

Chapter 1

Wars, Victims and a Touch of Trauma

This research has focused on the central characters of the stories who display a trait of trauma such as fear, anxiety, numbness and silence due to war in the country. They endure very complicated situations in their lives. However, they try to overcome it with their inner strength but fail. They undergo alienation and desertion due to drastic change in their lives. In the name of revolution and social change, many people are forced to sacrifice their lives and many others are distressed. War trauma is depicted in the four stories namely, “Maoist in the Village” by Khem Kumar Aryal, “The Bond of Blood” by Ammaraj Joshi, “The Mother of a Traitor” by Maxim Gorky and “The Fate of a Man” by M. Sholokhov that I have chosen as the primary texts in my research writing.

“Maoist in the Village” is a short story about Maoist insurgency in the context of Nepal. Govindey, the central character of the story undergoes various circumstances during the insurgency time. He belongs to the poor family and spends his time uselessly just entertaining the villagers singing and dancing. He leaves the village during the time of Maoists insurgency and nobody knows about his whereabouts during that time. Unexpectedly, he returns the village after a few months when there was a rumor of Maoists entering into the village. Villagers try to obstruct the Maoists from entering into the village and Govindey actively supports them. Despite his honesty, he is accused of being a terrorist and tortured severely. He even could not fight for his justice. He becomes the victim of war trauma.

Likewise, “The Bond of Blood” written by Ammaraj Joshi is another example of a story depicting the war trauma. Manorama, the central character of the story lives through great psychological trauma due to the death of her husband, Sailesh. Rupak

and Madhu are the two sons who become the hope for her future. They are sincere, dedicated and honest. Manorama is very happy to see the success of her sons. Their lives go smooth for few years but their happiness cannot last longer. One day, Rupak is abducted by Maoist in order to take revenge with Madhu, whom they think to be an enemy. Rupak and Madhu are killed with gunshot. Later, Manorama was informed about the event and goes to see her sons. She is devastated with the scene where her sons are lying in the pool of blood. The pain overwhelms her, she falls down and never gets up. That happy family becomes the dupe of war and every member is drowned in the same pool of blood at last.

Similarly, “The Mother of a Traitor” is a story of war which shows the extreme level of trauma. Monna, a mother is frequently tortured by her son due to his involvement in the war. He is the leader of the traitors’ group. His ambition to lead the nation and sense of rivalry are the major causes of pain to his mother. The mother sees her city dweller wailing with pain due to the death of their loved ones who fought for the preservation of their nation. She sees the traumatic life of the people which is resulted by the mission led by her own son. Finally, she leaves her city and meets her son. The son is happy to see his mother and expresses his happiness being able to lead the traitors’ group but his happiness could not last long. The mother kills her own son for the shake of her nation and its citizen. A kind hearted mother becomes the cruel being. She sacrifices her only son for the protection of her nation.

Alike “The Mother of a Traitor”, “The Fate of a Man” by M. Sholokhov also reflects the war trauma. It is a story of Adrei Sokolov who is the direct victim of war as a civilian. He goes to fight in the war leaving his wife and children at home. During the war, he is put into the various factories of the Third Reich. He is sent for an imminent execution. He himself and his family members have to face a lot of

traumatic situations due to war.

All these four stories revolve around war and that destructive war leads the characters to physical, psychological and emotional trauma. Mostly, wars are started in the name of social change. It is considered as the revolution against society, political or economic issues. People want to bring some positive change but they fail to realize the negative effects of war. War is always destructive. It is the source of trauma that affects people in several ways. Innocent people become the victim of war. They are traumatized by it. Wars are created by the political leaders and sometimes they persuade the common people to go against their opponent parties. They compel them to revolt as they are innocent and are unknown about its result. Dr. Lewis Blackburn states, "The onset of war is characterized by intense uncertainty for ordinary people whose everyday lives are ruptured by war. While some prepare for war, most do not expect violence, even in the context of ongoing conflict" (4). We can say that war brings uncertainty in the lives of people. Some people take war as a normal thing, which in reality is more destructive than people expect it to be.

People have the hope to bring economic change. They have the dream to live better future. But their dream never come true. As a result of war, they only get sufferings in their lives. Inequality, crisis, domination, enmity and political instability are also other factors which make people revolt against different issues. People are never satisfied with whatever they have. This dissatisfaction leads to revolution.

Different revolutions have broken out in Nepal in different times and contexts. But, the Maoist insurgency is regarded as one of the longest and destructive revolutions. It tried to bring some transformations in the society but did not prove to be much effective for the people. The story, "Maoist in the Village" depicts the vivid picture of physical as well as psychological trauma in the war. The villagers talk

about the Maoists and their activities in different parts of the country. The scenario in the country was going worse that time.

“The Mother of a Traitor” reveals the bitter truth of the society that mother is the one who suffers a lot when her children do something wrong. Mother’s unconditional love towards her child is really great than anything else. She is ready to sacrifice anything for the sake of her child. But children do not understand her emotions. Gorkey in his story writes, “My son has come to be your enemy. Either kill me or open the gates that I may go to him” (75). He intends to show the bravery of a traitor’s mother who is ready to die for the misdeed of her own son. The mother can never be away from her children wherever they go or whatever they do. The mother in the story is much panicked when her son becomes a traitor. In other words, the war has given rise to psychological trauma to the mother. The only cause for this trauma is the war.

Wars are always horrible. In other words, we can say, war is torture for some of the people involved in it. Sometimes, they have to lose the hope for their lives. They have to tolerate unbearable pain in the war. In “The Fate of a Man” when narrator of the story, Andrei Sokolov goes to fight for Soviet Union, he becomes a prisoner there. He is treated in a cruel manner. As a victim, he describes the way he was treated there, “Two Germans came up on the motorbikes. First, they beat me up good and proper, then they set the dog on me. And they tore into me. I was taken back to camp, naked and bloody as I was. They gave me month in solitary for trying to escape, but I was still alive, I kept alive somehow” (Sholokhov 150). It is really hard to believe the pain tolerated by such victims in the war. They have to cross the highest level of psychological and physical trauma to keep themselves alive. Otherwise, there is no any other option expect death.

Unlike other revolutions carried out in different times in different political contexts, Maoist insurgency is taken as one of the most destructive wars in Nepal. Many of the Nepali stories are written with the theme of same insurgency and its effects to the society. Joshi has also successfully explored this theme in his story “The Bond of Blood”. Manorama was living a happy life with her sons forgetting her husband’s demise. But, during the time of Maoist insurgency, her innocent and honest sons become the victims.

As in this story, in rest of the stories too, the manifestation of different levels of trauma are traceable about which some scholars have studied and made some comments.

Review of Literature

War is a destructive event. It victimizes many people and affects the social and economic development. Many reports have been prepared about Maoist insurgency. It has been interpreted in different ways. One of the reports of International Crisis Group writes:

In less than ten years, the Maoist insurgency has transformed Nepal. The Communists party of Nepal (Maoist) has spread armed conflict across the country and reshaped its political environment irrevocably. But their political aims are still questioned, and not known enough about the structure and strategy. This background report seeks to fulfill in many of the gaps based on the close study of their writings and actions and a wide range of interviews, in order to provide policymakers in Nepal and international community with information and insights needed to approach a peace process realistically. (1)

This report talks about the transformation brought by the Maoist insurgency in Nepal which is very doubtful as it lacks clear vision and policy. But this research digs out

the impacts of the revolution on people and their life rather than the circumstances and policies:

There are books in every language that are landmarks in the history of the literature in that particular language. Such a book for Russians is Maxim Gorky's "The Mother of a Traitor", for, though it was written ten years before establishment of Soviet Power in Russia, we count it the first stone laid in the foundation of literature. Gorky's "The Mother of a Traitor" sets a good example of society literature. It reflects the clear picture of conflicts and the trauma of Russian society during the civil war. (4)

This review exemplifies the above mentioned text as a society literature as it shows the conflict and trauma of Russian society during civil war. The idea generated is similar to the argument of this research. However, this research presents the text mentioned above as a trauma literature.

Armin Knigge, who is an expert on Gorky, comments, "Gorky is full of contradictions and clichés." She further states, "He is not a classical writer like Fyodor Dostoevsky, but a representative of world literature. (1)" Knigge considers Gorky's work a "portrait gallery of Russian people", and sees the author as "a humanist, a wise and rigorous observer on a level comparable to German writer Thomas Mann". However, this research portrays Gorky as a revolutionary writer who uses war trauma as the major theme of his stories as in the "The Mother of a Traitor". Anita A. Kondoyanidi comments:

Gorky's sense of compassion for men was subjected to its harshest test in the years of revolution and civil war. In the first month and even that followed 25 Oct. 1917, he would find it difficult to term with the Bolshevik party, which had taken power. He was troubled and repelled by the same factors which also

blinded many others in that dramatic, uncompromising period, “the inevitability” of revolutionary violence, its excesses and dark wave of anarchy, lawlessness and spontaneous cruelty which accompanies any massive uprising. (12)

According to Kondoyanidi, Gorkey was much concerned with the sufferings of the people during the time of revolution and civil war as he was affected by revolutionary violence and other negative impacts. However, Gorkey had written his war stories ten years before the civil war in Russia. There is no boundary or limit to realize the effects of war:

Representations of the Second World War, The Soviet Canon of representing the Second World War as a heroic exploit of a people that had liberated Europe from fascism and defended the ideals of humanism began to crumble during the glasnost period. In Post-Soviet Russia, the memory of the war has become inseparable from the memory of the crimes of Stalinism. (Royde-Smith 1)

Royde-smith states that representation of different wars and revolutions has affected people in many ways which is inseparable from the memory of the crime of policies implanted by Soviet Union from 1927-1953 by Joseph Stalin. This is also one of the concerns of this research as a part.

After reading Shokolov’s story “The Fate of a Man”, Billy O’Callaghan writes:

Though I’ve read a lot of Russian literature in my life, “The Fate of a Man” marks my first encounter with Shokholov’s writing and I could not be more impressed. It’s a short but powerful and extraordinarily poignant novella. In simple terms, it tells the story of the hardships and tragedy suffered by one

man, Andrei Solokov, during his years spent fighting the Nazis and incarcerated in their camps. Grief mounts on grief until his pain seems almost beyond endurance, a level of suffering that should have destroyed the strongest spirit. Yet, even with all that happens, the heart finds a way and a reason to go on beating. Shokolov's tale is a brief, sad, beautiful, account of a life lived for love, and defined by strength, honour and compassion. And it is in these directions that redemption lies.

Billy analyzes the story "The Fate of a Man" as a brief account of a life filled with strength, honour and compassion but he does not try to excavate the depth of trauma that the characters undergo which this research aims to fulfill.

Similarly, Mosarraf Hossain opines, "One of the greatest optimistic stories of Russian literature I have ever read. It's a story of travelling in history against crisis, crime, war, disaster and death. At the end it's a story of life, a story of endless spirit to live". Musharraf finds "The Fate of a Man" as an optimistic story. This research has nothing to do with this matter but it rather focuses on pessimistic side of war.

Though above mentioned scholars have pinpointed their ideas on different writers and contexts from their own perspectives which differ from each person. However, what this research focuses are on the manifestation of traumatic traces that are common in all the selected stories for the research undertaken.

Chapter 2

Manifestation of Trauma: Principles and Perspectives

Trauma is basically a psychological concept. Sigmund Freud, “the father of modern psychoanalysis, is the sole founder of trauma theories” (Pokhrel Bhawana 28). According to Freud, Human mind is divided into three parts i.e. unconscious, sub-conscious and conscious. This proposition is directly related to trauma theory. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders defines trauma as the response caused when an individual person is exposed “to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence” (271). The psychoanalytic theories of trauma highlight “unconscious conflict and meditation in the formation of neuroses on a broad scale” (40). It includes the act of exploitation and violence, war and genocide which results in trauma through “claimed and unclaimed experience”.

There are various ways of manifestation of trauma. Some people express their trauma through fear and some through anxiety. *Oxford Dictionary* defines fear as “an unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of danger, pain or harm.” In other words, it is the terror or fright resulted due to some unexpected events or incidents. Similarly, anxiety is “a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome”.

Fear is an emotional reaction to a specific, real danger, while anxiety is an excessive and unfocused fear that may be triggered by a variety of stimuli. “The traumatized person feels utmost fear at the time of traumatic event; the same intensity of fear remains and recurs overtime” (29). Medical University of South Carolina quotes the fear as “the common reaction that a traumatized person goes through” (11). Trauma is revived through different perceptions of sound and sight and that triggers fear. When a person is not able to overcome the fear then he or she is hunted by the

past and shows unusual behaviors losing control over the life. The person himself is unknown about his situation and even does not accept the fact that he is in trauma. Such situation is “unclaimed experience” as stated by Cathy Caruth.

Trauma is a complex concept. It is very difficult to understand it in broad sense. “Trauma is an emotional crash that produces a long lasting damage in the unconscious of a person” (Pokhrel Bhawana 28). Trauma sometimes may go long and ruin a person’s life drastically. It requires observation and analysis to know whether a person is in trauma. “Trauma is a subject of ideological and fiduciary struggle and has been racialized, sexualized, gendered and classed from its inception” (Pokhrel Badri 48). It differs from person to person on the various basis. Therefore, trauma theory is helpful for the better understanding of holistic approach of trauma.

There are various types of trauma and trauma theories. However, we can classify them into two types as psychological and cultural trauma. Psychological trauma refers to the mental disorder or the disturbance created in one’s mind and affects an individual whereas cultural trauma exists collectively and affects the group of people at the same time. Cathy Caruth elaborates that trauma is “a shock that appears to work much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time” (61). Though trauma affects both mind and body, there is more disturbance in the mind as bodily threat is the result of break in the mind itself.

Unlike Caruth, Alexander presents his views on trauma from socio cultural perspectives. For him, “Events are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution” (13). For him, events and their representations differ from each other. Rather than events, the representations provide the feelings of shock and fear. Trauma is the result of discomfort that enters in the inner part of the collectivity’s awareness. He further centralizes the trauma, as the filler of “the gap between event

and representation” (15). In his book *Trauma as a Social Theory* he states: “We need to blow up the idea of self-interest to encompass collective identity, as something not given but culturally conceived, whose boundary expands and contracts. Instead of dominant interest, we need to think about social suffering, about emotions and existential threats to ethical convictions” (78). In the above mentioned lines Alexander means to say that we should focus on social theory of collective trauma instead of interest and capacity. It explains how collective agency develops in response to experience of social suffering.

“Trauma has been a subject of interpretation of literary works and many critics have taken it as a major area of writing criticism” (Pokhrel Badri 48). Literary trauma theory emerged on the concept that trauma causes one to coherent the traumatic event in much the same way that postmodern writer structures narrative. “Literary theory seeks to identify "trauma texts", that is, texts that employ intertextuality, repetition, fragmentation and language manipulation to create meaning due to extreme traumatic stress” (Pokhrel Badri 2). The works of William H. Gass appear to be major examples of postmodern “trauma texts” in the twentieth century. Similarly, in earlier centuries, the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* is an ultimate example of “trauma text”. Trauma and text productions have great correlation in modern literature. Trauma, being one of the most common issues in literary text is criticized by various critics.

Publication of Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* in 1996 achieved remarkable achievement in the field of trauma study, where “she has proposed that in the widespread and bewildering experience of trauma in our century. She further explores the ways in which the texts of psychoanalysis, literature and literary theory both speak about and speak through the profound story of traumatic experience” (11). Caruth pioneered “a theoretical trend”, who introduced

“psychoanalytic post structural approach” which describes trauma as “an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language” (14). Though its unsolvable it can be expressed through trauma narrative which somehow helps the victim to ease the problem. Caruth argues, “We can understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely permitting history to arise where immediate understanding may not” (11). According to her, “history” can be recreated according to our understanding.

Trauma narrative is the best way to express the traumatic experience for the victims. It helps the victims to make the sense of experience they suffered:

People who have lived through trauma often have a need to make sense of those events and the memories, thoughts, feelings and physical responses connected to them. This strategy can intensify the pain and can make triggers even more acute, particularly in situations where they can't be avoided. A trauma narrative exposes the person to memories of the experience in a safe environment and helps them reframe the experience so the victim can reclaim their power and autonomy. Crafting a trauma narrative helps people to overcome the painful memories associated with the experience through the power of storytelling. (Therapist 3)

Storytelling itself helps the victim recall their memories and structure them in more manageable way which can help them to reduce their pain. Trauma survivors can better understand their relation with trauma and can solve them through story telling. It also helps the people reduce their pain being away from isolation.

Some literatures present trauma and narrative on “thematic” and “structural” levels. The story in different literatures are told in a series of events; the protagonists

experience it and try to avoid their traumas by creating “falsifying versions of their experiences” (Pokhrel Badri 18) and with the help of the interpretations they work-through and bear witness. But trauma is not experienced by all in the same way. Kalpan opines, “People encounter trauma by being a bystander, by living near to where catastrophe happened, or by hearing about crisis from a friend. But most people encounter through media, which is why focusing on so-called mediatized trauma is important” (2). It is not necessary to be a real victim to feel the pain caused by trauma, a person can even be traumatized through various means of mass media.

Dissimilar to Kalpan, Laurie Vickroy says that writing literature can help the victims to express their feelings. They can explore themselves to overcome their fear and agony. Literature also helps the collective who suffers trauma but due to some reasons cannot speak against it:

Fictional narratives that help readers to access traumatic experience have taken an important place among diverse artistic, scholarly and testimonial representations in illuminating aspects of trauma and in elucidating our relationship to memory and forgetting within the complex interweaving of the social and psychological relationships. (1)

Fictional narratives can be a psychological therapy for the victim to access traumatic experience which is far better than any other way to get out of the past experience.

Trauma narrative in fictions helps the reader to know about trauma through the characters and their reactions who undergo it. This kind of literature presents certain characteristics, therefore, Vickroy holds “individuals’ actions under extreme oppression whether in a domestic or war situation cannot be understood by applying normalized values or moral systems” (2). This is the reason why writers use specific narrative tools in order to clearly represent how the characters express their traumas.

There are many pieces of literature which show the “trauma narratives”.

Remnants of Auschwitz by Agamben, *If This is a Man* by Primo Levi, *Anil's Ghost* by Michael Ondaatje and *The Fate of a Man* by M. Sokolov set the best example of “trauma narrative”. The protagonists or the central characters in these fictions try to overcome their depressed feelings through trauma narration.

Chapter 3

Comparison and Contrast Between Russian and Nepalese Civil War

A civil war is a conflict between organized groups within the same state or country. The aim of one side may be to take control of the country or a region, to achieve independence for a region, or to change government policies. Economic interest, cultural values, the power of federal government to control the state can be some causes of civil war.

The Nepalese civil war was an armed conflict that took place in Nepal between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Government of Nepal from 1996 to 2006. The major purpose of the rebellion was to overthrow Monarchy and establish the people's republic. It ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord on 21 November 2006. Executions, massacres, purges, kidnappings and other war crimes against mankind were some of the activities that took place in the country in the name of civil war. Over 17000 people, including civilians, insurgents, army and police personnel died and there was the internal displacement of thousands of people mostly throughout rural Nepal. In addition, this conflict dislocated most rural development activities. The revolution brought in political, social and cultural change in the country.

Contrasting Nepali Civil War, the Russian Civil War was a multi-party civil war in the former Russian Empire held immediately after the two Russian revolutions of 1917. The two largest combatant groups were the Red Army, fighting for the Bolshevik form of socialism led by Vladimir Lenin, and the loosely allied forces known as the White Army, which included dissimilar interest favoring political monarchism, capitalism and social democracy, each with democratic and anti-democratic variants.

Likewise, rival militant, socialists, notably Makhnovia anarchists and Left SRS, as well as non-ideological green armies, fought against both the Reds and Whites. After the revolution the Bolsheviks swept through Russia nearly unopposed. The republic had collapsed after the Soviets were given all political power, leaving no solid conflict to the Reds.

10-years long conflict in Nepal (1996-2006) headed by Maoist against the then government dislocated many families; thousands of people were killed and over one thousand three hundred families still have no information on the fate or whereabouts of their loved ones. It was devastating war in the history of Nepal held from 1918-1920. But the Russian Civil War was the conflict between the Red Army and Bolshevik government led by Vladimir I. Lenin. Nearly 10 million people lost their lives in the war. There was no foreign intervention in the Nepalese Civil War but there was intervention of different countries in the Russian Civil War like France, Japan, United States, etc.

As a result of Russian Civil War, communicable disease such as typhoid spread throughout the country. Problem of malnutrition occurred due to the lack of adequate food supply in the country as there was the breakdown of transportation all over the country. Many houses were destroyed and the whole country was in the crisis. It made the Soviet government vanish back to countryside.

Dissimilar to Russian Civil War, Nepalese Civil war affected mostly the rural life. Most the youths inhabited in the villages were abducted and forced to carry the guns. If they denied then, they would be killed. They used to force the villagers to manage their food and accommodation. It was a rivalry against the ruling system or the government. It ended with the victory of Maoist over the then monarchism. It overthrew the trend of monarchy and established the people's republic.

Russia is a great empire whereas Nepal is a small state. There is a vast difference between various aspects of these two countries. The political system also differs. Despite the differences between Nepalese and Russian Civil War, both the wars were against the government and its ruling system. Both of them were successful to bring change in their respective nations. The revolutions resulted in large number of deaths, destruction of physical properties and horror in the people. These revolutions were the sources of trauma for the whole nation. The wars led into collective trauma which affected many people at a time. It is obvious to say that war and trauma correlates to each other as they arise in the form of cause and effects. Such correlation between war and trauma is briefly discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

War and Traumatic Overtone in Nepali and Russian Stories

Depiction of War Trauma in Nepali Stories

As mentioned in the previous chapter, war has a great influence in human life as well as in literature. Many writers include the war as the major theme in their literary pieces. We find many books written in war theme worldwide. After First and Second World War, the whole world was in a shock and they had an uncertain and chaotic life. In order to overcome that chaotic situation, they found writing as the best alternative. We find various forms of literature in which war and trauma are included as the major theme. In the context of Nepal, the civil war led by Maoist in 1996 is considered as one of the greatest wars. So many poems and stories have been written with the theme of war. “Rage” and “Maoists in the Village” by Khem K. Aryal, Prakash Mani Dahal’s “The Wailing Mother and the Ailing Sons”, Ammaraj Joshi’s “An Uncertain Journey” and “The Bond of Blood”, Mahesh Poudel’s “A Mother’s Nightmare”, “Memoirs of the Massacre” by Sanjeev Uprety, “The Silence of Violence” by Padhmawati Singh, etc. are some examples of short stories written in war theme by Nepali writers.

The major theme depicted by most of the above mentioned stories is horrendous civil war that resulted traumatized life in Nepalese. These stories depict depression, trauma and terror encompassing the nation during these miserable times. One of the stories I have included under this theme is Khem K. Aryal’s “Maoists in the Village”. This story is an example of war trauma. Govindev, a small village boy has grown up during the time of war. He has been the victim of war.

The villagers talk about the Maoists slaughters in different parts of the

country. The scenario in the country was going worse that time. Aryal points out the horrible situation of the people in his story:

The rebels slaughtered local leaders of other political parties for resisting the so-called “People’s War”. They crucified schoolteachers for allegedly spying against the Maoists and supporting the existing feudal system. They justified capturing properties by claiming that the landowners had amassed their wealth by exploiting the poor. They invaded villagers, formed their own government, established their own court to decide who would be hanged and whose legs would be chopped off. (83)

These lines represent how the war has affected people. Many innocent people have been killed and threatened by the war. Crucifixion of a schoolteacher is a terrible action taken by Maoists. Capturing the properties of landowners, forming their own government invading the villagers and establishing their own court are also against the law. In the same context, Alexander says, “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness marking their memories forever and changes their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (1). They practiced many criminal activities in the name of revolution which leaves unforgettable marks on the villager’s consciousness in the form of cultural trauma.

Govindey leaves his village for few months and again returns when there was Maoist insurgency in the village. That poor boy wants to protect his village from the attack of Maoist but he himself is accused of being a terrorist:

“Boy, you shut up!” Dhanbahadur suppressed Govindey. “You’re behaving too smart these days.” He had no doubt that the Maoists were mostly people like Govindey- “Govindey himself could be one of them. Who knows?”

Dhanbahadur looked at everyone as if he were expecting someone to second his thoughts. (84)

There was the doubtful situation. Nobody could trust anybody. Govindeg was away from the village for few months. So they got the space to doubt him. An innocent boy is suspected to be a terrorist which led a psychological trauma in Govindeg individually.

Govindeg tries to protect his village from Maoists. He wishes he could really fight the Maoists. All the villagers along with Govindeg participate in that mission. But only Govindeg is falsely identified as the Maoist and he is bitten brutally but he did not resist. He is tortured physically and mentally. "Dhanbahadur punched Govindeg's face and the boy fell flat on the ground, blood oozing out of his mouth and involuntary tears filling his eyes. But Govindeg's gaze denied the pain that his body experienced. He did not have the heart to cry" (88). The people of his own village failed to identify the real identity and treated him in an inhuman way.

Govindeg's silence depicted in the lines cited above shows how much broken he is. Freud believes, "Sometimes when the conflict is too much for a person to handle, his or her ego may engage in one or many defense mechanisms to protect the individual" (24). Here, Govindeg has used his "silence" against the torture as the "defense mechanism". His ego has blocked his "overwhelming experiences" from awareness, which make him to "refuse or acknowledge" what is happening. This is the highest level of psychological trauma resulted by the war.

None could feel the pain of Govindeg. Neither, they inquired about the reality. Everyone assumed whatever they had seen is the truth. But, in reality, he is the innocent and brave boy who had intention to do good for his village. Destructive war took the life of an innocent person like Govindeg. He is depicted as a very pitiable

character. He is the direct victim of war trauma. It shows the “unclaimed experience” of trauma theory. Govindey, himself is not aware of the trauma he is going through. He does not necessarily accept his sufferings rather unknowingly tackles everything as a victim which seems to be applicable with the theory of Caruth’s “unclaimed experience of trauma” (14). Along with Govindey, other villagers also suffer and go through different complexities during the war which reflect the “cultural trauma”. However, their suffering is overshadowed by Govindey’s trauma.

“The Bond of Blood” by Ammaraj Joshi is another example of war trauma. Manorama, the central character goes through several circumstances throughout the story. She is betrayed by her own luck as a wife. “The village women knew what it was for Manorama to live and to have her children grow up. Hunger was her friend; scarcity was her company; humiliation was her shadow; worries was her breathing; pain-regular pain was her blood for twenty long years” (135). It is really hard for a woman to fulfill the responsibility of a mother and a father at once. She had to face hunger, scarcity, humiliation, worries and pain for twenty years which are the factors that lead a person to traumatic life. In other words, Manorama was traumatized throughout her life. However, she moves on in her life with the hope to see bright future with her sons.

Rupak was abducted by a group of young boys and girls from his work place. Everyone in the school was scared. All the teachers and students tried to protect Rupak but he himself came forward asking what they wanted. But, they tied him and treated badly. The following lines depict the horror of war:

Teachers and students all pleaded for forgiveness, but the armed gang turned deaf ears towards them. They instead shouted slogans, fired a few blank shots and rushed into the jungle, taking Rupak with them. For half an hour, no one

spoke as if a demon had breathed in their mouths, making them mute. Only then did they regain full awareness. But they all were helpless. There was a sense of loss-the loss of the friend. They knew how unlikely it would be for Rupak to come back. (140)

Every single person is frightened by the horror of war. One of the gentle persons like Rupak has been abducted and taken to the jungle but nobody could speak even a single word. Everyone has fear to death. Anxiety, numbness, silence and fear are manifestations in the story as the effects of war trauma and that meets the major argument of this research.

During the war, people are unaware of the destruction they are causing. Joshi in the story states:

Both the groups had suffered losses, many were killed, and many wounded.

Both sides felt happy that they had killed the enemy unaware of exactly who had been killed. During the fighting there had hardly been any time to see who died. The soldiers, however, knew, that one of their own had been killed- Madhu was shot dead. They saw his body lying a top of a rebel; their enemy.

But there was no time to check whether Madhu was still breathing. (141)

Injuries and deaths are common in war. Deaths are prioritized than life in the war. Madhu was shot dead but nobody had time to see if he was breathing. Their rivalry and enemy's death are important than someone's life. It shows the cruelty of war.

Manorama was waiting for her son to return home but he did not. She came to learn about him from some school children and teachers. She was almost fainted. Her unconscious state was more painful. She was crying for Rupak who had been taken away by the Maoist rebels, a soldier went to Madhu's house to call her. When she reached the Tika hill, her heart sank. She saw her two sons Rupak and Madhu dead.

She was completely devastated by that scenario. “Manorama did not react, could not move or speak. Then, she said, “Shailesh, I have promises to keep”. Saying that, “She fell and three of them became one” (143). Manorama is not able to express her pain by wiling or crying. She is mourning in the death of her husband. In the essay “Mourning and Melancholia” Freud states that “in mourning, a person deals with the grief of losing of a specific love object and this process takes place in the conscious mind” (Freud 1). Similarly, Manorama is expressing her grief for losing her husband whom she loved very much. She accepts the pain and sufferings she is going through which is termed as “claimed experience of trauma”. Her silence and numbness is visualized in the lines quoted above. She cannot tolerate the trauma she is going through as she is so much depressed that led her to death.

These two stories convey intense loss and fear on individual as well as collective level. The external event that causes an extreme response from the central characters is bound to war. The war is the major cause of trauma represented in both the stories. The central character manifests silence, fear, anxiety and numbness as various signals of psychological trauma.

Representation of War Trauma in Russian Stories

Many Russian writers have written their fictions concerning war trauma. The fiction writers represent the war trauma in their texts in both “individual” and “collective” level. They portray it through their characters symbolically. Sarah Cole writes: “The figure of the shell-shocked combatant almost immediately provided writers and other artists with a kind of paradigm for the modern condition” (Cole 194). Writers and artists get the idea to create something new. She also writes that the writers “emblemized the war not in death or in physical injury but in psychological wounds” (194). The writers of the two Russian stories taken as the primary texts

in this research also have symbolically presented war as the psychological wound as stated by Cole.

“The Mother of a Traitor” revolves around Monna Marianna, the mother of a traitor. Her son leads the traitors’ group who surround the city creating several problems. People in the city suffer a lot due to the war. Being a mother of a traitor, she is totally devastated within herself. She is hated by most of the people in the city. She is alienated from the society for being a mother of a traitor.

While wondering around the city, one day she encounters woman kneeling beside a corpse of her son, whose husband has also died recently. She expresses her overwhelmed feeling to Marianna: “Now that he has died honorably fighting for his country. I can say that I feared for him: he was light-hearted, too fond of revelry and I feared that he might betray his city, as did the son of Marianna, the enemy of God and Man, the leader of our foes, may he be so cursed and the womb that bore him!” (74-75). The old lady is unaware of talking to herself. We can interpret it with Freud’s concept of “melancholia”. According to him, “In grief, the world appears poor because the loved one is no longer there. The melancholic patient belittles themselves, speaks of themselves in terms of contempt, feels morally reprehensible and unworthy of someone else’s love” (168). Similar to Freud’s concept, she is also lamenting on the death of her loved one unconsciously talking to herself.

The next morning, she went to the city dwellers and said “My son has come to be your enemy. Either kill me or open the gates that I may go to him” (74). Mother presents herself as a bold character here. “The soldiers took causal with one another and decided that it was killing the lady for the sins of her son. They were certain that she could not have led her son to commit this terrible sin. Therefore, they opened the gate and let her go” (75). In the enemy’s camp, the soldiers asked about her. She said

that their leader was her son. Then, her son came to her and kissing her hand, he said, “Mother! you have come to me. You are with me. Tomorrow I shall capture the city I have spared this city for your sake, it has been like a thorn in my flesh. It has retarded swift rise to fame. But now tomorrow I shall capture the city” (78). The son expresses his feelings with her mother being unaware of the result.

They talked to each other for a long time. The mother said to him “Come my son, lay thy head on my breast and rest, remember how gay and kind you were as a child and how everyone loved you.” (78). He quietly went to his mother like an innocent and obedient child. He dozed on her mother’s breast but mother killed him plunging a knife into his heart. Then, she threw his corpse at the feet of the people who are confused looking at that incident. Addressing the countrymen, she said, “As a citizen I have done for my country all I could; as a mother I remain with my soul.” (79). Right after that, she also plunged the same knife into her breast and died.

A kind hearted mother is turned into a heartless mother killing her own son for the shake of her countrymen. She has to go through many traumatic events. The main cause of her trauma is the war. The mother cannot see the people of her city lamenting on the death of their loved ones. She cannot tolerate the criticisms against her son. Although, she loves her son very much, she takes the life of him and finally she kills herself. This pain is unbearable and mother’s sacrifice is great deed that only few people can do.

War comes in between the relationship of a mother and son and takes both of their lives. This story visualizes the clear picture of “cultural trauma” through the city dwellers whereas “psychological trauma” through the central character. It also presents the best example of “claimed experience” of trauma theory as the characters accept the reality of traumatic life. However, they are forced to be in the death bed

due to unbearable circumstances created by the war.

“The Fate of Man” is another story of war trauma. The reader is presented not just with the life story of a soldier, but with the traumatized fate of a person who embodied the typical features of a national Russian character. Andrei was living happily with his family and suddenly the war broke out. Then, he went to the front to defend his country.

Like thousands of others, like him, the war pushed Andrew with inevitable horrors. It tore him from his home, from the family, from the work and the whole life. Andrei says, “Other women chatted to their husbands and sons, but mine clung to me like a leaf to a branch, and just trembled all the time, and couldn’t say a word.” “Take a grip on yourself, Irina dear, say something to me before I go, at least” (138). These lines show the silence and fear of Andrei’s wife. She fears the consequences of war so she could not speak even a single word though there were many things to say. Fear and silence are manifested in the form of trauma here.

“The Fate of a Man” is not only about a civilian involved in war. It is also a story of war survivor who undergoes various torture and traumatized life in the war. Andrei experienced hardships of war, inhuman torture of the fascist captivity. When he was taken to the camp. He was treated very cruelly there. He states, “I never heard the bang nor anything, just something burst inside my head, and I don’t remember any more. How I stayed alive, and how long I lay there by the ditch, I’ve no idea” (142). He went through extreme level of psychological as well as physical torture. He himself was unaware about the thing happening there. He was close to the death more than once, but he always found in himself an enormous courage and until the end he remained the same. He struggled a lot to keep himself alive.

After Andrei Sokolov returned from the war after his victory. He had lost

everything that he had in his life “for himself”, family, love, happiness. He becomes a “ruthless and “heartless” person. It is the story of not only Andrei but many of the soldiers who return from the war. Sarah Cole states that “... The return of the soldier- each individual soldier as well as their accumulated returns-become a literary event, in itself a moment of disruption, which also transfixed an array of social changes and uncertainties” (Cole 191). Sholokhov has also represented his experience of war through the protagonist, Sokolov. His experience has become Sokolov’s story in his literary piece. Being the major character of war story, "The Fate of a Man" Andrei goes through the “claimed experience” of trauma. He realizes the torturous effects resulted by war. The story also sets the best example of “cultural trauma”. Here, it is not as an individual Andrei suffers but other characters too suffer in the story collectively which elucidates Alexander’s “Cultural Trauma”.

This story of Sholokhov is the testimony through which the traumatic life of the characters can be witnessed and readers can make the clear sense upon the Russian civil war and its impact on the civilians. As the stories above show any sort of conflicts and wars do not do any good to anyone. Virginia Woolf has commented on the same issue.

Woolf is one of the witnesses of war. She has made several comments on war through her essays and letters. She wrote, “I don’t like any of the feelings war breeds: patriotism; communal and all sentimental and emotional parodies of our real feeling” (302). She expresses her dislikes on patriotic feelings of people that war generates. Apart from this, she comments on different things related to war. She contrasts references specific to World War II with images of conflict in the natural world.

Thus, vivid picture of trauma from various manifestations such as fear, silence, numbness and anxiety have been presented in the above mentioned Russian

stories. The characters undergo psychological as well as cultural trauma during the war.

Comparison and Contrast Between Nepali and Russian Stories in Terms of Trauma

Trauma is the common theme of the four stories that I have chosen as the primary texts of this research. However, there are some similarities and differences between the stories. They differ from one another according to the nature of trauma the characters undergo, intensity of trauma, kinds of victims and perpetrators.

“Maoists in the Village” and “The Bond of Blood” share the common historical context of Nepal namely “Maoist Insurgency” led in the name of social revolution. Both the stories are written in the rural periphery where rustic rural people are portrayed as the major characters who have been victimized despite their innocence. Both the stories highlight the psychological as well as cultural trauma through the central characters. Both of the central characters “Govindey” and “Manorama” die at the end of the story being unable to tolerate the extreme intensity of trauma. They exemplify silence and numbness as the manifestation of trauma.

Silence and numbness are seen in the characters at the end of the stories as they do not resist the blame and sufferings and do not speak anything even when they have to go through very critical situations in their life. Individual sufferings of the central character show the “psychological trauma” whereas, collective sufferings due to the Maoists insurgency resembles the “cultural trauma”. Villagers, family members, relatives and other minor characters are the victims of “cultural trauma” in these stories. Both the stories can be interpreted from Caruth’s “Unclaimed Experience” of war. Despite these similarities, these stories have some differences too.

Govindey is the direct victim of war. He is directly involved in the events of wars. He is tortured physically and psychologically by the villagers. They never show empathy on this poor character but Manorama is not the direct victim. Though she is the central character, she is indirectly affected by the war. She does not face any sort of violence and torture physically rather she is overwhelmed by the death of her two sons.

“The Mother of a Traitor” and “The Fate of a Man” are the stories written in the periphery of Russian Civil war. The central characters of the stories “Monna Marianna” and “Andrei Solokov” are presented as the bold and brave characters. They have to go through various traumatic situations in their life due to the outbreak of civil war. They individually suffer a lot. They are the victims of “psychological trauma”. However, the stories also portray the “cultural trauma” through the minor characters like family, relatives, city dwellers, civilians and other minor characters as they all suffer collectively due to war. Anxiety, fear and silence are the major manifestations of the stories. Both the characters express their trauma through “claimed experience” as they are aware about their sufferings and knowingly tackle with their problems.

Despite the above mentioned similarities, they differ from each other on various perspectives. “Monna”, the central character of “The Mother of a Traitor” is a non-civilian character whereas, “Andrei” in “The Fate of a Man” is a civilian character. Monna suffers due to the involvement of her son in the war as a traitor but Andrei, suffers due to his own involvement in the war. Andrei is the survivor of war but Monna sacrifices her life for the sake of her nation. She even kills her own son to protect her nation. On the other hand, Andrei adopts Vanya, an orphan as his son. Here, these two characters take different actions but their motive is not limited to their

personal interest rather they value the moral ethics.

All the stories mentioned above are similar in theme but different in contexts. Nepali stories are written in the context of Maoists insurgency whereas, Russian stories written in the context of Russian civil war. The characters in Nepali stories are poor and pitiable characters but the characters in the Russian stories seem to be brave and bold. Poverty and depression are the result of Nepali civil war depicted in the story but alienation and loneliness are major effects depicted in the Russian stories. Unlike these differences, all four stories have many similarities as discussed above.

Hence, all the stories are about the war trauma especially, psychological and cultural trauma. The characters are traumatized and tortured due to the war. Fear, silence, numbness and anxiety are common in all the stories which are the obvious manifestations of trauma.

Chapter 5

Trauma as an Upshot of War

One of the foremost themes of contemporary literature is trauma. It manifests itself in popular fiction. However, trauma is also central in the more serious literature of our era. War affects every people adversely, either civilians or common people both psychologically and culturally. Death, injury, anxiety and depression are the common effects of war normally presented in the literatures. But silence, numbness, fear and anxiety are more distinct in the stories selected in this research.

My focus in this paper has been to present various perspectives of war trauma in Nepali and Russian short stories. In “Maoist in the Village” Aryal has presented Govidey as the poor character who is tortured and threatened by the war. However, he tolerates everything being silent. It shows the “psychological trauma” more rather than “cultural trauma” though few traces of cultural trauma can also be identified in the story through the minor characters such as terrified and suspicious villagers. Similarly, in “The Bond of Blood” Joshi, through the central character Manorama, presents the extreme level of traumatized life during the time of Maoists insurgency. Her sense of trauma is characterized by the fear, numbness, anxiety and silence that she shows as the victim. Likewise, in the third story “The Mother of a Traitor” Gorkey portrays the cultural as well as psychological trauma through the central character. Being a mother of a traitor she goes through several traumatic incidents. Not only she herself, but she also witnesses other people in her city being traumatized by the ongoing war led by her own son. In the final story “The Fate of a Man” Sholokhov represents Andrei as the survivor of the war who undergoes various traumatic events as a civilian. He loses everything in his life due to war. Furthermore, the story draws the attention of the readers through the perspective of cultural trauma

resulted by the war.

Thus, the four different stories taken as the primary texts in this paper are the evidence to prove that trauma is an upshot of war from various perspectives either psychologically or culturally. The characters presented in the stories are depressed, tortured, murdered and frequently threatened by the war. They express their trauma as “claimed and unclaimed experience”. Some characters are the victims of psychological trauma and some other of cultural trauma. They manifest the trauma through silence, numbness, anxiety and fear. Most of the characters could not overcome the impact upon them and lost their life. Hence, a vivid presentation of such traumatic life of people has been the emphases of this research with their interpretation through the perspectives of psychological and cultural trauma theory. This area of research can be an exploration into the working through of the central characters for healing as Sholokhov does in the story “The Fate of a Man” by adopting the boy namely Vanya the way ahead.

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