha 188). The statue he is deputed to protect from the demonstrators is “more apprehensive than ever and its image sketched in the inner part of his heart had already changed” (188). He misses the congestion of the city with the rushes of vehicle, commuters, farmers with their commodities and “heaved a deep sigh of relief and plumped himself, putting the helmet on the stair” (188). He finds the situation very odd and anticipates for good.

The memory of his family and responsibility is another factor which makes him go through “unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mentality” (Van de Kolk and Hart 176) that is his duty “as a soldier to serve the people” (Shah 189), but does not find solace and “an upheaval raged in his mind, dumbfounded he kept staring vacantly into space” (189). The constable is seen completely “traumatized, fixated and inflexible” (Van de Kolk and Hart 177). He does not feel comfortable as “a dreadful lull and giddy stillness

prevailed around made him feel all dejected, no matter how much he tried to restrain himself” (Shaha 190). He seems to be waiting for tumult of what Shaha describes:

He squatted abruptly on the stairs of the statue. Now he ceased to look at the long stretch of the road. He also ceased to raise his eyes to closed doors and windows of the houses. Peering down to the ground, he came to realize that the strenuous exertion of night and day and the fatigue have left him all wilted. His eyes are heavy due to sleeplessness. He has splitting headache. He propped his body against the statue and closed his eyes. (190)

The constable a representative of all the security forces deputed to protect the year-old autocratic regime controlling the aspiration of the citizen is in trauma, and anticipating for peace and restoration of multiparty democracy, so that all unheard voices would be heard and equality would be prevailed in the country.

Unlike other stories, the storyteller has brought the mentality of a security officer whose duty is to protect the age old statue and dictate the demonstrators positively. His suppressed desire has come out when he starts repeating the slogan of the demonstrators while destroying the statue. The writer describes the situation in these lines:

‘We want peace,’ the procession chanted the slogan.

‘I want it, too,’ he spoke to his heart.

‘We want emancipation.’ They again chanted the slogan.

‘I also want emancipation from the slavery,’ he whispered to his heart.

‘We want a radical change.’ Having said so, the procession broke the defense circle. (194)

Seeing Nepal’s legendary heroes like Bal Bhadra, Dhasrath Chand, Gangalal, Balkrishna Sam, Laxmi Prasad Devkota and B. P. Koirala, all in demonstrators is a positive way to illustrate the conflict between two forces which are assigned to confront physically and

mentally; and is also a strong hope for peace and stability. The presentation of such national heroes from the security person's perspective is narrated:

Despite having been equipped with arms, how weak and helpless he is at the moment! Even without arms, how powerful and bold these people are! It is only now did he realize why the peaceful movement is so powerful and why the guns are bound to get down to their knees in front of the people. While looking at the procession, he got filled with emotions. How wonderful! What a miracle! (193)

Even if the security personnel have arms and ammunition, but they feel feeble to face the national heroes and their strong determination that they are ready to sacrifice for change but they would never give up.

The narration of the story has used the middle voice as a proper way of representing realistically bitter experience of the security officer who is deputed to shoot the demonstrators to protect the age old statue, which is an affirmation and would prescribe an "insufficiently modulated rhetoric" (LaCapra 26) or any other forms of discourse. As the story writer, Shah - a police officer deputed to protect the age old monarchical regime and to shoot the demonstrators, is able narrate the events objectively not othering the agitated people, but has better measured the depth of human emotion to each other. With the help of narrating the security person's mentality, narrator has brought a fore the facts of approaching the historical events of change for peace and stability:

Frantic and astounded, he kept watching the mammoth procession of the peace loving people. They were moving ahead for their emancipation. 'Long Live Democracy', they were chanting the slogan on the top of their voice. He proudly raised his hand in the air gesturing 'Long Live Democracy'. As the

procession moved further ahead from there, he looked at the center of the square where he did not even a solitary trace of the statue that had been standing there for ages. A cloud of dust was floating about where the statue had stood before. (Shaha 194)

But, if the language of revenge and sacrifice is used, writing literary works about trauma would turn into redemptive, fetishistic narrative, which, sooner or later embarks hostility and enmity. But in this context, he is successful to maintain a balance keeping both forces in similar ways.

These stories written on the background of the second People's Movement show trauma in the life of ordinary people. "The Meek" shows how rural community is badly traumatized due to the Maoist insurgency and how innocent people are destined to lose their life in the movement. Similarly, "The Eyewitness" shows the consequences of the movement on ordinary people with the use of a metaphor – a red tomato, and "The Constable and the Statue" shows how much security personnel are sensitive and optimistic to political change in the country. In general, they bear the witness of the movement and present testimony of the facts, which would help one understand the historical development in the country. Besides, while bearing witness to the movement and presenting the testimony of the traumatic facts, these writers as neutral observers of the event seem to have used LaCapra's middle voice. They have neither supported nor othered any groups of the Movement, which would subsequently help establish peace and stability in the society.

5.3 Social and Symbolic Representation of Trauma and Appeal for Peace in Narendra Raj Paudel, Nirab and Shrestha

There are three stories in this book which are symbolic and indirectly suggest different analytical perspectives of traumatic experiences whether of rebels or of

security force during the Maoist insurgency or emergency period. These stories, on the one hand, show the real pictures of the war and its bitter consequences upon the ordinary people, but, on the other hand, they show the underlying bitter experience. With the help of symbols like statues, pillars, shadow etc. the story writers have tried to bring the traumatic pains endured either by the security forces or the rebels themselves. Such people whether in security force or in rebel are compelled to live in very miserable condition. However, these grief-stricken people are seen anticipating for peace and better life in future in spite of several troubles they were facing in their life. These stories mainly focus on the trauma and their anticipation for peace and stability in society.

Stories written about the impact of the Maoist insurgency focus not only on the manifestation of physical reality, but also on traumatic experience by narrating the stories of displacement and death. The characters in the stories like “The Bullet”, “The Ambush” and “Monologues” express extreme situations and can’t recover from the traumatic shocks. They are in LaCapra’s acting out condition and unable to come to working through condition. Many belonging to the detritus of the society died, even if they remained alive, they lost the pace of life and normalcy as well as human sensibility. The victims of the Maoist insurgency could hardly bear the suffering of long strikes imposed in the name of people’s rights. But these grief-stricken people still hope for better life in future in spite of several troubles they had to face in their life. The abovementioned stories deal with the trauma of such people.

In this context, three stories Narendra Raj Paudel’s “The Bullet”, Nirab’s “The Ambush” and Shrestha’s “Monologues” have shown the bitter trauma of the conflict victims during the Maoist insurgency. These writers are seen as neutral observers of

the conflict and have narrated the whole of the incidents objectively not aligning nor othering any groups.

The stories written about the pain and suffering of the common people living in the rural areas focus on traumatic experience of such people. Trauma seen in these stories is what the people experience as “unsupportable, horrifying, or overwhelming” (Humburger 4). As a part of social fact, it “points to some underlying social experience which can be sociologically reflected” (4). While narrativising the traumatic experiences in the stories, Paudel, Nirab and Shrestha confine themselves to narrativization of the difficulties caused by the insurgency and their traumatic impact on ordinary citizens without lapsing into a language of feud whereas Pahadi is seen to fail in achieving authentic balance between victimization and villainization (a case of social or cultural trauma).

“The Bullet”, a story written on the background of the Maoist insurgency when it was in climax and the citizenry’s life was at stake and they could not express their agony and fear to the responsible authority being afraid of being arrested and detained at the police or rebel’s custody, shows how an innocent retired school teacher, while trying to bear responsibility of a dutiful citizen, undergoes with several traumatic situations and nearly loses his life. By narrativizing the traumatic condition of an ordinary person, Paudel, as a neutral observer of the conflict has brought the truthful fact neither aligning with one nor othering another group, but has objectively presented the event, which would subsequently help establish peace and stability in society.

The main focus of the story is the trauma of the principal character, Ramnath, a retired school teacher and a seeker of “pleasure and happiness, success and peace in life” (Paudel, “The Bullet” 89) and a gun’s bullet that “fell onto the floor with a ping

after striking the wall” (87). He could not be sure whether it was shot by the security force or the rebels, but mistakenly it strikes the wall of his house with “a small mark on the stone of the wall” (87). The story is written on the pretext of the Maoist insurgency, and people were on the edge of a sword from both fighting groups. Even a small events would terrorize them and get mentally disturbed. After finding the bullet, how this family undergoes with traumatic situation, the narrator mentions:

All of sudden, he began to tremble and exude the beads of sweats, called his wife, and began to tell her the whole story. His wife with grandchild on her lap flinched at the sight of the bullet and her husband’s words and began to shudder. Dumbfounded by the unexpected disaster befallen them, the spouse remained panic-stricken for a long time. (88)

The event shocks and leaves him dumbfounded with the upcoming disaster. He could hardly be sure what actually happened to him. His wife also remains panic-stricken and wouldn’t be able to decide what they should do. He could hardly bear the pain and behaves abnormally. Seeing his condition, his wife finally decides to share it to the neighbours and the issue goes to the local tea stall where different people impart different arguments.

In every event mentioned in the story, the narrator has been found disturbed mentally. Behind social, political, economic and historical issues, one major issue in social trauma for starting or keeping alive the conflict is “the protection and maintenance of the large-group identity” (Volkan 18). Traumatic experience found in this story is understood as a fixed, unrepresentable and timeless photographic negative stored in an unlocatable place of the brain, but it has the ability to interrupt consciousness and maintains the ability to be transferred to non-traumatized individuals and groups. It means traumatic experience is repetitious, timeless and

unspeakable. Ramnath is in such condition that he is totally disturbed and his consciousness is interrupted with “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic event” (Caruth, “Trauma and Experience” 11). The response to the bullet often occurs in delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance which makes him lose the balance in himself which has been narrated:

More than this, had it been an ordinary shooting, it would not have struck, breaking the stone of the wall. The bullet must have been fired from the gun. In conclusion, somebody else must have fired at him in an attempt to take his life. While speculating and analyzing the situation, he startled. All of a sudden, he began to tremble and exude the beads of sweats, called his wife, and began to tell her the whole story. His wife with a grandchild on her lap flinched at the sight of the bullet and her husband’s words and began to shudder.

Dumbfounded by the unexpected disaster befallen them, the spouse remained panic-stricken for a long time. (Paudel, “The Bullet” 88)

The bullet has created a big mental torture in his mind and he is not in the condition to soothe himself, rather after sharing his tension to his wife, the problem exacerbates to both of them.

How the narrator describes his mentality when he is crossing the stream is his imbalanced mind which allows him to lose life that would help him get away from “different sorts of pains, terrors and troubles and the only way to peace” (93). His psychic numbing to experience what is happening is what Laura S. Brown has quoted as “symptoms of heightened physiological arousal: hyper vigilance and distracted mind” (100). In such condition, Ramnath wouldn’t be in normal condition either physically or mentally. His mind was occupied with a terror that any time anything

might happen to him and his family. The narrator has pointed out his distracted mind like this:

That would be the only way to peace. He turned more cowardly at the thoughts of the police station on his way ahead. It seemed as if pitch darkness trailed in front of him. His ears were ringing, deafening him. He was somehow stepping across the ford, all of a sudden he ceased to step on the bottom of the stream. He began to drift on the flood. (Paudel "The Bullet" 93)

Drowning in the flooded stream can be seen as an outcome of his disturbed mind. Becoming ready to die by getting drowned in the river shows his "psychiatric syndrome that arises out of the experience of trauma" (Brown 100) which he is unable to control himself from the possible danger.

Another important aspect of his traumatic condition is observing the situation from his own psychology which leads him to problem after problem. His weakness of determining what he has found is not illegal and immoral. Depending on other's suggestions what he should do and what not is "an untraceable border between self-hood and the somatic" (Bloom 117). Seeing police outside the police station, following the kharidar's advice, not going to his own student's hotel where he often visits when he goes to the headquarter to have a cup of tea are some instances of his mentality of which Harold Bloom says, "the body is part of the Not-Me and not part of the external world" (117). This move is a somatic demand on his psyche which is very different from the external excitation that Ramnath is going through. The following extract shows how his mentality is getting worse and he is losing his control over his mind:

As he went to bed after food as usual, his mind lost in such extraneous things and it began to flounder more restlessly and edgily. Having discovered the

sensitive things like bullet, the epitome of killings, violence and devastation, he was supposed to report to the government about it. He should have handed it over. Since the government is the only authority that can keep, fire or destroy the bullet, he made a mistake by burying the bullet that had come across in the morning. He regarded himself as the accomplice of crime of lying the government and failing to carry out the duty of handing it over.

Overwhelmed by such funny logic and whimsical thoughts, his tension and physical restlessness kept mounting almost all night. (Paudel, "The Bullet" 89)

Not getting any solution is a way to getting into more severe mental problem from which Ramnath is seen going into. As an epitome of destruction and legal prosecution, the bullet has devastated his life.

In contrast, Paudel, as a neutral observer of the conflict happening in the country that time, has not used the prose of otherness alienating any groups involved in the conflict – here the security force and the rebel, rather the story has become successful in better measuring the depth of human emotion of an innocent old man who is badly sandwiched in the terror of both groups. But while bringing the bitter truth, the writer has not used the language of revenge and sacrifice to exacerbate the emotion of either sides, so writing this about trauma has not been turned into redemptive, fetishistic narrative, which, sooner or later would embark hostility and enmity among the people who were directly or indirectly affected by the insurgency. Pandey is in the opinion that the politics of language of violence should not be chauvinistic; and the writers of trauma should employ the language which should neither reduce the specificity of the experience nor should nullify the possibilities of co-existence. The language of the stories written about such conflicts should rather develop a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial feuds, hatred;

not the notion of separation and partition (136). Following this idea in this story would ultimately help establish a peaceful and co-existing society that would ultimately help the affected people forget their feuds and come together holding hands to hands to live in the same society. How the narrator has maintained a balance to bring out the trauma of an innocent old man can be seen from the extract given below:

A thought occurred to his mind that he should go back and meet the government lawyer and disclose the whole matter. Again the kharidar's words crossed his mind. Then he walked slowly ahead with the help of a walking stick by the slippery path through the hedges of sajobans and cactus bushes. He had not noticed anything of these earlier. On his way he came across the snakes slithering around the slippery track flanked with gande and bansho grass. As drizzle had softened the red earth, he felt slippery wherever he stepped. The green hedges of sajobans trees swaying in the air and the pungent smell floating in the air from the cactus in full blossom gave him a splitting headache. (Paudel, "The Bullet" 92)

The language used in the story as mentioned in the above extract shows that the writer/narrator has not demonized any group for creating trauma in the mind of the main character whose mentality helps each reader to accept the traumatic facts of the insurgency.

The story writer, while dramatizing the subtle insight, human emotion hidden in darkness, rural setting, the emptiness, vanity and passion of ordinary people living in hinterlands, is able to portray a bitter traumatic picture of an innocent man crippled in the turmoil of the Maoist insurgency with such details which, on the one hand, help one understand how much terrific and traumatized the insurgency was. But on the other hand, as a neutral observer of the conflict, he has delineated this traumatic fact

so objectively not villainizing any groups, which would definitely help establish a peaceful and co-existing society which, once, had been veiled under terror.

The narratives written about war and conflict often deal with the pain and suffering of common people and their trauma. The conflict which has once “targeted against the whole group” (Hamburger et al. v) would bring some fundamental changes by helping many writers write narratives as “psychopathological symptoms in both victims and perpetrators” (11) and by “copying through narrativization and recounting” (Hamburger 8) different aspects of the conflict neutrally not aligning to either groups. The painful traumatic experience of violence which has “afflicted whole social environments” (8) and endured by the victims during the Movement can be an instrument and purpose of the narration. The stories written about such atrocities, on the other hand, might become very “inauthentic because they tried to reduce the violence to the language of feud” (Das and Nandi 189), which would not help establish peace in disturbed society. On the other hand, portraying the events from one side and villainizing another “may affect whole societies through loss of social and political confidence” (Hamburger et al v) and would only be a means of expanding violence even in future. Sooner or later conflict may erupt and elapse in the whole community and there would never be peace for a long time in the society.

Nirab’s “The Ambush” talks about the condition in which people find themselves helpless and physically and mentally trapped in emotion that would lead them realize that their life is going to be ended and how much it should be important. During the Maoist insurgency explosive ammunitions were rampant everywhere and many innocent citizens, if not militants from both security force and rebels, used to be victims and died in different events while handling or sometimes playing with the objects thrown here and there. It becomes terribly important for those who mistakenly

handle such objects and know that they are explosive and realize that they are about to die soon. This story is about to show the trauma of this situation. Still, Nirab is able to bring this fact keeping both sides of conflict away from being blamed, rather the story centralizes only on the protagonist's traumatic condition.

The trauma shown in this story is psychological as it has shown the mentality of the war victim who stepping on the so-called bomb is sure that he is going to die soon and how his mind flows like a stream of thoughts. The images of his "traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise" (Caruth, "Recapturing the Past" 151) as he feels, "the rivers have gone dry; the mountains are sobbing; the sky is hanging itself in shame; the country is writhing about in agony" (Nirab 205). His mentality and traumatic situation would be apparent when he happens to notice, "The wind has ceased to move; peace has died; and defense mechanism has disappeared" (205), and such sensations are "springing from the surface of the body" (Bloom 117). He finds himself being "drawn into this terror-stricken eddy" (Nirab 203). He finds his surrounding very different and disturbing. From his self to the national policies, he becomes ready to rebel for change. When he finds the situation rather beyond the control and he could not control his emotion when remembers the condition is flipping out which can be seen from this extract:

I love this country. I love its soil. The mountains are delicately cool, the river are sacred, but the violence, the blood. . . ? It is always the meek, who have been the scapegoats of this. Why should they always be ground down by the vicious injustice? His rage mounted to the height of the Dharahara tower. He clenched his fist. It occurred to him if possible, he would right now annihilate all these corrupt policies and all forms of oppression. But? (205)

In such condition, the narrator is seen psychologically excited with the ongoing chaotic situation prevailing in the country. His anger rose to the height of the Dharahara tower, the highest tower in the country towards the ongoing policies and policymakers. But there doesn't seem to be any limitation of his rage.

In contrast, finding himself terrified unnecessarily, he becomes even angrier with himself. He seems to be in trauma. When a person is in trauma, he would be “outside the range of human experience” (Brown 100) and would not be able to decide what should be done or not. When the protagonist finds the bundle is not a bomb but garbage of ‘use and throw’ items, he loses his control over his mind. Sometimes he laughs and sometimes he gets angry abruptly. The narrator describes his mentality:

Idiot . . . how coward . . . how fear-stricken man's life is! How terrifying! On seeing these items, he laughed and got angry at the same time. He laughed because the citizens of this country are losing their identity and originality to the extent of changing the definition: as a coward or bestial creature. He was angry because while these days the people are bound to be blanketed in the veil of death even at the slightest inkling of apprehension in such a terror-stricken situation why do some idiots exhibit their luxurious deluxe couch in the public place instead of confining it within their own bedrooms? After this terror-struck questions, he looked at these abandoned items, but now he could not decide – should he bawl at the users of these items or the word called ‘bomb’ itself? (Nirab 206)

Rescuing from the terror-struck situation in which he was sure that he would not be any more and remain away from all family responsibility as an elder brother, a lover and a dutiful son, he could trust himself with the situation he is undergoing with and

happens to burst out all his anger, hypocrite and frustration, which seem to be quite normal to all. When the terror-struck mind gets relief unexpectedly, his “vim and vigor that had mounted to the height of the Dharahara tower crumbled down on the ground. His ever-mounting blood pressure seemed to drop all at once” (206). The protagonist feels very irritated with himself, the surrounding and the people who are responsible for such events.

The trauma of about one hour shown in the life of an ordinary person – representative of all common people living in the contemporary society “requires integration both for the sake of testimony and for the sake of cure” (Laub, “Bearing Witness” 70) as he is seen to have been overcoming the problem instead of instigating it further with the positive perspectives of the writer who seems to be a neutral observer of the Maoist insurgency, which can be justified in this extract:

The dreadful and heinous sights of all places from Mechi to Mahakali zones began reeling over his eyes. The people are dead all around; the teachers are burnt at stake as a punishment for their teaching of ABC of honesty. It has been an abominable sin for the innocent children to hop around carrying a bagful of sweet dreams of making for a new nation. They are bound to shatter into pieces by the remorseless explosion of the uncertain future. The rivers have gone dry; the mountains are sobbing; the sky is hanging itself in shame; the country is writhing about in agony. The wind has ceased to move; peace has died; and defense mechanism has disappeared. There are other countless pieces of news about this and that.... (Nirab 205)

The narrator is not biased to any fighting groups who had detonated the bomb while presenting the mentality of the civil servant who has been trapped in the so-called ambush which is about to diminish all his dreams and aspirations.

The narrator, neither supporting nor opposing any groups has rather written as a middle voice of what LaCapra says, “. . . the use of middle voice would require modulation of proximity and distance, empathy and irony with respect to different objects of investigation” (30). The traumatic situations like finding bombs, landmines, arsons etc. can be seen as described by “ruling out all forms of objectivity and objectification” (30), which would definitely help those who have gone through such situation that time, understand the traumatic events which might otherwise have taken many innocent people’s lives at once. In presenting such sensitive issue, the narrator is neutral to both sides which can be justified from the following extract:

I am bound to die one day, why should I get scared of this petty bomb? It is only the person, who struggles for life, deserves to remain alive. So, why should I die being encumbered by the terror? This thought reminded him of Buddha; he remembered Amar Singh Thapa; he remembered Bhakti Thapa; he remembered Prithvi Narayan Shah; he remembered his parents; he remembered his siblings; he remembered his beloved; he remembered his colleagues; he remembered his country. Then he thought about himself. What he came to realize was that he had to show his bravery if he had to survive.

(Nirab 206)

One can argue that the story like this would not aggravate any tension among the affected groups, rather help settle peace and reconciliation in the politically and culturally disturbed society.

“The Ambush” a testimony of an event during the People’s War witnessed by the writer shows an innocent person’s trauma in the conflict in which many innocent people have lost their lives because of such objects which Nirab has delineated in the story as a possible event. The events like this have been an outlet of the explosion of

emotions and irritation of an individual; which seems to be true. But, while delineating such terrific event in the form of post-conflict narrative, Nirab has not blamed anyone whether the rebels or the security force responsible for this. He has neither shown the security force nor the rebel as agents for creating such terror in the society, but such things normally happened during that time. So, this story has not intensified the emotion of the effected people, rather has tried to soothe the tension and make a balance for peace and stability in society.

Shrestha's "Monologues" is a testimony of trauma of an inhabitant of a village which abuts onto the district headquarter. The inhabitant is a villager who can be from any villages of any districts of the country because during the Maoist insurgency or emergency period, whole of the country was under the threat from both the rebels and security forces. The inhabitant is a representative of all victims of extreme cruelty. Both sides which involved in creating psychological horror in the villagers were supposed to protect the lives and liberty as well as to bring changes in the lives of ordinary people who, later, turned to be equally cruel, inhuman and perform barbarous deeds as they are heartless individuals. Shrestha's narrative has done a justice by presenting the event with the help of the middle voice; as a neutral observer he has neither aligned with the security force nor has he villainized the rebel. The story is written objectively, which would help all affected people to accept the narrative from heart.

The beginning of the story along with these lines traces the traumatic fact one can feel in the rural areas which would be afar from the control of the state's security forces and there would be the reign of rebels. Shrestha has outlined the beginning:

Everything is in shambles. Everything lies in ruins. Everything is in a state of disarray.

The justice is in deep slumber.

The law is defunct.

The administration is eroding away every day.

The defense is busy in its own security. That is to say, the security is desperate to secure itself. The system is busy banging its own drum and dancing itself.

The security has nearly come to an end. In addition, social conscience – tormented by fear, terror and death fear is defaced beyond recognition.

(Shrestha, “Monologue”135)

The village is seen reeling under such circumstances. Then a typical a rural family consisting an old father, husband and wife, their married son, daughter-in-law and two unmarried daughter is living their life in the abovementioned situation. Either security or rebel force in a group of twelve come and drag the fifty-seven year old man, father out of the house. In front of his family, they “spat out the shower of abuses at him and slapped on his face with a demonic force. No sooner had his fragile body collapsed onto the floor; one of them did boot him in the waist” (137). He remains asking them who actually they are whether security or rebel, they don’t reply him, only charge him being spied against them. Blindfolding him, they take him to their shelter or barrack and start torturing him brutally physically and mentally. He does not know why he is being tortured and who they are. He could not be sure to himself:

Who is the protector? Who is the murderer?

Which one gives security and which one cleanses the humanity? Every one of them has the selfsame nature and character. Their faces and the savagery reflected in their faces are alike.

Prose and poetry are alike.

The drama and the essay are alike.

The story and the poem are alike.

The man and the demon are alike. (139)

The instances clearly indicate how much he is traumatized not only from the threats of the militants but also from the phenomenal situations surrounded him. He then realizes how helpless and piteous a villager should be in front of monstrous beings who have forgotten the importance of humanity.

This story is taken as a testimony of a historical event – the Maoist insurgency and its impact upon the villagers sandwiched between two fighting forces – the security persons and the Maoist rebels. The trauma seen in one villager is the trauma of all Nepali villagers whose life was crippled between these two forces. This conflict has become the part of history and history which is always written about the victorious events ignores the trauma of other people – here it is written about an innocent villager of what she says “their history is repression” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 15). Along with illustrating the glorious events happened in past, history must bring those traumatic events which badly impacted the contemporary society and many ordinary people became victims of “overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events” (11). Trauma can become a source of narratives and this story has brought the trauma of ordinary people; which can unfold the historical facts of how ordinary people were treated by the militants. In this context, the narrator describes:

We apparently hear the banging on the door mounting and bowling it filled with wrath. Yet we have failed to pluck courage to go downstairs and open the door. In the meantime, white with fear and doubts, the daughters, the sister-in-law and the wife are standing close to us. Fear is written all over their faces.

(Shrestha, “Monologue” 137)

The condition of the narrator and his family is very pathetic and helpless which would signify how common people were forced to live in their own house in terror and trauma. The narrator further delineates the situation:

Like a trained hunting dog, they present themselves in a murderous and life-threatening way. For my being late to open the door, they enter the house hurling abuses, thrashing the character of my dead mother.

They are about 12 in number. The armed figures in combat dresses. They are in thorough preparation for hunting. It is difficult to recognize them. It is difficult to distinguish one from the other because the combats have been the favorite dresses of all hunters. (137)

The militants, neither being presented as security force or the rebels have left an undeletable mark on the readers how in those days, ordinary people who were stateless or away from all the functions of the state were being treated and became victims of war about whom nothing would be written.

There must be the description of trauma and other painful events happened in ordinary people's lives along with the events of developments and glories; which the story has shown clearly narrating the pain and suffering of the villager to whom "it is the heinous moment when the grotesque, fiendish, unfeeling bestial rough time has turned anarchic and is hounding the whole lot" (136). History, she says, "may speak through the individual or through community, which may not be the site of its disruption, but the locus of a wisdom of all its own" (Caruth, "Recapturing the Past" 156). Like history, post-conflict narrative should be a mixture of both rise and fall, good and bad, and victory and defeat. It should bring out all the facts happened in past as an "attempt to bring the experience to light" (*Unclaimed* 22). Trauma and history,

in this way, can have a certain kind of link which directly or indirectly unfold many hidden facts.

The trauma of the narrator is worth mentioning to elicit the facts of the war that not only remains a testimony of the victims and victimized but also of historical archives. Bringing trauma through the historical events as the conflict “progressed and the casualty figures increased” (Einsiedel et al.22) in different parts of the nation, everyone has been a “slave to his own inhuman obsession that he is the only one who deserves to live and all deserve death” (Shrestha 135). The traumatic events would not make the victims able to face the challenges, and they remain in trauma even more as she states, “. . .while the images of traumatic reenactment remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control” (Caruth, “Recapturing the Past”151). They have become so desperate to enslave themselves that “the wounded humanity is floundering here and there with piercing shriek” (Shrestha, “Monologues” 136). The justice for them “leaves such victims and their families feeling raw” (Thapa 59) as it is getting late they remain “prone to sentimentality” (Adhikari, *The Bullet to* 153), which is sure to be allured to be victimized sooner or later because everyone was prone to be dictated and penetrated at any time.

Traumatic event the villager is facing in the story is, therefore, a strange sort of an event because once it is understood as a belated consequence of a missed encounter, trauma itself must be understood in terms of absence, that is, the absence of something that failed to become located in time or place rather than as a positive presence. Caruth further states, “The flashback, it seems, provides a form of recall that survives at the cost of willed memory or of the very continuity of conscious

thought” (“Recapturing the Past” 152). This absence at the heart of the traumatic event lends it its constitutive ghostly quality. The villager’s trauma can be seen here:

It is difficult to say where I am. However, wherever I am, the place is replete with a reek of anti-humanity. The air is heavy with a stale odor of primitive barbarism. The loud hiccups of torture and heart-reading cry of torment are awake here like the evil-spirits of the fiends.

Everything is devoid of its virtue. Everything is losing its natural quality.

The stream is not like a stream but a drain. It has been difficult to distinguish between the character of a tiger and that of a cat. It is almost impossible to distinguish between a guard dog and a predatory fox. Likewise at the moment all gunmen look almost identical. (Shrestha, “Monologue” 139)

But as paradoxical as it may appear, this “absence” does not necessarily produce purely negative consequences. It still makes a balance to produce the impression of the reader upon the ongoing situation the villager is going through. It is trauma that opens up a breach in experience and understanding, it also opens up new possibilities for experience and new modes of understanding the people’s sentiment. In this context, the narrator reveals:

Clutching me by the neck, one of them pressed hard and asked – ‘Hey you mother.... Aren’t Mr. So and so?’

He was taking my own name. I had to say ‘Yes I am.?’ As they were assured that I was the person they were searching for, one of them spat out the shower of abuses at me and slapped on my face with a demonic force. No sooner had my fragile body collapsed onto the floor; one of them did boot me in the waist.

(137)

Trauma definitely opens up the possibility of learning the historical facts that would remain hidden from the readers for a long time. If trauma is written objectively without aligning with any warring groups, it would be a testimony forever.

One important fact the story has made the reader notice that it is written by neither supporting the Maoists and nor villainizing the security forces; both are presented to be responsible to create the traumatic situation in the rural areas across the country. While reading the story as a post-conflict narrative one knows the character and the events are presented with antagonistic feeling to others or othering both sides because both are responsible for this situation:

The remorse-ridden face of my father, who was once locked in a pen for all day for his failure to pay off twenty rupees to the debtor within the given deadline, his tears dried on the brink of the eyes and his head hanging with shame spring to my mind. I am a voiceless and innocent Nepali who inherits the poverty and disgrace of my meek father encumbered with disgraceful torments of the barbaric feudal class. What harm have I done to anybody else for which I am being subject to such ordeal? Do I not have rights to live a free and dignified life with my family in my own native place? I have the ceaseless array of questions inside me, but not a single answer comes from anywhere else and from anybody else. (141)

By presenting the agony and trauma of an ordinary person representing all the victims of that time, the writer is seen as a neutral observer and the story has been written with Dominick LaCapra's concept of middle voice - an affirmation, which would prescribe an "insufficiently modulated rhetoric" (26) and can be taken as a way to make a balance between both forces while writing the story about the conflict. In doing so, the storyteller remains neutral observer of the conflict.

These stories written to bring out the traumatic experiences during the insurgency when it was in climax or when the emergency period was going on and all provisions of human right were at stake, clearly show how much traumatized ordinary people like the soldier and the villager have been while bearing their responsibility whether to the nation or to the family. They suffer physically and mentally without any serious crimes or mistakes they have committed. They have been written bringing both sides sentiments in a balance and both sides can accept it as a testimony of their struggle to bring change in the country; which would subsequently help establish peace and stability in society.

Paudel, Nirab and Shrestha who have written the stories about the insurgency and its trauma on ordinary citizens, have brought these traumatic experiences keeping both forces away from being blamed and responsible for creating the terror in war-affected Nepali society. The civil servant, the villager and the retired school teacher are in trauma badly not because of any particular militant group, but of the ongoing situation which had badly disturbed all citizenry. So, they have tried their best to soothe the tension.

The restraint shown by them in keeping to just a psychological impact due to the disruption in people's everyday life makes the strikes and closures look morally monstrous. A compelling moral appeal as available in both writers augurs well for peace.

5.4 Trauma at Home or Abroad and Quest for Peace in Amod Bhattarai and Bimal

There are some stories which are about those people who suffer from the unknown terror not only in the native land but also abroad. On the one hand, the country was reeling over the series of violent activities leaving many people in trauma, on the other hand, people who had left the country because of the insurgency

and living in abroad had undergone with severe trauma either in detainee centers or in refugee camps, shanties as war-prisoners from violence, conflicts and revolution. Such people whether in security force or in rebel are compelled to live in very miserable condition. But these grief-stricken people still anticipated for better life in future in spite of several troubles they were facing in their life. Both stories – Bimal’s “The Lankuri Tree Will Blossom Again” and Amod Bhattarai’s “I Heard the Cock Crow” have better shown the trauma of such people who are seen anticipating peace in their life. While narrativising the trauma, both are successful in achieving authentic balance between victimization and villainization (a case of social or cultural trauma) and they confine themselves to narrativization of the difficulties caused by the insurgency and their traumatic impact on ordinary citizens without lapsing into a language of feud.

In this context, Amod Bhattarai’s “I Heard the Cock Crow” and Bimal’s “The Lankuri Tree Will Blossom Again”, though both are about the internal and external conflict in which people at home or abroad are in severe trauma due to mistrust, violence and similar uprising, have brought a fore the painful testimony of those who are involved in maintaining peace and order in the disturbed societies. Amod Bhattarai in “I Heard the Cock Crow”, on the one hand, has brought trauma in international scenario being a neutral narrator of the conflict, which would not partialize any force, but Bimal in “The Lankuri Tree Will Blossom Again” while showing the bitter facts of the Maoist insurgency, has nicely maintained the balance and taken one force’s side by othering another one, which would help annihilate the tension.

Amod Bhattarai’s “I Heard the Cock Crow”, a post-conflict narrative of universal suffering that millions of people all over the world have been undergoing

with. While showing the traumatic experience of the war prisoners being held captives in detainee camps by enemies, the narrator tries to fill those responsible people with great human values like kind, love, sympathy and compassion which would change the embolden heart into soft one; and gradually human suffering could be relieved and life may return to normalcy. Subsequently, it appeals for peace and reconciliation, which each country wishes to obtain at any condition.

The story has brought the bitter traumatic facts normally one knows from different forms of media. People like Sammi, Anna, Jurina and her brother who don't know whereabouts of their parents are very prevalent in the warring countries like Afganistan, Syria, Ajarbaizan and Ukrane. They are all traumatized as "not a single person was there who was not crippled by pain, sickness, remorse, and resentment" ("I Heard" 200). People narrated in the story don't seem in normal condition because their mentality "stricken with the war and ethnic riots, gout body and unnaturally blackened countenance looked terribly painful" (196) and they could nor remain free from terror because "fear shadowed them every time" (197). The victims might have stroke of any kinds of amnesia o "intrusive hallucinations, dreams, flashbacks, thoughts or behaviors" (Caruth "Trauma and Experience ..." 4), from which they seem to be trying to come out and proceed for normal life.

Remaining for about one and a half month in prison by lying, scattering, eating, and sleeping in the same room, besides using it as toilet, their life has been crippled and the place was "closed in by the inhuman situation nearing the mouth of death" (Bhattarai, "I Heard" 198) every time. Among them, there are some old people who are too weak to hold themselves, "ingenuous children and guileless young people full of vim and vigor" (198). But their mentality has been "engulfed with the flames of fire and frantic emotion" (197), which would not be cured easily until they would

be able to meet their kin and kith, besides bringing the culprit under the grip of law and order. But the story ends with a hope of normalcy as the representatives of the humanitarian organization are able to convince the authority of the detainee camp.

The narrator in the story describes the situation:

It occurred to us straight away that human being is not actually a bad creature.

Every one happens to have the sense of love, affection, trust, respect. . . . I was more than delighted to see the detention authorities' hearts melt. To me it occurred that powerful leaders come and go, the empires rise and fall, the ideologies appear and disappear – they are all transient and do not last long. But love, compassion, mutual trust and empathy are the real and long lasting tenets and values. They are true and permanent human values! The permanent truth!! (201)

With self-determination along with positive thinking and love for other fellow beings, one can change doubt into trust, hatred into love and evils into empathy; the story is able to set an example to solve not only national but international issue with the responsible authority of the delegates for their work from the heart.

It is always good for all the writers to internalize the reality of traumatizing events “a form of recall” (Caruth, “Recapturing the Past” 152) which would always make the victims emotional and panicked and experiences along with the “denials of the perpetrators and their conservative supporters, the denials that insist on looking to the future and forgetting the past” (Alexander 7). Bhattarai narrates the possible events happening in the international scenarios in such a way that all readers can identify with the situation, which is presented objectively neither supporting one nor opposing another group, which is described by the narrator keeping himself away from both warring groups:

Each and every one there had a problem of one kind or the other. Not a single person was there who was not crippled by pain, sickness, remorse and resentment. Having seen such a tragic sight, I felt as if I was suffering from a war-disease myself. Her eyes welled with tears, Aswi was busy recording the details of the captives while Martin was trying in vain hard to control himself and gulping back the unbearable pain, caressing the tormented victims. (“I Heard” 200-1)

To make the literary writing readable for all kinds of readers for a long time, it is always important that the voices for commemorations, remembrance of the disappearances and the torments, and of denunciation of the repressors are some factors which would remain very landmarks for recovery. The story writer has noticed this fact and presented the reality which has played a very important role in soothing the tension; not exacerbating the tension between among fighting groups.

Another important message the story is able to deliver to the readers is that remaining in conflict and intensifying the tension, the problem would not be solved, rather it escalates for a long time leaving all the affected people in trauma. The story ends with these lines which show that the country which name is not mentioned in the story would return to normalcy and peace would prevail everywhere:

By the time we submitted our final report on the detention centers of both sides to the Geneva-based Secretariat, the news of the provision of two square meals a day and enough water for the captives had come out. Afterwards, it was learnt that they were also allowed a certain time to amble around in the premises of detention centers. They were also moved to a better and more spacious location.

The reports of guns and bombs had also stopped by the time we returned to our respective countries. We had firm belief that within a few weeks, the captives would be released from the detention centers. Far in the distance, I heard a cock crow. (“I Heard” 201)

One can assume that the captives would feel relief and the ethnically disturbed country would prevail peace and solidarity among all prisoners and they would live again holding hands each other like brothers and sisters.

“I Heard the Cock Crow” has been written about the agony of the war-prisoners in a foreign country from the eyes of a Nepali citizen working for an internationally recognized humanitarian organization to work for their betterment. The trauma of the prisoners is beyond the toleration for ordinary people, but, the way the narrator has sought for the solution and hope for their release from the detainee camps can be taken as a sign to solve the problems happening in any parts of the world including Nepal because our country was also reeling over series of traumatic situations as mentioned in the story. The ending embarks a possibility for all war-torn societies.

In “The Lankuri Tree Will Blossom Again” written on the background of the People’s War and its grim consequences, Bimal as a neutral observer of the insurgency, has portrayed a horrific story of trauma of a grief-stricken family living in a remote village terribly gripped by both warring forces. The life of hinterlands’ people is badly impacted by the conflict and has intensified the “the experience of trauma that would seem to consist in an inherent latency within the experience itself” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 17). While narrativizing the events, he seems to have presented them objectively neither aligning one nor villainizing another. The catastrophe shown in the story is “the most striking feature of traumatic recollection” (“Recapturing the Past” 151) that would require

“integration, both for the sake of testimony and for the sake of cure” (153), thus, would have a message to the warring groups to come to peace and reconciliation.

Bimal, being a neutral observer of the conflict enraged by both warring groups – the Maoists and the Nepal Army, is successful to bring out the facts of war-stricken villages of hinterlands how people were badly gripped by the war – “the bullet has no conscience, brother. Whoever it is – the Army or the Maoist – it is we Nepali who die” (60). Kaude, a representative of all war-ridden villages of then Nepal is overwhelmed by observing the chaotic and terroristic condition of his village as Bimal observes his condition here:

He saw himself how the whirring of security force’s helicopter, hovering in the sky made the panic-stricken villagers stampede and hid in desperation. He also saw who and at what time sticks the Maoist pamphlets on the trunk of the lankuri and flees, and how anybody charged with spying has to prepare himself to get shot in the name of ‘operation’ . . . The same terror has also struck Kaude. He wishes to speak but cannot muster courage to do so.

Anybody may fall prey to the bullet the Maoists or that of the security force, if caught talking about the political matters openly, who? (61)

There was no political, social and cultural activity which would help them share their feelings to each other; rather everyone seems to have been expecting him or her falling prey any time sooner or later. Kaude and his grief-stricken family are shown traumatized having lost Cheuki as a consequence of the terroristic political repression from which each one living in such village would fall prey.

The story is not written by showing the condition of supporting one and villainizing another. Characters are not presented living in hatred with antagonistic feeling to others or othering the opposite group. In such condition, there would be

some chance for one to live in peace; which may ultimately help all live in mutual solidarity and reconciliation. The narrator presents the situation neutrally like this, “Anybody may fall prey to the bullet of the Maoists or that of the security force, if caught talking about the political matters openly, who knows?” (61). The writer is seen as a neutral observer keeping himself aloof from both warring groups. Here, in this story, LaCapra’s concept of middle voice can be taken as way to make a balance while writing the story about the conflict.

Middle voice designates the types of action where the agent remains enveloped in the released actions. Talking about middle voice, LaCapra delineates that it harbors an affirmative or even utopian dimension and it would be desirable to explicate that dimension as clearly and fully as possible in order to facilitate informed attempts to evaluate it and submit it critically to reality testing without which affirmation would become empty and utopianism is tantamount to wishful thinking (32). Middle voice in writing about war and conflict should neither be written or understood from victims’ point of view nor from perpetrators’, but it should be narrated objectively not supporting either side, rather neutrally; which Bimal has used properly and written consequences of the war keeping the political ideology away from the main characters Kaude and his family. One character is presented saying this, “the bullet has no conscience, brother. Whoever it is – the army or the Maoist – it is we Nepalis who die” (Bimal 60). It shows how the writer has presented the situation neutrally keeping himself aloof from both forces.

The story has brought the traumatic facts of conflict-hit people. Kaude and his parents after losing Cheuki have been shown in unspeakable pain as “the explicit admission of the inadequacy of language in a given case” (Stampfl 15). While defining unspeakable as a trope – a particular kind of linguistic expression, Stampfl says that the unspeakable is only

a phase in the “process of traumatization” (16), which they can hardly expose to anyone.

Here, how a mother expresses the pain of separating from her daughter:

Cheuki, my poor daughter, once abducted by the Maoists, both characters and life are said to be burnt at the stake. Better than this, if you do washing up in others' houses, to a large extent it is only the characters that may be stained.

At least, I don't have to lose my only daughter, always full of life. How come you won't come back to your mother's bosom one day? (Bimal 62)

Along with pain of separation, the mother has clearly anticipated for better future when all the conflicts and tensions will residue. She would, one day, be able to meet her daughter in spite of the fact that she has wandered facing many ups and downs as an outcome of the conflict.

The tree lankuri is a symbol to describe the traumatic situation of the family and also embedded peace that would probably be endorsed in the conflict-hit villages. As the story opens with destruction and vandalizing the society, “the branches of the lankuri breaking and piling on the earth” (64) connote how the condition of lankuri looks all mutilated Nepali killed in the clash. But towards the end of the story, the same tree has been shown as a symbol of renovation and chances of reconciliation in the war-rift society when Kaude's father tries to console his grief-stricken son from all traumatic situations:

My son, we are not the tree of lankuri.... Nobody understand its whispering voice, but there is power in our voice, in our arms, in our brain, and in our heart. We can prevent our destruction ourselves. To speak the truth, at the moment, you see this raging storm has made this lankuri like a corpse, breaking its branches. One day you will see that with its inner power some sprouts will grow from its vary stump. New buds and then the flowers in full

blossom with their fragrance will be casting a spell all around. It does not suit for the youth like you to lose the heart. (65)

Kaude's father, an old man always bedridden once he fell of the roof while thatching the Jimwal's shed, has forecast that good time would come and everything would return to normal condition.

Bimal has not used the prose of otherness on the other alienating either group, it has become successful in better measuring the depth of human emotion to each other. But, if the language of revenge and sacrifice had been used, writing literary works about trauma would have turned into redemptive, fetishistic narrative, which, sooner or later would embark hostility and enmity. The writer has chosen the neutral language – not the prose of otherness to present the situation:

The sky began to thunder. A gust of wind enters the room, blows off burning splinter of pine-wood all at once. Whoof...whoof...whoof! His limping father's whooping cough does not cease. Kaude feels pity on him. He comes out to see his father. Standing by the door as he is about to call him, Kaude stops to hear his mother's voice. He feels curious to hear the talks between the old couple. The old man is speaking and groaning as well – 'Hey dear! You just gave him a bowl of popcorn to the grown up lad, will it subside his hunger? The poor lad has returned home after so many days.' (Bimal 64)

The narrator has not used the language of otherness to present the traumatic condition of the characters. Pandey is of the opinion that the politics of language of violence should not be chauvinistic; and the writers of trauma should employ the language which should neither reduce the specificity of the experience nor should nullify the possibilities of co-existence. It should rather develop a humanistic, critical consciousness in pacifying immemorial feuds, hatred; not the notion of separation and

partition (136). Following this idea in this story would ultimately help establish a peaceful and co-existing society even after the blood-shedding rebellion in Nepali society which had been anticipating peace and solidarity to come out from the years' long hostility.

As a witness to unfolding of the insurgency, Bimal has brought the facts of the Maoist insurgency objectively by presenting Kaude, a victim of the conflict who neither aligns nor opposes any fighting groups that have ruined the peaceful atmosphere of his village and still hopes for best. His story "The Lankuri Tree will Blossom Again", along with showing very traumatic condition of a family, which has been written to describe how people in the hinterlands of Nepal had been badly crippled by the conflict, is successful in bringing out the actual facts of the insurgency neither aligning nor villainizing to any fighting groups, rather neutrally with a message of peace and reconciliation. Similarly, Bhattarai's story is able to appeal all stakeholders to realize how much civil war in the country is harmful for all inmates who share the same community. Bhattarai's language seems to appeal the reader to internalize the feelings and emotions of the prisoners who detain in the concentration camps gyrated by the militants. Post-conflict narratives like Bimal's and Bhattarai's always help the readers accept the aims of the writers.

5.5 Traumatized People and Their Anticipation for Peace in Mohan Raj Sharma, Regmi and Menyangbo

The stories in this book also talk about the horror and terror created by the insurgency and other similar events that badly affected ordinary people who were poor and from the low class depending on their daily wages. A decade-long insurgency brought to the fore the cases of *bandas* (closures) and strikes lasting for days and weeks, even months. There was no transportation, and most of the time,

there used to be curfews that would cripple the life of such people. As demonstrations and strikes continued, the levels of people, that managed to earn a living in and around the streets by hawking things, transporting loads, selling goods on the pavements or squares, experienced a situation of unrelenting, extreme horror. In such condition, people remained even starved to death. Most of them could not remain unaffected by this terror. During the time, people no longer felt safety, justice, order and peace in their lives. But these grief-stricken people still anticipated for better life in future in spite of several troubles they were facing in their life which some Nepali writers have tried to narrativize in the form of stories.

The political movements and other cultural upheavals have left many victims in miserable condition, which would be a good source of writing narratives for them. Their painful traumatic experience of violence can be an instrument and purpose of the narration. The stories written about such atrocities, in contrast, might become very worthless because they tend to reduce the violence to the language of enmity, which would not help establish a good society and portraying the events from one side and villainizing another would only be a means of escalating of the full the scales of violence.

In this context, three stories – Mohan Raj Sharma’s “A Ra and a Mo”, Regmi’s “The Curfew” and Menyangbo’s “The Unknown Martyr”, though written about the curfew, demonstration and strikes (*closures*) imposed by various political parties and government, emphasize on the need to live in peace and harmony in politically and culturally disturbed societies. The writers have narrativized the traumatic life of poor and ordinary people very objectively neither aligning nor opposing any conflicting forces. Regmi, as a neutral witness of horrific past event that once happened in Nepalgunj, succeeds in making an authentic balance in the narrativization which makes the undertone of peace and harmony sound genuine. On

the other hand, both Sharma and Menyangbo, weaving the plot on the periphery of the Second People's Movement for the restoration of multiparty democracy, have brought a fore the very traumatic situation of working class people and their anticipation for peace and harmony in the country.

“A Ra and a Mo”, written on the background of the climax of the second People’s Movement (2006) in which all strata of people had actively participated to throw the autocratic rule and “to restore democracy” (Sharma, “A Ra” 41) in the country, shows how ordinary people like hawkers, prostitutes, laborers etc. are badly affected by the movement imposed by the political parties. Mo, a hawker, explains his situation, “I was penniless and was crushed by the rage of hunger” (40). Demonstrations, strikes, curfews, and *bandhas* (closures) for days, weeks, or even months have crippled their life of which Caruth says, “an impossible history within them” (“Trauma and Experience”5). While presenting the traumatized life of such ordinary people as Mo says, “My whole body still prickles as the thought of those terrible days” (Sharma, “A Ra” 40), the story teller has shown both sides of the conflict objectively or has not villainized any groups; which would help maintain peace and harmony in society and the situation would not worsen any more. The main impact of this movement is on the life of the poor and low class people, the destitute and the wage earners who, remaining hungry for a long time, remain starved to death as if “confined both geographically and in terms of fatalities” (Einsiedel et al. 19). But still they anticipate for peace and harmonious society and become ready to sacrifice themselves for a good cause by “opening up the possibility of what could be called a truly historical transmission” (Caruth, “Recapturing the Past”156), that would help construct solidarity among all forgetting all their past foes and feuds.

The story is about an important event of history which is always written about glorious events ignoring the trauma of ordinary people of what Caruth states, “Their history is repression” (*Unclaimed* 14). History should bring the traumatic events that happened in the life of ordinary people who become the victims of “overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events” (11). In this context, the story is successful in bringing a fore the real experience of ordinary people like Ra and Mo who contribute to bring change in the country as Mo is quoted saying, “there has come an opportunity to live forever, by dying a single death instead of dying a slow death every day A great carnival full of pleasure and joy is going on there” (Sharma, “A Ra” 37). There must be the description of trauma and other painful events happened in ordinary people’s lives along with the events of developments and glories to be true testimony of real victims of a good cause.

The testimony Ra presents about her past life is very traumatic and encroaching her all the time which made her homeless and orphan and compelled her to live this kind of life which the contemporary society eyes negatively. But still the Maoist insurgency became a good cause of her painful life, but the narrator has maintained a balanced neutrality not aligning with any fighting groups, which she herself reminisces:

Ra is hurled five years back to her life. It is the selfshame *chautari* where she had lain senseless five years ago. Her youngest brother had brought a round object lying astray on the way. As he was entering the house playing with it, the object exploded in his hand with the ear-shattering sound. The explosion shattered his body into tiny pieces which lay scattered all over the floor. Her mother, who was busy stirring the food with a ladle, had collapsed with a gush of blood in one of the corners of the house. The roofs had been blown to dust.

Ra had got the message of the annihilation of her whole family. No sooner had she been told of it than it seemed to her that the whole surroundings were reeling. She thought her whole world had collapsed. (37-8)

The narrator while narrativizing the events has not blamed who actually had kept the bomb there. However, in this explosion, her parents also died, and she remained alone in the world. One can imagine how her life became painful to live alone in the society which was instigated by the insurgency and people were crippled by both fighting forces.

The testimony of his past life presented by Mo is not better than Ra which indicates the narrator has maintained a balance while narrativizing both these characters' traumatic past life. They were badly traumatized and their traumatic experience, "in its sheer extremity, shatters or disables the victims' cognitive and perpetual capacities" (Bell 9). He neither supports nor opposes any warring groups, rather keeps himself aloof from any kind of alignment. How he maintains this balance can be seen from the narration of Mo's past traumatic life as he is "smothered in the dark clouds of despair" (36) and poverty and the lack of opportunity made him loiter here and there. Upon the consequence of Ra's horrific past life which impacts his life, Mo narrates:

As you began prostituting yourself for the sake of my life, a storm began to surging up inside me. The very pangs drove me into the inn. I tilted to liquor and young girls. Far from forgetting the inner pains, I happened to throw myself in the embraces of anybody and everybody and I earned this AIDS. Then I happened to pass it on to you. Ra, the liquor seller would chivvy me into using the condoms. However, intoxication and youthful passion had me turn my deaf ear to his warning. (40)

Both are inflicted with AIDS and they are sure to die. For them the traumatic events are belated consequence of a missed encounter, therefore, must be understood in terms of absence, that is, the absence of something that failed to become located in time or place rather than as a positive presence. Caruth states, “The flashback, it seems, provides a form of recall that survives at the cost of willed memory or of the very continuity of conscious thought” (“Recapturing the Past” 152). Both Ra and Mo are surviving “on the return to origins in memory and on the return of the repressed” (*Unclaimed* 13) as well as the return of the deeds they are contributing for the nation. The testimony presented above shows a balance in narrativizing the events.

Both traumatized characters are seen sharing their painful memory to each other and they “see and relive the insistent reality of the past” (“Recapturing the Past” 152). Such memories always remain overwhelming experiences which should be integrated with existing mental schemes and transmitted to narrative language. To come out of such “reappearance of traumatic memories in the form of flashbacks, reenactments, and so on” (Van der Kolk and Hart 176), one has to narrate the memories, to look back at what happened, which he or she “has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his personality” (176). Narrating such painful stories, both Ra and Mo have brought relief to the condition and while unfolding the plot, it has induced their pain, so they are able to face the challenges awaiting ahead of them.

The story shows these principal characters in trauma because Ra has lost all her family members in a bomb explosion and Mo has to live a pathetic life due to the insurgency. Both characters are presented as victims of the insurgency, but both are determined to sacrifice for the betterment of the nation. The writer has pointed neither rebels nor security force responsible for their difficult life, and it is written not

supporting either side, but with the help of middle voice “the appropriate way to write trauma” (LaCapra 19) propagated by LaCapra. The writer has brought out the historical facts of ten years long insurgency that killed more than fifteen thousand lives and many others displaced as well as millions have badly been injured mentally and physically. While bringing out the facts, the writer seems very conscious to describe the events not supporting any sides. The writer is not seen igniting any group’s emotion to conflict.

The story also brings out the 2006 people’s movement to root out the two hundred thirty years old monarchy, an important historical fact that caused a U turn in Nepali politics. Here, the writer is able to bring out the fact how the supporters of monarchy and of democracy fought for democracy and how they sacrificed their lives with a cause of emancipation from all kinds of bonds. Ra and Mo, victims of AIDS due to hunger caused by strikes show how they took up this perilous path due to this political impasse:

- Oh Ra, Don’t remind me of those days of band. I still feel giddy. As the papers stopped being circulated due to vehicular strike, I was left penniless and was crushed by the rage of hunger. My whole body still prickles at the thought of those terrible days.
- Mo, as you were laid up with a week-long starvation, I found everything out of my control. Don’t ask me where I did not wander and whatever I did not try to do, but in vain. Then what could I do? That drove me to prostitution. Then I don’t know when that disease called AIDS entered my body and nested there. Later I passed it on to you. (Sharma, “A Ra” 40)

People like Mo and Ra, when they found the life with AIDS meaningless to continue, noticed the people’s movement a good cause to sacrifice themselves even not caring

how difficult it would be. They express their dismay like this, “Our lifelong foe AIDS has already hurled into the mouth of death. Let’s defeat the foe from the mouth of death itself. This disease has been eroding our lives every day. After all, we are wasting away. Instead, if we give up our lives for the revolution ...” (42). The fatal disease they suffered from the compulsion and the sacrifice they are going to do for the good cause seem the writer is able to bring out the historical facts not provoking either side but letting the readers know the truth and show how people came together for the good cause – revolution even not caring their precious lives with the prospect of bright future.

This is how an important historical fact of Nepal has been presented. History is believed to have been written about the great people ignoring the contribution of the commoners who have also sacrificed for the nation. Unlike this, this story does not talk about great people rather shows two commoners Mo and Ra, victims of the insurgency and AIDS have happily sacrificed for an attempt to restore democracy in the nation. The writer talks about their situation:

Mo and Ra break the baton, snatching them from the demons’ grip and they make way shoving and pushing them. The demons stand frantic, go white with fear and step aside as they see simmering crowd moving with a dauntless commitment, hopping, and dancing, clamoring and chanting slogan. (44)

These commoners have made their dauntless effort success and the autocrats have to turn back; and they step onto the land of democracy, people start chanting the slogans of victory and joy along with the contribution of Mo and Ra:

Down with

Autocracy !

Long live

Democracy !

Long live

Mo and Ra!

Long live

Nepalese People! (45)

The narrator seems to be a witness and presenting his testimony as an account of historical fact that helps establish a record in the form of literary writing. He seems to be witnessing how common people at one place not even caring for the safety of their lives have brought a great historical change in the country.

The story “A Ra and a Mo” is written bringing out the painful traumatic historical facts as testimony; which have dilapidated many common people’s lives. But while bringing out the facts, the writer has presented all the facts not aligning to either sides, but with middle voice, which would help both victims and perpetrators know what had happened to them and how they have undergone with such painful traumatic past which would perpetually help both fighting groups come together to the path of peace and reconciliation.

Regmi’s “The Curfew”, written on the periphery of Hindu-Muslim’s riot of Nepalgunj, shows about how ordinary people like a porter and a tonga-driver live miserably as the curfew is deployed after the riot. People cannot come out of their houses as their daily activities are stopped and they have even hand-mouth problems. There would not be enmity between Hindus and Muslims who would be living as neighbors for a long time participating in each other’s cultural and social activities or festivals, but the political and religious leaders are doing their best to make them divide and fight to each other as much as they can. But still, these people, understanding such people’s ill-intention and realizing their traumatized condition,

come to the point of reconciliation. The writer, as a neutral witness of such catastrophe, has presented the situation objectively neither supporting nor opposing any fighting groups – showing the issue and forwarding the solution that would help establish peace and harmony in the disturbed society.

The story as a testimony of what the witness (the narrator) has witnessed in the riot as “a completed statement and totalizable account of the events” (Felman, “Education and Crisis” 16), is “a repeated suffering of the event” (Caruth, “Trauma and Experience” 10); which has caused trauma in the survivors who are “perplexed by the terrifyingly literal nightmares” (*Unclaimed* 1). People no longer can come out of their houses because “while the Hindus are terrified in the Muslim-dominated community, likewise the Muslims are equally terrified in the Hindu-dominated community” (Regmi 72). Their life is crippled within the four walls of their houses being afraid, but they are still hoping and anticipating peace and harmony once the curfew is lifted. Allarakha is quoted as saying, “As the curfew is lifted, we should attempt to demolish the walls within men. We should tell all the people that the division between ‘temple’ and ‘mosque’ is a betrayal. It is fatal weapon against humanity” (76-77). Confronting with catastrophe, opening up the possibility of reconciliation of enmity, and sharing testimony from each other’s “wisdom all its own” (Caruth, “Recapturing the Past” 156), the traumatic situation in the story has created “new ways of gaining access to a historical catastrophe of those who attempt to witness it from afar” (155). Writing about such catastrophic events, the writer as a neutral witness has tried his best to present the testimony to appease the tension among the victims, which can be seen from these lines:

In both communities, the provocation is escalated in the group which is in the majority. The temples of Hindus and mosques of Muslims have turned to be

the places to hold discussions and make strategies. The administration can ban everything but cannot ban the people from visiting temples and mosques. As soon as the first day curfew was lifted, the people began to throng the premises of temples and mosques, then the administration was bound to clamp the curfew again. Ramdin, the porter and Allarakha, the tonga-driver are entrapped in that every curfew. (Regmi 72)

The narrator, in this way presenting his testimony, has maintained a balance a neutral point of view in narrativizing the trauma of these two people who belong to different communities and the narrator neither supports nor opposes any communities, which subsequently helps sustain peace and stability in the conflict-hit society as mentioned in the story.

The story is able to raise the “suppressed, repressed, or uneasily accommodated voices of the victims” (LaCapra 44). Allarakha and Ramdin who are confined within the four walls of their houses due to curfew for more than three days. Their voices, “inhabited by the impossibility of telling, and therefore, silence about the truth commonly prevail” (Laub, “Bearing Witness” 64), finally came out in the form of testimony “as a privileged contemporary mode of transmission and communication” (Felman, “Education and Crisis” 17) that would help recover “in the interest of working through a past that had severely divided groups and caused damages to victims” (LaCapra 44). The meeting point between these two rival communities comes only when they are able to work through their intrigued traumatic past, as Ramdin asks question to Allarakha, “What is happening to our town? Did any riot break out there like this ever before? Did anybody else ever die in such violence? Was the city ever ablaze like this” (Regmi 74)? These questions indicate of traumatic past of common people. Working through such terrific past, both are able to “have

some chance of being effective ritually and politically in creating both a livable society and a national collectivity” (LaCapra 44). Memorializing the painful past, one would be able to relive from his suppressed condition in a new atmosphere with an anticipation of better and solitary life.

The storyteller, presenting a communal riot in a particular place where dozens of common people had lost their lives; many houses, shops, and other property were looted; and murder, rape, arson etc. were common, as a neutral witness “the vehicle of an occurrence” (Felman, “Education and Crisis” 14), has outlined the testimony reclaiming “his position as a witness” (Laub, “Bearing Witness” 70) very objectively neither supporting nor villainizing any groups. It is the middle voice propagated by LaCapra, that would “indeed harbor an affirmative or even utopian dimension” (LaCapra 31-32) in establishing a discourse of peace and harmony in the warring community. It can be seen as a movement away from “a binary, sacrificial logic and any totalizing belief that a regulative ideal may be fully realized toward a problematic condition of social emergency or crisis marked by the generalization of trauma as a trope” (31). The trauma of the two members of rival communities is seen to be realized as they talk, “Allarakha, people at this moment are divided into the temple and the mosque. A high wall is erected in the minds of people. This wall needs to be demolished” (Regmi 75). Both try to come out of this situation making the city an epitome of brotherhood and mutual respect. Allarakha says, “Here, the Hindus would participate in the festivals of Eid and Ramadan and we (Muslim) also participate in the Dashain, Tihar and Holi” (75). Regmi bringing out the communal riot shows the actual situation of Nepali societies in which two rival religious groups live together in peace and harmony.

The trauma shown in the life of both characters – representatives of two rival religious groups “requires integration both for the sake of testimony and for the sake of cure” (Laub, “Bearing Witness” 70) as both are seen to be solving the problems instead of being pursued by their religious leaders to instigate the tension. Here, the writer has neither supported nor opposed any groups rather written as a middle voice of what LaCapra states, “. . . the use of middle voice would require modulation of proximity and distance, empathy and irony with respect to different objects of investigation” (30). The traumatic situations like “Violence, killings and devastations are rampant” (Regmi 75) are described by “ruling out all forms of objectivity and objectification” (LaCapra 30), which would help the readers understand the actual condition of the events like this, and would not aggravate any tension among the warring groups, rather help settle peace and reconciliation in the politically and culturally disturbed society. The narrator presents Ramdin saying these lines which indicate the better possibilities of peace and reconciliation in the riot-hit society:

Allarakha, these political leaders are dividing us in the name of religion and sects, either preaching sermons in temples or mosques. They divided the man in us by erecting the invisible walls. As we get divided, our political leaders collect our divided votes. Our intolerance leads to violence, killings and riots. This devours us as well, Allarakha. This riot preys on the destitute and meek like us. In such riots, it is the poor who suffer the loss. The people who were killed in the violence, be it Kabadiya or Ramdev Chidimar, they were the poor one. It is neither Maulana Hassar nor the Hindu leaders who suffer any sort of loss. But, aren't the helpless and weak dying from want of medicines and the poor labourers starving to death due to lack of work? (Regmi 76)

In narrativizing the trauma keeping both groups' sentiment in balance would help both accept the testimony and realize their past (mis)deeds and come to the state of peace and reconciliation from their long lasting feud.

“The Curfew” a testimony of a historical event is able to bear witness of trauma and suffering of the people in the name of religion in the city. As a neutral observer, the storyteller has balancedly presented the situation of curfew on the common people not of any glorious events and great people. He has even not supported or opposed any one rather has presented all the situation with the help of middle voice. As the story ends, one can feel that the city would return to normalcy sooner or later anticipating peace and harmony in such disturbed society.

Menyangbo's “The Unknown Martyr”, is written about crippled life of very ordinary people on the background of a seven-day long strike imposed by a political party that claims to work for poor people and curfew deployed by the government to maintain law and order for common people in the society. In such condition, the life of common people like wage earners, porters, and cart pullers would be traumatic and such people would have hand to mouth problem. Once unable to bear this trauma any more, they would not care about the warnings of either strikes or curfews and come out to face the challenges. Menyangbo has brought very traumatic condition of such people objectively neither supporting nor opposing any groups; which would help appease the tension, never aggravate it anymore and ultimately helps settle peace and harmony in society.

This story has enabled people to bear witness of the event which cannot be known or remained unknown and unheard for a long time. It can be taken as a response to very unexpected or overwhelming violent event of what Cathy Caruth states, “repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivors”

(*Unclaimed* 5), which cannot be grasped totally but they recur in different forms i.e. repeated flashbacks, amnesia, latency, nightmares and other conditions. As in traumatic condition “With his desperate and listless face, Bir Bahadur arrived in his room empty as if struck by an unexpected thunderbolt” (Menyangbo 208), he does not have work and food for seven days and he is “terror-stricken” (208). He is seen as “invaded by the defeatist mentality” (208) and due to hunger he “pressed his empty stomach hard with both of his hands” (208). The pain he is undergoing with is unbearable and unspeakable of what the writer narrates, “He suffers the selfsame pangs of hunger. He had been surviving on a gulp of water and a piece of bread, and on top of this, everything had finished that morning” (210). The empty room, where he has been staying for more than twenty years as a cart puller in this town, is narrated like this, “That was the room where he had undergone his traumatic days” (210); which would rather torment him time and again of what Caruth states, “the silence of its mute repetition of suffering” (*Unclaimed* 9). He has undergone with such unbearable pangs and finally decides to leave it in search of better place.

Writing only about glorious events, history would become partial, and many people would not accept it from heart. But this story has illustrated the trauma of ordinary people like cart puller. History, Caruth states, “may speak through the individual or through community, which may not be the site of its disruption, but the locus of a wisdom of all its own” (“Recapturing the Past”156). It should be a mixture of both rise and fall, good and bad, and victory and defeat which the narrator while narrativizing the painful life of very ordinary cart puller Bir Bahadur, has delineated like this:

He has noticed much difference between this modern city and the city that existed here twenty years ago. Many ever so tall buildings with electronic lifts

have appeared and many colourful grand departmental stores are constructed around the squares. Not a solitary change has occurred in Bir Bahadur's life. The only conspicuous difference is that he has grown old. Earlier he looked robust. These days he has turned terribly feeble.

His cart has not undergone any significant change – the selfsame shape and colour for ages. He has no idea who calls such shut downs and why. As such he is unknown about the earlier, countless public strikes. He heard the people say – Today is also Nepal *banda*. (Menyangbo 209)

It should bring out all the facts happened in past as an “attempt to bring the experience to light” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 22). In this context, the writer is successful to bring the historical fact which would appease the tension of both victims and perpetrators and converting such traumatic facts into narrative would help the story to be verbalized and communicated, “to be integrated into one's own and others' knowledge of the past” (“Recapturing the Past” 153). It should accept the pain that has affected the victims. By so doing the concerned people would feel relief.

The use of metairony can be helpful with the help of language of presenting traumatic events. The language should not be disturbing, but should capture, “specificity of the partition violence from the perspective of morality, interrogates the ideological underpinning of the state-centred national histories” (Pandey 132). The standard of such morality can emphasize human relations with the attribute of being human among victims and perpetrators. It should not be the prose of otherness while narrativizing the historical events in the form of fiction.

Menyangbo, being aware of this fact, has used such language which would not help anyone aggravate the situation which can be seen in these lines, “He is used to living, being smothered by such frequent strikes and he has survived many Nepal

bandas. Since the strike of this time is slightly different from the usual one, some sort of apprehension keeps surging up inside him” (208). Traumatic experience should be sublime and this aesthetic category of what Ray says, “Sublime pertains to artistic and cultural representations of traumatic damage” (135). Trauma seen in the literary writing should be a means of curing and healing the pain not recurring the past which would rather torment the people. It should not be “a means of overcoming instability, contaminated as it is with the ideological contours of the dominant culture to which the trauma belongs” (Pandey 137). It should pacify the warring groups with their feuds conduce to forgiveness which would sooner or later help fighting groups come to the way of peaceful co-existence.

The characterization of Bir Bahadur is not disturbing to anyone who would be in the conflict as seen in the story because the writer has not shown anyone guilty of his death. Neither political party nor security force is responsible for the situation Bir Bahadur is going through, which is described here:

Bir Bahadur was bewildered, but did not make his mind to stop the cart. He had to desert that city at any cost. He kept pushing the cart hard, his cart – the only means of his livelihood.

‘Hey! What are you waiting for, shoot that bastard... .’

Along with that command, two bullets went right through his chest, bang... ban For a moment, he did not know that he had received the bullets, but as blood began to gushing out from his chest, and then he was dead sure that he was shot. But, why was he shot?

Till he breathed his last, he was all stunned to get shot through no fault of his own. (Menyangbo 210-11)

To justify this, LaCapra states, “Writing is a medium for expressing a content, and its ideal goal is to be transparent to content or an open window on the past” (3). In a sense, language is all to show the truth without playing with anyone’s sentiment.

Middle voice propagated by LaCapra, “the appropriate way to write trauma” (19) is manifested in presenting the situation in the story “to substitute the instance of discourse for the instance of reality (or of the referent)” (19). In writing the story, the writer does not seem to individualize himself or patronizing any personality. The story can be seen as “adapted to the recounting of past event without any intervention by the speaker and which is consequently deprived of present and future” (20).

Middle voice undermines the necessity of third person referential statement, direct quotations and summaries or paraphrases. It should be understood as a way of presenting “insufficiently differentiated treatment” (26) of victims and perpetrators. The narrator in the story is seen using it as everything is presented neutrally neither aligning nor opposing any groups. This can be proved from this extract:

In search of a morsel of food, he was deserting one city and making a journey into another one. As he was about to reach the square, a harsh voice issuing from about two hundred meters far struck his ears – ‘Hey! Who is that pushing cart? Don’t you know there is a curfew today? Hey! Stop, you bastard!’

In that ever so big a city, he was the only ordinary commoner who was pushing his cart and moving with his heavy steps. (Menyangbo 210)

LaCapra’s middle voice has worked here bringing out the trauma of Bir Bahadur and it has worked through the his traumatic situation, which signifies how long a hungry man can tolerate his pain without thinking whose strike it was and who were imposing a curfew on the very common denizen who would not have anything for their stomach. It is to undercut or undo systematically any distinction between victims and

perpetrators. It would accord with a scene beneath or beyond ethical considerations and calling for representation.

Writing this way, readers find the events touching their heart and they would easily accept the emotion shown in the story. Bir Bahadur's traumatic situation does not seem others', but it rather provides many perspectives which allow readers to meditate on the variety of human responses to shock. It depicts "many avenues for expressing the voices of trauma through the survivor's narrative" (Vickroy 130). The situation Bir Bahadur is facing in the story "keeps surging up inside him" (Menyangbo 209). It would be very problematic to him to go ahead with it, however, he cannot escape it and ultimately goes out with his cart packing up whatever property he has earned, which "he could claim as his property" (210). He comes out in search of "a morsel of food, he was deserting one city and making a journey into another" (210), which "opens up the possibility of what could be called a truly historical transmission" (Caruth, "Recapturing the Past" 158), and also a new possibility of life with new expectation and goal. It might lead him to place of peace and reconciliation. His martyrdom at the end of the story and lifting up the curfew would open up "the possibility of integration" (154) of all factors which have disintegrated the society and hope for new morning for all people like Bir Bahadur.

"The Unknown Martyr", in short, delineating the possibility of integration of fractured parts of our society which has been going on with various dissimilarities causing a big gap among many groups of people, has shown trauma of a cart puller and anticipates for peace and harmony in the society subsequently. Menyangbo is able to picturize the very true image of working class people without aligning or opposing any conflicting groups. LaCapra's middle voice can appropriately be seen in bringing out the facts. Similarly, "A Ra and a Mo", having brought out the political movement

and its impacts upon the working class people and how their life has been traumatized leaving their family members dead and living a perilous life in the society, is also successful in bringing the facts of Nepali society during the movement with a message of introducing new change which would help establish a peaceful society. But, on the other hand, “The Curfew”, written on the background of religious riot that once happened in Nepalgunj and crippled life of very ordinary people, shows their consciousness of the foundation which they belong; and also a determination to bring a new morning in the life of such people. On the whole, all these three stories, though written on different backgrounds, open up a new possibility peace and harmony in the warring societies.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Peace and Solidarity through Narratives

By showing multifaceted experiences of trauma of various conflict affected people along with their initiation of embedded peace and solidarity in some selected post-conflict Nepali narratives, the dissertation has brought the facts that these narratives have broadly talked about the trauma of all those people who were badly traumatized during the conflict time. Either it is psychological or cultural trauma, each of the characters as victimized has been narrativized with his or her painful memory to share with. It has also shown that these narratives are the medium of representing the decade-long conflict in literary form. Besides, it has presented that some narratives, though written about trauma of the victims, have othered one fighting group by aggravating the tension, whereas other narratives have been written objectively keeping both sides in balance not aligning to any group which would subsequently help maintain peace and solidarity in society.

The dissertation has intended to understand the trauma theory proposed by Caruth, Alexander, LaCapra, Laub, Felman and Pandey and view the experiences of the ten-year long Maoist insurgency as represented in the selected literature through its lens. The insurgency was indeed an overwhelming, sudden and catastrophic experience as people were not physically equipped to deal with the all prevalent turbulence and not mentally capable to handle the impact of the violence and the migration from their own places. There existed the trauma of the orphaned, the separated, the abandoned, the betrayed, the ruined and the destitute. Still these war-affected people were found anticipating peace and stability in their places, so they could return with a hope of reconciliation. The study concentrated on the literary texts with the presence of physical and mental trauma, either a dominating one or an

influential one to study trauma. The purpose was to analyze the psychological impact of the insurgency on psyche through the trauma theory of abovementioned theorists and their initiation for peace and stability in their lives. The literary trauma theory aids one's understanding of the trauma of the victims of this Himalayan nation-state. It widens the understanding of the trauma and pain the people have gone through and their longingness for peace.

A historical event can best be understood not only through its realistic accounts but also through its literary representations. The selected literature in the present study *Stories of Conflict and War* helps one scrutinize the political, social and psychological features of the ten-year long Maoist insurgency. The texts not only reproduced the widespread violence and hatred, but also delved deep into the traumatic impact on the individual psyche and embedded peace remained inherently in them. The fictional representations have provided a nuanced first/third person account of people's experiences and perspectives that helped understand the situation thoroughly. The selected texts provided one with well-articulated and meaningful testimonies of the rigorous past. It gave words to the unexpressed.

The dissertation has aimed to explore the various ways in which writers have presented the insurgency experience in the selected literature. The literature on insurgency deals with the theme by either keeping the insurgency in the center of the narrative or by keeping it in backdrop and developing an account which is an impact of the event. The selected fictional representations of the insurgency have aimed to grasp the enormity of this human tragedy. Through the study, it has been observed that stories written immediately after the insurgency provides a detailed description of the violence and the impact on the lives of the characters.

The dissertation contemplates at analyzing the themes of hatred, violence, abuse, uprootedness and longingness for peace and stability presented in these stories. No insurgency has ever taken place in history without violence. The dissertation has revealed that the violence was not random, scattered or occasional but the routine and wide spread violence was an initiation for change to bring in the country. It argues that the barbaric violence was not normal but surpassed the limits of violent imagination in the lives of the war-affected people either the victims or the perpetrators. Hilly and mountainous areas had become the immediate target of the ongoing violence aimed at so-called elite group who fled to the capital and headquarters of the districts to survive, but unfortunately and miserably caught in the process and remained waiting for peace and stability so they could return to their places. The study points out that these instances do not reflect normal but unimaginable violence. The selected literary narratives have given voice and space to this matrix of sectarian violence

This dissertation has presented several instances of the application of the trauma theory on the characters of the selected literature. The trauma of Nirmaya in “The Silence of Violence” is better understood with the concept of the suddenness of the unfolding of the event presented by Caruth. The theory states that trauma producing event is always experienced with suddenness as the mind is not prepared for it. Nirmaya had never thought and imagined that her husband would remain disappeared for a long time and she would badly be raped as this. The sudden realization of the meaning of the situation just made her rush to the state of bitter shock and trauma. It was after spending a long time in the rehabilitation center for treatment that she understood what had happened to her. The moment she spends in her senselessness either at her home or rehabilitation was really beyond one’s

imagination. The lack of mourning and crying and the walking out of the house and village elaborate on her numbing due to the experience. Along with the numbing, there is also an opening, as suggested by Caruth, as her determination to survive became stronger hoping for a new morning in her life.

In “The Bullet”, the flashbacks and re-visiting of past experiences of Ramnath, the main character and victim of the insurgency point towards the trauma ingrained in his mind. His recall of the traumatic memories of the bullet that pierced his wall served as a kind of testimony to oneself and produced a cathartic impact on him. His attempt to solve the issue meeting different personalities in the district headquarter and his drowning into the stream lead to a purgation of the traumatic emotions which cleared her mind. His struggles and redemption for purgation refer to Caruth’s concept of trauma being a call for survival. The trauma she experienced compelled her to be more committed to fight the battles of life for the initiation of better one.

Caruth claims that trauma is unspeakable. Bhunte in “A Pair of Innocent Eyes” is not in the condition of speaking the event in which his father was butchered brutally and his mother was gang raped by the insurgents. The brutality of his parents’ murder made him remained silent for a long time. He was the eye witness of this brutality and its consequences, but was not in the condition to share it to anyone. It was a bitter shock or trauma in his psyche. His inability to communicate his fears and insecurities to anyone who visited his home proposed and hints at his trauma. Narrating the testimony of the insurgency in this way is a way of sidelining or antagonizing the rebels, which ultimately help them not to accept this narrative as their testimony and finally aggravates the situation.

The dissertation points out that the literary trauma theory of Caruth, LaCapra, Alexander and others provides one with solutions to trauma. They suggest that

speaking out the traumatic experience has a calming effect on the individual. The calm emerges due to the process of catharsis that takes place during the expression of the experience. An individual can be healed of trauma only through giving a reaction to the event or through talking things out. The act would vent out the suppressed emotions associated with the experience and would calm the individual. In the same way, while narrativizing the testimony, if the narrator narrates the events being a neutral witness as in LaCapra's middle voice, both victims and the perpetrator can accept the testimony as their own. In "The Curfew" both Ramadin and Allarakha have accepted the riot ravaged by Hindu-Muslim conflict in Nepalganj and have tried their best to sooth themselves. They have not blamed each other's creed. The narrator as a middle voice has narrated whole of the testimony as a neutral witness not aligning with either group. The festivals of both characters are important occasions for them as the mourning serves as a means of venting their pent up emotions. The pains in their lives find a way of release which produces a cathartic effect that calms the mind.

The ten years long insurgency of the country was an event that destroyed and ruptured the fabric of the society, devastated the self-respect of an individual and shattered the honor of women. For the wounded and the witness, this event was too intricate to resolve. The event was life altering; shattering emotionally, bizarre psychologically and ruinous economically. Even after decades it continues to sting the soul across the nation. The study directed to explore the impact of this heinous event on the psyche of the survivors through selected literature. Relimai in "The Motherly Doctor" has gone with the similar situation. Her good deeds for the villagers have brought a misfortune in her family life. Her husband and children leave her alone in the village. Her initiation to serve the villagers from their illness and illiteracy ultimately leaves her in trauma and subsequently to her demise.

Sita in the story “Sitas-23” faced identity crisis and was unable to adjust to the new traumatic condition as her husband disappears, and her children go away from her grip. She spends almost of all her time visiting the police station reporting about her condition. Whole story is her painful testimony to the police inspector, the narrator of the story. Sita being a mother of two children had a frail personality which had turned into her social identity seeking justice from NGOs, INGOs and other government offices, but remained empty handed. When she narrates what she lost and had to depend on other people for support. The cultural trauma propounded by Jeffery Alexander has been a prevalent issue for the condition of Sita and many other like Sitas.

“The Tears of Terror” is also a record of the reactions of people in a critical situation when an innocent citizen Chet dai was badly manhandled on the change of talking to the army. These reactions, it is understood, depend mainly on the nature of the individual. Chet dai being a traumatized old man was able to sustain the times and happened to doubt on everyone whom he met on the way supposing them insurgents and following him. His encounter with his own student makes him feel horrified with the prevailing terror. The study argues that political conflicts have a collective impact upon communities and produce responses of trauma. The experience of the insurgency, though traumatic for everyone in varying degrees, was not a homogenous one.

The main impact of the insurgency as observed in this study is the experiences of time, place, mode of thinking and the capabilities of the individual. Time became an important aspect as the events and its unexpected repercussions gradually unfolded. In “Monologues”, the narrator did not only experience the violence as the insurgency was going on rigorously everywhere, he was also seen hoping for good

and reconciliation. His testimony is presented as per with the time, mode of living life which had harrowing experiences as he was on the wrong side and on the verge of his execution.

The immoral and corrupt mode of narrativizing the painful trauma in the literary mode, sometimes, makes a misfortune to those who belong to opposite group if the testimony is presented from one side while the naive and trusting loses everything. The courageous and daring are able to protect themselves while weaker ones would be victimized. The impact of the study lies on how the story is narrated. If they are narrated being a neutral narrator, it would be an authentic testimony for both fighting groups, or both victims and perpetrators and they can sooth their traumatic experience to the ways to reconciliation which subsequently leads to the path of peace and stability in the war-hit nation-state. If they are narrated aligning with one side, it is definitely aggravating for the establishment of peace and solidarity in the conflict-hit societies.

The dissertation views the ten-year long Maoists revolution as a founding trauma, which also led to intergenerational trauma, a trauma which is unconsciously transferred by one generation that is directly and deeply affected by the incidents to their children and even to the generations that follow. This continues to be a site of questioning, grasping, analyzing and revisiting. Fresh episodes of violence may provide evidence of the continuing effects of the historical trauma. Years after the insurgency, it continues to make its presence felt even today. It continues to be a life changing factor for the abducted women, children and other family members and the families who were kidnapped, butchered in front of their own family members and scattered during that event and their successive generations. Besides, there emerges a great need to make people, most crucially in a positive light, about the situation,

suffering and spirit of the people of the time. It should be emphasized that both the communities suffered during the insurgency. The generation that experienced and suffered agree that violence was on both the sides with the participation of both the sides. They were sympathetic about the loss suffered by the other side. The experiences were seen as shared histories. The dissertation concludes with a proposal of peace. Efforts should be made to maintain peace and harmony in the country. Education could help eradicate the ill effects. Mass media and technology can aid in creating awareness, bringing about a change in the mindset, controlling the situation during the violence. An unemotional scientific approach is required to bring about a change in the perception of the people. The relations between the two groups can only be improved through positive social change and reconciliation.

Literature always takes discussion of defeat, disgrace, death and transgression, not only for unmaking reader frustration, but also for delivering them from disappointment. Mankind consists of another human being; that is, mankind only through others be comprehended entirely, and getting the understanding of other people is not possible, except through exposing their interior condition to others. This is the ability and capacity of literature that enlightens and clears the interior condition of mankind for each other.

From this research work, literary writings here the post-conflict narratives, while bringing out the traumatic facts of the past objectively not aligning to any groups, have been provocative approach to elucidate the importance of peace, stability, co-existence, brotherhood and ultimately pacification in the war-rift society like our country. However, some literary works while elucidating painful past life, have been aligned with igniting the tension. In doing so, the protracted conflict would

enable the world to re-establish equality, brotherhood and non-violence and peaceful settlement would resume after that.

Scope for Further Research

The ten-year long Maoist insurgency has left many areas of research for those aspiring researchers who want to do something new in this area. It is a fertile area of research with its multifaceted approaches opening up myriad possibilities for research. The event has received more attention from across the globe researchers in comparison to other area of research. Nepal's geopolitical condition for the emergence of such conflict has left some cues for the possibilities of future insurgency, which can be one area of digging up new dimension for work.

The impact of the insurgency as mentioned in this book on the subaltern of the society such as the underprivileged ones who remain backward either by the state mechanism or the so-called elite need to be studied. Did the suppressed and marginalized people have more different and additional set of problems than the normal war-affected people? There are many unsung heroes and the nameless saviours depicted in many stories, who risked their lives to restore faith in humanity even in the time of raging hatred and should be recognized and honoured at most. If viewed from an optimistic angle, the insurgency mentioned in this book resounds with the preference of freedom from age old traditional bonds and power, the courage to fight for survival and the undaunted resolution to build lives again. The unnoticed efforts, unlabelled troubles and unsung adjustments of the victims cannot be overlooked. Not knowing what lay ahead was traumatic in itself. Men bore the trauma of the experiences with remarkable stoicism. There is a dire need to celebrate the humanity and spirit displayed during this bloody civil war.

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