

## I. Introduction

This thesis explores the connections between violence, the effects of trauma that it produces, and forms of political community. It aims to contribute to understandings of the particular way in which power, the social order and the person are constituted in the contemporary Nepal, through a study of practices of trauma, memory and witness in *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu*. Its focus is firmly on ethical memory, based on political community in the present Nepalese context. *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu* represent trauma of the violence perpetrated in the course of the People's War. The narrativization of traumatic memory in both *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu* is contaminated with the language of demonization which has been used largely against the Maoists in *Palpasa Café* and conversely against the Nepalese Army in *Forget Kathmandu*.

The account of statehood, in the liberal view is a story of individual citizens banding together to form democratic institutions which represent the views of those citizens and which have their interests at heart. The state possesses power, in this narrative, because the people legitimize its authority. On the other hand Maoists fight against the authority of state. War is the cause of grief, frustration, devastation, suffering, and untimely death; this even gives continuity to these things. Different literatures have preserved the traumatic experience that wars have imprinted on society. The hideous nature of war took thousands of peoples lives; it carried stream of tears and bloods. In Nepal, the war has impacted on all fields of national life. It is well known that if a country has armed conflict, the country cannot be developed. Without political stability democracy cannot be institutionalized. If internal conflict goes on for a long time, a culture of revenge and violence develops in the society. People cannot participate in the political life

because of fear and frustration. Without people's participation, democracy cannot survive. Political parties and political groups convert to militant groups or their policies are mostly influenced by armed forces. National resources are used in unproductive ways and the country grows gradually poorer. International aid/assistance and international investment can no longer run, for want of peace. The Constitution and other laws cannot be implemented.

Govinda Raj Bhattarai estimates in *Stories of Conflicts and War*;

The stories contained in the present volume portray such conditions-  
grief and pain, fear and terror, and scenes of deaths. The  
psychological horror and trauma that millions underwent is a  
greatest of all shocks, unforgettable in their memory. (8)

There are other social effects created by armed conflict. All kinds of human rights have been violated in the areas of conflict in Nepal. The government has killed, disappeared and arrested Maoist workers. It has not allowed the Maoists to participate in normal political life. Similarly the Maoists have not allowed any other political activities in their captured areas. In this way the people's right to participate in the national political life has been violated. Armed conflict has also created a migration problem into the cities. Many people have left their homes and lands from fear of Maoist attack. They have no other alternative sources of income, leading to social instability in the society. Many civilians have lost their families and relatives during the armed conflict. Many children have lost their guardians and violence has impacted in their young minds. Many Maoist supporters have been living in the jungle and in the long term this might create a different social culture among them. Many school-age children are involved in the war for the Maoists. Most schools in Maoist captured areas are closed, as are other

government and social institutions.

Govinda Raj Bhattarai further expresses;

By the time it was over, more than thirteen thousand innocent people had lost their lives, many were maimed, many were displaced, others were left homeless, and many fled the country unable to bear torture and trauma. Several villages turned vacant, desolate and deserted, even the towns were no less terror-stricken. The factories and industries were locked; much of the physical infrastructure was destroyed. All this is beyond description. It was the greatest shock that a poor nation was forced to suffer. (8)

Armed conflict is having a very deep impact on the economy of the country. The tourism industry is suffering. Industries are experiencing frequent strikes and fund collections by the Maoists. Liquor industries are going to be closed if the Maoist women's faction is able to ban liquor all over the country. Armed conflict also has a negative impact on the agricultural sector because in conflict areas most adults have left their homes. Some have left out of fear and others because they have joined the Maoist army. Private Boarding schools have been facing many obstacles presented by the Maoist student front. Maoist students have been striking in school frequently. In conflict areas, people cannot run their businesses because of the Maoists demand of heavy taxes from businessmen and professionals. In sum, all areas of economic and social life are influenced by the armed conflict.

The ravages of war, the pangs, and the wounds were represented in words, in the verses of the poets, in the pictures of the photographers, in the paintings of the artists, in the stories of the storywriters and so and so forth. The masthead of newspaper replete with the counting of dead people, the destruction of human

resources, TV channels, radio fm kept themselves busy with war events and news.

The trauma of war loomed everywhere, represented everywhere. Many innocent policemen had to sacrifice their lives, becoming scapegoats in the battle of two great parties. They lost their lives without their any guilt and mistakes, situation turned in to horrible pangs in their families. People fled towards the cities leaving their own houses.

Moreover, the turmoiled period not only took lives of many innocent people, it left an insurmountable wounds to the living people, many young women had to loose their husbands untimely, many parents had to bury their sons at their prime, their uncontrollable tears created a sort of very traumatic and infernal situation.

How trauma affects the formation of words, or how words deal with trauma, can be viewed as a technical matter in which the focus becomes what region and processes of the brain are involved. But neurology, cognitive science, or a formal therapy are not the primary concerns of trauma studying the arts. In so far as there is an established field to which it belongs, it would be close to semiology in Saussures definition as the study of signs within the context of social interaction.

Different people reported events of war differently. Manjushree Thapa, in her article 'The War in The West' gives some reporting of war time which was captivated by ideological perspective;

The journalists say that district government offices do little to protest them from the security forces. They also complain about the complacency of those in Kathmandu, [...] what they write and edit it beyond recognition. Rudra Khadka of *Kantipur* says that he feels relatively safe, but those working for the smaller media houses feel

vulnerable. (323)

Adding to this, numbers of journalists were summoned and tortured to the Chisapani Barracks. Likewise many reporters of newspaper and media were tortured and killed by people's army. Ganendra Khadka is a picture of such brutality.

Revolution's root was the outcome of utter suppression, revolution emerged from the unfulfilled dream's ashes, and it dot birth from the abominable feelings of the marginalized Nepalese citizens. The latent revolutionary spirit of thousands marginalized Nepalese people's got manifested heralding lots of trauma amidst the Nepalese citizen. Trauma is the matter of feeling of the wounded, neglected, horrified and terrified, only can feel the sour taste of it. These years imparted such sour tastes, which out rusted as a revolution.

There is always a politics of representation in every piece of writing. The writer who has written about a text, is always guided by the ideological instances that he is accustomed to, eventually making his writing a mere reflection of the representation of his ideology. For instances, the writers who have close affiliation with Maoist's ideology will support Maoist's act and blame opposition parties' view, showing Police forces as cruel and barbaric, whereas the one who believes in other ideology will present the horrific sight of Maoist's activities and shows the police forces as the agent to end the terrorism. Every interpretation, therefore, is the mere representation of one's perspective.

Representation have powerful effect upon the society because it is through representation, people see the reality of society and believe that what they have seen or read, is the truth. His biasness can be felt while reading the text as he seems to be more concerned about justifying his ideology rather than providing balanced

views about both parties. It is almost impossible to take neutral stance while writing because no one can avoid the ideological perspective which is always influenced by the scenario of a country.

Peoples War became the flaming issue for media and newspaper. The events of war were represented in media and literature. Different people reported events of war differently. In this regard Kanak Mani Dixit gives some reporting of war time which was captivated by ideological perspective;

‘There are many grave instances of misbehavior towards the people by the security forces,’ says Mandira Sharma, a member of Advocated Forum, who has visited the Maoist heartland in western Nepal since the emergency was put in place and the army activated. ‘There is a state of terror in the villages, but the news is not coming out. There is little pressure on the army to improve its record. Hundreds have been held incommunicado, not receiving even the right to justice which is available under the emergency.’ (304)

War has always been represented as something bad and horrible due to its bad impact upon people and society. Most of the writers have focused on the terrific sight and destruction of war. It can never have any good impact upon society, hence, is always discouraged. There are other writers too, for whom war is a vehicle of change. Whatever be the evidences provided in favor or against it, this topic is worth-pondering. Every opinion about war is the result of representation of writer's ideology. Truth is always hidden because one has to go beyond biasness in order to reach the arena of truth and must be free of any opinion but it is impossible to avoid our ideological stances.

Every art, thus, is a representation of writer's ideology and trauma is the

tool that he uses to show the cruelty of opponent, representing the reality according to his ideological preferences. It is impossible to present the reality without being colored by some personal preferences. Writer's biasness is always present in his writing and thus making the writing a mere representation. Thus, there is politics of representation in every text and it is unavoidable fact.

## II. Trauma and Ethical Memory

The term "trauma", in general, refers to an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person. It is an action shown by the abnormal mind to the body and provides a method of interpretation of disorder, distress and destruction aroused by the psychological repression. Trauma theory is a privileged critical category which includes diverse fields, with its specific focus on psychological, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic questions about the nature and representation of traumatic events. These concerns of trauma theory "range from the public and historical to the private and memorial" (497). Freudian psychoanalysis provided a model of traumatic subjectivity and various accounts about the effect of trauma and memory. Geoffery Hartman turns from work on the undecidability of interpretation in literature to publish work on Holocaust memory and witness in the early 1990s. Cathy Caruth signaled that trauma as the limit of knowledge is a continuation of the Yale project. In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of "sudden or catastrophic events, in which the responses to the event occurs in the after delayed and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (181). When traumatic experience takes place, the mind and body are found in numbed state. In such situation post traumatic stress disorder comes.

Sigmund Freud studies dynamics of trauma, repression and symptoms formations as the matter of hysteria. The overpowering event is revealed in the form of somatic symptom or compulsive, repetitive behavior. Studying the trauma theory related with Freud, James Berger reads that the neurotic symptoms are related with the repressed drives. He comments, ". . . initial theory of trauma and symptom becomes problematic for Freud when he concluded that neurotic

symptoms were often the result of repressed drives and desires than of traumatic events" (1). The traumatic event and its aftermath again become central to psychoanalysis. Further, the theory of trauma for Freud becomes the account for the historical development of entire culture. And he develops the elaboration of the concept of 'latency'. Berger defines the term as "a memory of traumatic events which can be lost over time but then regained in a symptomatic form when triggered by some similar events" (3).

Regarding psychoanalytical approach, in *Studies on Hysteria* Breuer and Freud are committed to the view that the "reminiscences that causes hysterical suffering are historical in the sense that they are linked to actual traumas in patient's life" (186). The affect associated with the past trauma can't be acknowledged and the amnesia that results means that the force of the affect becomes dammed up.

Freud's elaboration of the concept of 'latency' of how memory of a traumatic event can be lost over a time is a challenging test of a symptomatic event. Each national catastrophe invokes and transforms memories of other catastrophes, so that history becomes a complex entanglement of crimes inflicted and suffered with each catastrophe understood—in the context of repressed memories of previous ones.

Trauma has become a socially, morally, and politically acceptable object to revolve around on the ground of multiculturalists institutional survival in the act of a finding a 'sublimated' object.

Before the larger discussion of trauma from cultural approach which has a magnificent importance, psychoanalytical approach to trauma also need to be discussed which also have great importance in a definition of trauma. When we

talk about the trauma from psychoanalytic approach, the idea of Cathy Caruth, should not be forgotten which is one of the leading figures of trauma theory appears to be worth-mentioning.

Cathy Caruth in his book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, is concerned principally with questions of reference and representation: how trauma becomes text, or how wound becomes voice. Caruth sketches a theory of trauma as instigator of historical narrative which describes the intersections traumatic narrative. Caruth argues that trauma as it first occurs is incomprehensible. Traumatic narrative, then, is strongly referential, but not in any simple or direct way. Berger cites Caruth where he claims that the historical narrative arises from traumatic repetition. Caruth argues that “the historical narrative arises from such intersections of traumatic repetitions, which history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (5).

The impact of major traumatic events is never identical to any two people and those trauma manifests where political and psychological forces fuse. On this point Deborah M. Horvitz cites Cathy Caruth, who has written extensively on psychoanalysis and trauma theories, states:

If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not-knowing. And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect with the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet. (5)

Cathy Caruth, who is very famous for her ideas of latency, argues that trauma as it

first takes place in uncertain, but that “the survivors uncertainly is not a simple amnesia; for the event returns, as Freud points out insistently and against will” (6). Her ideas reinforce the fact that the trauma can’t be forgotten. Caruth gives emphasis on the part of latency the temporary delay, which should not be misunderstood as repression because trauma by its very nature, displays with a vengeance over a period of time, especially when triggered by a similar event.

The term “latency” which means the period in which the effect of the experience are not apparent has been described by Freud “as the successive moment from an event to its repression to its return” (6). Caruth opines that the victim of a crash is never fully conscious during the accident itself. The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist, not in the forgetting of a reality that can never be fully known, but in “as inherent latency within the experience itself” (8).

Traumatic past, experienced in the literary text itself plays the role to prove the traumatic representation and reference, and how it become text and how a wound become a voice. Cathy caruth, similarly explores the principles of trauma and its narrative history. In the book *Unclaimed Experience* Caruth sketches the theory of trauma as instigator of historical narrative through an analysis of *Moses and Monotheism*: describes the intersections of traumatic narratives in the Alain Resnais film *Hiroshima*; outlines a theory of reference as the imprint of catastrophic face in a discussion of de Man and ends with a reading of Lacan’s gloss of Freud’s interpretation of the dream of the burning child( a sequence of interpretation that itself highlights issues of traumatic transmission ), in which she proposes testimony as providing an ethical relation to trauma. In relation the de Manian theory of language, Caruth argues and proceed to a quite difficult

discussion of how events befall authors, how language falls short of perpetual reality while producing reference through this fall and how reference ultimately “registers, in language, the impact of an events” (74).

Geoffery Hartman, a leading critic of trauma theory, focusing on the deconstructive rereading of romantic literature started to turn his interest to the ‘remembrance and representation’ of the Holocaust in early 1990s. Defining the Trauma Study in the arts and literature, Hartman, in his article *Trauma Within the Limits of Literature* explores the relation of “psychic wounds and signification” (257). The structure of psychic wounding of ‘trauma’ in its physical connotation has a bearing on the second of the “pressure and relief of a determining yet deeply occluded experience” (257).

Not only, there is the impact of specific historical shocks like the Holocaust and other genocides, but also is the impact of electronic media on the feelings of viewers especially the transmission of ‘distance suffering’. As a specifically literary endeavor trauma study projects the relation of ‘words and wounds’. Its main focus is on words that wound, and presumably can be healed, if at all, by further words. But hurt, striking deeper than we realize, also comes through “the radical inadequacy of what is heard or read, when the words searched for cannot address or redress other shocks, including visual images with a violent content” (259). Literature both recognizes and offsets that inadequacy. If there is a failure of language, resulting in silence then no working through, no catharsis, is possible.

In any case, trauma theory within literary studies does shift attention from aetiology to effects among which a literary sensibility is often found. This shift, increasing our consciousness of the power as well as impotence of words, has both an intriguing and a more dubious consequence. When we speak of the nightmare

sufferings of war, or of the Holocaust's break with civilized values these extraordinary determinants of trauma are different from ordinary ones, whether "unguarded phrases, or deliberate insults, or more violent but random excitations that inflict psychic damage"(260).

Hartman, 'On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary studies' had effectively translated his long critical career into variations on the study of trauma. After reading Romantic Poetry, Hartman argued that trauma marks the disjunction between the event and the forever belated, incomplete understanding of the event. Figurative language is a form of 'perpetual troping' around a primary experience that can never be captured. Whether it is Coleridge's Ancient Mariner compulsively repeating his tale, or William Blake's private and cryptic mythology, or Wordsworth's account, in *The Prelude*, of how poetic subjectivity is created through wounding events. Hartman regards trauma theory as a key expository device. Hartman had always emphasized that poetic discourse induced a proliferation of meanings; trauma was now the motivating "nature of the negative that provokes symbolic language" (540).

The burden on imagination is aggravated by the fact that many families were decimated in the Holocaust, so that the injury suffered becomes an injury to memory itself, to the very possibility of recollection. Hartman further adds:

The act of remembrance, especially by the immediate descendents, turns in a vacuum as it tries to recover individual details about the life and death of those who disappeared. The internal other in this 'compact void' is here rarely, into the presence of imaginary figures, interlocuters summoned from the void and who must assume a convincing identity, that 'solidity of, specification' which alone

satisfies, according to Henry James, a modern realism. A cold trauma may result not only an immediate, overwhelming affright and its probable consequence of defensive emotional dulling, but also a chill brought on by the absence of what normally facilitates identification and a working-through, however precarious.(262)

The wound words inflict is generic because discourse as such, whether private or public, literary or philosophic, consolidates the difference between words and things even while trying to bridge it. This perspective differs from discourse analysis like Foucault's, which concentrates on the link between power and established professional idioms. However, it does not challenge the relevance of discourse analysis. The generic character of the word-wound stresses a dialectic progression in which language 'negates' the enticement of phenomena, creating a space for reflection in which their sensuous aspect is more clearly perceived and sublimed into thought.

Regarding the matter of trauma theory, Anne Kaplan in the essay 'Why Trauma Now' focuses on trauma culture. The remembering of recent catastrophes implicates us back into the trauma of industrial warfare, totalitarian atrocities, and the annihilating speed of modernization that, along with imperial invasion and colonial subjugation, demolished traditional cultures. Supporting the idea of trauma memory as Caruth explains, Kaplan argues:

In arguing that trauma is a special form of memory, they stated that in trauma the event has affect only, not meaning. It produces emotions--- terror, fear, shock--- but perhaps above all disruption of the normal feeling of comfort. Only the sensation sector of the brain --- the amygdale--- is active during the trauma. The meaning-

making one (in the sense of rational thought, cognitive processing), namely, the cerebral cortex, remains shut down because the affect is too much to be registered cognitively in the brain. Caruth, taking these theories for granted, argued that just because the traumatic experience has not been given meaning, the subject is continually haunted by it in dreams, flashbacks, and hallucination. (34)

Moreover, about the memory he further adds the idea of Susannah Radstone. She views that “memory is the outcome of complex processes of revision shaped by promptings from the present whereas trauma theory posits the linear registration of events as they happen, albeit such registrations may be secreted away through dissociation”. She further claims that “trauma theory exorcises . . . psychoanalysis’ later insistence on the agency of the unconscious in the formation of memories” (109).

Trauma theory bridges the gap and enables to approach the political/national structures that produce catastrophe while at the same time shaping its impact according to prevailing ideological and other discourses. When memory of trauma comes in the form of literature or in any art there is always biasness in representation. Kaplan further stresses:

I understand and appreciate the criticism of Caruth’s insistence on the “unspeakability” and “unrepresentability” of trauma: I will argue that telling stories about trauma, even though the story can never actually repeat or represent what happened, may partly achieve a certain “working through” for the victim. It may also (my main concern in this book) permit a kind of empathic “sharing” that moves us forward, if only by inches. What seems wrong in the way

criticisms have been formulated is the apparent dismissal of the phenomena of both dissociation and generational transmission of trauma. Many have written movingly about the experience of dissociation (once they became aware that such splitting had occurred) as well as about intergenerational transmission of trauma. (37).

Kaplan further takes the ideas of David Becker about the trauma. Trauma can only be understood with reference to the specific contexts in which it occurs, including cultural norms, political context, the nature of the event, the organization of the community. Instead of speaking about trauma per se, we should talk of the “traumatic situation,” since that phrasing implies that one is not just looking at an individual who has suffered but at what surrounds that person’s suffering-his or her environment, specific institutions involved, the state of her community, its politics. He cites the idea of Becker “in each different social context people should create their own definition of trauma within a framework, in which the basic focus is not so much on the symptoms of a person but on the sequential development of the traumatic situation” (7).

The memory of trauma defines depending upon the political, cultural ideology. Kaplan concludes:

Perhaps literary and film scholars were distracted from studying the reader or viewer position by focusing on events within a fictional or documentary text and studying the representation of trauma in terms of protagonists. In chapters that follow, I explore in more depth than humanities scholars have hitherto done the way trauma impacts on readers and viewers. In particular, I make distinctions between

direct and vicarious trauma, analyze the cultural politics of each type of trauma, and explore the aesthetics of catastrophe in a range of different media. (41)

In the attempt to represent traumatizing events and traumatic or posttraumatic experience, testimony, fiction, and history may share certain features, for instance, on the level of narrative, but they also differ, notably with respect to truth claims and the way that and account is framed. Testimony makes truth claims about experience or at least one's memory of it and, more tenuously, about events.

Sociologist Jeffery C. Alexander has launched, what he has coined "A Theory of Cultural Trauma". The aim with Alexander's notion of cultural trauma is to both criticize what he calls "lay trauma theory" and to offer a perspective for considering social and cultural processes of collective traumas. Moreover, Alexander gives cultural trauma an ethical dimension, although he does not explicitly use the notion ethics.

Accordingly, trauma is a normative concept, but in what way is it also a question of an ethics? – 'Of thick relations' as Avishai Margalit, in *The Ethics of Memory* has named it, dichotomizing the relation between ethics and morality into thick and thin relations respectively.

In general psychologists and sociologists agree that trauma and event are separate. Trauma is an act of signification, hence something social. Jeffery C. Alexander stresses the social dimension even further with the notion of cultural trauma:

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 changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.(1)

Moreover, Alexander gives cultural trauma an ethical dimension, although he does not explicitly use the notion ethics:

Insofar as they [the collective] 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 suffering of others. Is the suffering of others also our own? In thinking that it might in fact, societies expand the circle of the we. By the same token, social groups can, and often do, refuse to recognize the existence of others' trauma and because of their failure they cannot achieve a moral stance. [...] by refusing to participate in what I will describe as the process of trauma creation, social groups restrict solidarity, leaving others to suffer alone. (ibid)

Thus, Alexander's aim to deny that trauma is grounded in something objective (external or real) becomes a way of stressing the ethical character of the cultural trauma process. However, one of the key questions is how to 'expand the circle of the we' and still withhold the ethical imperative.

The cultural trauma process the semiotics of trauma, takes place in-between event and representation. But in order for the event to become a cultural trauma, to migrate into social significance, it has to be established as a shared value – even if we talk about a negative value as in the case of trauma. This is a process that takes time and that require agents, mediations and a community of carriers and 'caretakers'. Thus, cultural trauma, as a social and cultural phenomenon implies an ethics. This concerns *cultural* trauma and not all traumas. The gap between event

and representation is not always a free and open space that is accessible for intervention and agency. Some events may be so difficult and horrible that it takes an extensive time span to appropriate them. However, it also considers that psychological or individual trauma – at least in part – to be outside the model and the interpretative frame.

Accordingly, the theory which is considered as an empirical one, is a cultural perspective on dramatic events that have the potential to be made into collective traumas, into a shared past and a common memory around something that is deeply disturbing. It is rather ‘perspective’ instead of theory because what we face is a heuristic process where we are trying to find reasonable meanings for situations, acts and things. It is also a question of culture because trauma is used as a metaphor, it is something that is carried over – and migrating – from the discipline and domain of psychology into that of culture, or cultural anthropology and sociology of culture.

One of the consequences with the idea of cultural trauma is therefore that we have to get rid of the epistemological problem of memory. Who did what is not what matters. Our semiotics is instead based upon the principle of migration (we study effects of an absent event) and the question of origin or what actually happened is of no relevance. If we focus on the question of the character and quality of the event and the origin, then we are moving into the domain of the morality of trauma and of memory. This is the world of the detective, the police of morality. As Margalit claims we need morality because we don’t care about people in general, we care only for those we know, for those who are near us. Therefore caring is placed in a now, and so to speak localized. Consequently, to pose the question what actually happened is only important from a moral point of

view. Moral, according to Margalit, is abstract and general, when ethics is material and specific. Hence, ethics presupposes a shared past, memory and community. Morality does not. A true cultural trauma process is therefore a sign for a thick relation, an ethics.

Thus, acknowledging a cultural trauma is a social form of caring. If we care for a collective that has suffered we consider their traumatic past. If we care for the moral of the trauma (for example about what actually happened, or of whom that has the right to claim to be traumatized) we don't necessary care for the community or the victim.

Following Margalit's thesis then an ethics presupposes an enclosed social space. Morality on the other hand is unlimited. It regulates our "thin" relations, our common humanity. Morality is born out of principles and therefore the result of an act of negotiation and legislation. Margalit writes: "Morality is long on geography and short on memory. Ethics is typically short on geography and long on memory." Consequently we are facing a dilemma. When facing one of the primary characteristics of today's society, migration and immigration, how to move between the open and abstract space of morality and the enclosed space of ethics? How can one transgress and overcome the dichotomization of ethics and fixed place vs. morality and open space? One tentative answer could be that we in fact are talking about a process; hence our chains of signification are closed and opened up through time. The time span is important because it also implies that the cultural trauma process includes the act of forgetting as well; the absent other of memory.

Hence, trauma and ethical memory existed in some literary works before a long time but the few decades have been a period in which 'trauma' as an object of

inquiry has moved beyond the parameters of clinical study to become a preoccupation among literary and cultural critics. Since 'trauma' being a part of psychoanalysis, the society for the Humanities and social sciences, is concerned with the present and discuss work on trauma and its association with psychoanalysis. Now, a unique and realist discourse, 'trauma' studies' has become a part of study into its own area. Trauma has become a socially, morally, politically and culturally acceptable object to revolve around on the ground of multiculturalists institutional survival in the act of a finding a 'sublimated' object.

### **III. Politics of Trauma and Ethical Memory in *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu***

The 'ethics' of memory necessarily becomes a political question that must address hegemony, or the asymmetry of power relations. This thesis will address the political stakes of collective memories of violence. In the context of an increasingly global literature of memory, it becomes necessary to ask certain questions. How does memory itself become a means for repeating violence? How does memory manifest 'collectively,' particularly in the context of the literature? And, in the context of the present conflict in Peoples War: what happens when distinct memories of violence come into conflict? In other words, what happens when the Maoist representation of memory comes into conflict with the mainstream memory. The concern of the thesis is that the 'ethics' of memory necessarily becomes a political question that must address hegemony, or the asymmetry of power relations. The thesis begins by using trauma theory of Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, Anne Kaplan, Heartman, Jeffery C. Alexander and ethical memory of Avishai Margalit, in order to establish the difference between an ethics of memory and the violent repetition of a traumatic memory. But a key point of the argument is that psychoanalysis reaches a political limit when confronted with the question of how, or where, a collective memory repeats. Using the work of Avishi Margalit that collective memories must be viewed in the context of public space and thick relation, Narayan Wagle's novel *Palpasa Café* and Manjushree Thapa's book *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* deal with the politics of trauma and ethical memory of violence during the ten years' Peoples War. It is in this terrain that collective memory takes place and runs the risk of reproducing past violence. That's why an ethics of memory must confront issues of public in order to address the political situation in which two collective memories

contest one another.

According to Kunda Dixit, editor and co publisher of the *Nepali Times*, in his book review of *Palpasa Café*, ‘In Other Words’ portrays the traumatic events of contemporary society, where Wagle is representing the real picture. The narrator of the novel is able to successfully understand and represent the traumatic experiences. Dixit explains, “As a fellow editor, I empathize with Wagle’s feeling of inadequacy about journalism’s capacity to provide a true picture of our nation’s current trauma” (96 Foreign Policy). However, Wagle’s style of narrating event is true as a journalist but traumatic memory of people is transformed in secondary form. Dixit further adds:

Facts are often more dramatic than fiction in societies wracked by messy conflict. In Nepal, every story of landmines killing children, rebels abducting students, young women disappearing at a checkpoint is a heart-wrenching family tragedy that the rest of the country must hear. Instead, they are often reported in a manner that turns such victims into meaningless statistics. (96)

We rarely see, hear, or share the pain and personal loss of the bereaved, executed by Maoists, a bomb going off somewhere. We are just chroniclers of carnage. The plot weaves the fragile and undeclared love between Drishya and Palpasa—a first-generation Nepali American who has returned to the land of her parents after becoming fed up with post- 9/11 racial stereotyping in the United States—into the artist’s with his old friend, Siddhartha, who is now a guerrilla. When Siddhartha comes to Katmandu in the aftermath of the royal massacre to seek shelter in Drishya’s house, the two argue over whether the goals of revolution justify the means: “How can you ever justify violence?” Drishya asks. Siddhartha replies:

“Without destroying, you can’t build anew.” “But people are dying; they crave for peace,” Drishya pleads. “The people don’t need peace; *Palpasa Café* is a fictionalized account of several events, of the lives and deaths of ordinary Nepal’s caught in the grips of war. He always narrates the event from the perspective of mainstream politics.

After narrating the story of Royal massacre, Wagle turns his disappeared friend into an imaginary artist named Drishya, and the rest of the book is the artist’s story told in his own voice. Wagle admits that much of what Drishya goes through is semiautobiographical. Early on, Wagle offers a hint about why he is writing the book. As he takes dictation from a district reporter about another firefight in the mountains, he thinks: “Nothing new here. Every day it is the same. Tomorrow’s paper will be the same as this morning’s. The same stories of an army patrol being ambushed, suspected spy they need justice,” says his Maoist friend. “If there is justice, there will be peace.” “But you are carrying out injustices in the name of justice,” says Drishya one last time. But the two can’t even agree to disagree.

It’s clear that Wagle is deeply troubled about the impact of the fighting on the national mind-set, and he is appalled by the Maoist methods: the brutality, the intolerance of dissent, and the use of terror as a weapon. Drishya travels to his home village to meet Siddhartha and finds it torn apart by war, the Nepali psyche irreversibly scarred by the violence. Page after page, it is all there: the atrocities, executions, disappearances, abductions, landmines, and people caught in the crossfire. But because these events happen to characters we have grown to know intimately, the incidents seem more real than the headlines. Not only is this novel

as fresh as an open wound, it is also written in a nonlinear style. Wagle's Nepali language is simple and colloquial. Although Drishya's character is unnecessarily abrasive, *Palpasa* comes across as an authentic diaspora child caught between love for her motherland and alienation from her adopted home. Sooner or later, some outsider was going to write a novel about Nepal's Maoist insurgency and the country's present turmoil and transition. Dixit further writes, "Narayan Wagle beat them to it and has produced what is essentially an understated but powerful anti-war novel that will be read and talked about for years. It drags us beyond Shangri-La and forces us to look at the abyss below" (97).

*Palpasa Café* raises the issue of political conflict in which common people are, increasingly not only the victims but the weapons of war. Wagle's sensitive and careful telling of a story on behalf of those who can't, have not been allowed to tell it, obliges us to examine the limits of representation with constraint for greater than those that have conventionally taxed scholars who have been working on the trauma of the war. It has been difficult enough for scholars to struggle with the vexing questions that surround available testimony about the holocaust, in what language at what time; with what audience can the unspeakable horror of the traumatic event be adequately articulated. He means to say that the traumatic experiences of common people during the ten years peoples war present us with an event greater challenge, when there no validation of the event itself in the larger social register. But the traumatic events are presented from the perspective of ethical memory of mainstream political ideology.

Puspa Raj Acharya, in his seminal essay "Inauthentic Representation of Violence in *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu*" argues that "Narayan Wagle demonizes the Maobadis by using the prose of otherness and by presenting the

imbalance. In contrast, Manjushree Thapa demonizes the army through the same means. Thus, these texts, *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu* turn out to be poor literature of violence”(3). The narrative technique of both *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu* is that of travel narrative but Wagle’s writing supports to the mainstream literature whereas Thapa’s writing demonizes the mainstream literature. Insofar as they identify the cause of trauma, and thereby assume such moral responsibility; members of collectivities define their solidarity relationships which allow them to share the suffering of others. At the same time, they refuse to recognize the existence of others’ trauma and because of their failure they cannot achieve a moral stance. By refusing to participate in the process of trauma creation, social groups restrict solidarity, leaving others to suffer alone.

The violence which carried trauma from the personal to the collective level became synonymous with political evil itself. The Peoples War has become the iconic trauma. It is now a concept that has been dislocated from space and time resulting in its inscription into other acts of injustice and traumatic national memories across the country. Put differently, it is now perceived as a structural rather than a historical trauma.

Narayan Wagle’s novel *Palpasa Café* is about the traumatic memory of people during violence of Peoples war from the perspective of mainstream political ideology. Wagle, while narrating the traumatic experience of the death event of Palpasa and a small child of five years, he uses ethics of memory which is dominated by thick relation. He narrates the event by using prose of otherness and focuses on collective memory from the perspective of mainstream politics. The biases emerge in writer’s tone, attitude and exclusion and inclusion of details.

Using journalistic technique the narrator upholds the events, putting royal

massacre and killing and many bomb blast events at the centre of all the events and occurrences. Structurally the events of killing weave through Wagle's narrative; trauma pervades the story. In the same line Puspa Raj Acharya adds, "Though the write tries to balance the Maobadi atrocity with that of the armed, he has failed to conceal his distaste for the Maobadis"(1).

The novel potrays the violence inflicted by both the security forces and the Maobadis, but this portrayal is Wagle's politics of trauma and ethical memory. The novel describes only two atrocities committed by the security forces whereas the atrocities committed by the Maobadis add up to more than a dozen. The event of killing Siddhartha in chapter 21 is only the event of ateocities committed by the security forces:

All of a sudden, some appeared from nowhere. [...] the men had caught up with Siddhartha. He was completely surrounded. I hear three shots and he fell. I was speechless with shock. [...] the helicopter disappeared [...] He was lying in a pool of blood but was still breathing. [...] as he stared at me, the light behind his eyes flickered and died, like a candle snuffed out by the wind. I sobbed. I screamed. I wept like a child. (166)

Though he tries to show the balance but at the same time, he comments upon the Maoist activities:

Siddhertha had chosen to walk on the edge of a knife but he'd made the hills into a *Khukuri*. So many young people had followed him mindlessly and taken up arms without understanding the consequences. They were exhilarated by the power guns gave them. But it brought nothing but devastation. (169)

Wagle, here, comments the way where Siddhartha was running. He even blames him for misleading the young people of country who have taken up arms without understanding the situation of the country, which only leads the country in devastation. He never comments on the atrocities of army. However, my reading indicates that the event, as a long-awaited discharge of traumatic excitations in the Siddhartha's death, offers consolation; but the ending is deceptive.

The rest of the atrocities that find mention in the novel are carried out by the Maobadies. In the novel, there are the descriptions of the Maobadis' planting bombs in the villages roads and of schools being shut down because the teachers have been killed. Conscripted and atrocities on children appear in several places in the novel. Chapter 19 ends with a description of the Maobadi violence on civilians and death of five years old child in an explosion. Wagle writes:

Suddenly, at a fork in the road she stopped. Below us, people were gathered in front of a house. It looked like there'd been some kind of accident there. A man with a sad expression on his face came up and took my little friend in his arms. 'Nanu,' he told her. 'Your *mitini's* gone. She picked up a bomb and, when she was playing with it, it exploded in her hands.' Oh my God my whole body began to tremble. I stood there shocked. That was the noise we'd heard. Nanu dropped the bananas and ran towards the house, crying. She ran like a kite being pulled by a string. (150)

Here, the traumatic event of death is represented as form of cultural trauma, to migrate into social significance; it has to be established as a shared value – even if

we talk about a negative value as in the case of trauma. This is a process where is equal balance of require agents, mediations and a community of carriers and ‘caretakers’. This trauma memory which we study is an effect of an absent event, and the question of origin or what actually happened is of no relevance.

Wagle describes the trauma of the mentally disturbed old couple that has lost their son, who is Drishya’s childhood friend also, because of the Maobadis. In chapter 21 the narrator narrates many events of killing, torture and trauma. There is an image of widow women walking ahead of the narrator who’d been widowed the day after her wedding. He writes:

I felt like I was stepping on her tears. To one side of the trail was an injured bird that had fallen from a tree. One of its wings was caught on a branch. The flapping of its wings devastated me. That and the sound of the widow’s breathing were the saddest music I’d ever heard. [...] The hills in which he’d invested his sweat, blood and tears had become a burden to him. Now, he was in a hurry to claim his dead son. ‘I just buried one son,’ he said. ‘Now, I have to identify the body of another.’ He hobbled along, bereft of hope. [...] Behind me was an old woman. She was also on her way to claim a body, the body of her daughter which had been crammed into a basket on a riverbank across the hill. She’d identify her daughter by her face, the same sweet face she’d held to her breast all those years ago. (159-60)

In his journey, the narrator becomes the witness of different event of violence which speaks of enduring trauma, betraying a wound that has never quite healed the damaged body and psyche of women who became the sites of the worst

violence. When traumatic experience takes place, the mind and body are found in numbed state, the overpowering event is revealed in the form of somatic symptom or compulsive, repetitive behavior.

Though, Wagle seems initially to acknowledge the understanding of traumatic experience, he goes on to transcend the gaps in this record through literature, to absorb the terrible feeling of humanity truncated, tortured and to rehearse 'the trauma of those who have suffered at the hand of history. To assert that the writer can somehow 'know' and convey the experience of those who have been traumatic is to misunderstand the partiality of the traumatic experience and this assertion obscures the exercise of power through representation. He seems 'neutral' medium that can carry and convey the suffering but he indicates toward Maobadis that they are not able to learn the difference between right and wrong. However, showing enduring trauma of the people who were victimized through the violence of Maobadis, he supports mainstream politics, that is the politics of traumatic memory.

The most important incident that candidly reveals the writer's view about the Maobadis appears towards the end of the novel, when Palpasa, whom Drishya loves, dies in the bomb explosion carried out by the Maobadis. According to Acharya, the death of Palpasa, at the end of novel, signifies the death of creation. He writes, "Her death signifies the destruction of the creative principle at the hands of the Maobadis, which, by implication, means that the Maobadis are the destructive force opposing the feminine principle (2). Drishya always think about Palpasa and make a plan to tell her about the events he had seen. Once, Palpasa comments upon Maobadies: "They have made the villagers their prisoners! [...]" It's simply a dictatorship. It shows how they'd run the country if they ever came to

power. And that could only be achieved at the barren of a gun, not with the support of the people” (184). Here, using language of demonization, Wagle excludes Maobadi from the community and the peoples also, where he directly supports mainstream politics. Drishya narrates the event of bomb explosion:

All around, I heard people shrieking, I didn't know what was happening. Dazed, I ran my hands over myself to see if I'd been hurt. I saw the road was lit up. Everything seemed to be on fire. I heard people groaning. A few people were running helter-skelter, tripping over me. When I got up, the bus was ablaze. 'Palpasa!' I screamed. [...] I thought I could hear Palpasa's voice above the rest and the sound almost drove me insane. People were running away but I stood there helplessly, unable to move, unable to think. Then I noticed a row of torches moving up the hill. Our bus had been caught in an ambush, laid by the people carrying those torches. [...] Two passengers from the bus lay besides me unconsciously. 'Palpasa!' I screamed again towards the inferno. (186)

After the death of Palpasa, Drishya becomes mad like. He screams. He can't control the situation around him. He becomes the witness of his beloved's death. He himself describes an overwhelming experience of that catastrophic event. His mind and body are found in numbed state. He further explains:

My whole body was shaking like a leaf. All my dreams and desires were suddenly gone, like a bird flying off the branch of a tree. I'd survived only because of I'd got off the bus. And Palpasa had been killed only because she hadn't. It was absurd, the reason I'd survived and the reason she'd been killed. There is no reason to it at

all. It is not that I'd survived because of some act of courage and she'd died because of some weakness. None of it made sense. (187)

There is no reason why she is killed. It is a chance. Police were targeted but public bus became victim. Wagle is trying to make the event more real than in news, but narrating through the person, whose beloved is died in violence, can't be neutral because of the thick relation. It is not only the thick relation of lovers rather more about political relation which is shaping the trauma memory.

In each different social context people should create their own definition of trauma within a framework, in which the basic focus is not so much on the symptoms of a person but on the sequential development of the traumatic situation.

Drishya says:

This was a crime. This was cowardice. All logic and conscience were gone. Why was I alive and Palpasa dead. [...] I'd looked at Palpasa for the last time as I got off the bus. It was just the briefest of glances; I'd hardly seen her. Now I realized it would be the last time I'd ever see her. I thought about her lovely eyes, her soft skin. I wiped my eyes. [...] I was speechless. The person who was bringing happiness to my life was gone. Oh my God, I couldn't believe it. Palpasa was becoming the sweetest picture in my life. I was falling in love with her dreams. I'd felt we'd travel together to a wonderful destination. Now she was gone. She'd disappeared in flames before my eyes. [...] Oh God. How could I have witnessed the death of my lover? (188)

Trauma can only be understood with reference to the specific contexts in which it occurs, including cultural norms, political context, the nature of the event, the

organization of the community.

While discussing the problematic issue of memory in the narrative of trauma in this novel, that the society was troubled by the overwhelming flood of dangerous emotions resulting from the traumatic impact of an event on the scale of Peoples War . Representing the nightmare of war as well as the troubling and unresolved effects of the war, this witness perspective has been institutionalized and become politically consequential. As traumatic memories move between the historical and the structural, the narrativization of trauma has eventually given way to its politicization. Wagle's subtle politics of exclusion and inclusion emerges at places when he comments on violence directly. Hence, his own centrist politics -a political stance in text tilted in favor of the ethical memory of the mainstream rather than the memory of Maobadi.

In contrast to Wagle's *Palpasa Café*, Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu*, when seen with in the parameters of representation of violence, if for Wagle, the Maobadis are maligned other, for Thapa the Royal Nepal Army is the demon wreaking havoc upon the innocent people in the name of containing the Maobadi violence. Thapa fares no better than Wagle in so far as the use of politics of trauma and ethical memory is concerned. In spite of Thapa's attempts to be objective by letting her characters themselves speak about the human rights violations fails to represent the violence authentically. Hers are the ways even subtler than those of Wagle's in demonizing 'the other', which in her case is the security forces, valorizing the Maobadi revolution, between the violence perpetrated by the Maobadis and the security forces.

Written with a deep concern for the political future of a Nepal cornered by the authoritarian impulses of the monarchy, the grotesque factiousness of the

parliamentary parties and the anarchic violence of the Maoists, *Forget Kathmandu* is Manjushree Thapa's lament for the apparent impossibility of democracy in her country.

In June 2001, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah was killed in a massacre at Kathmandu's Narayanhiti Royal Palace, allegedly by his own son, the crown prince, and the world took new notice of Nepal. Since then, several thousand lives have been lost to a violent Maoist insurgency and repressive state counter-insurgency.

In this illuminating study of the tangled politics of the country, Manjushree Thapa examines what has gone wrong, and why. Starting with an account of the Narayanhiti massacre and its aftermath, she goes back in time to trace the history, often chaotic, of Nepal's monarchy since unification in the 18 century, and of the struggle, in the 20 century, for genuine democracy. She ends with a record of her trek into Maoist held territories in West Nepal, where the majority continue to live in poverty, human rights abuses are on the rise, and boys and girls as young as thirteen have taken to the gun.

Acharya claims about subtle politics of exclusion and inclusion in her writing. He comments:

She only indicates the human rights violations by the security forces and leaves out the human rights violations committed by the Maoist. She mentions only the less brutal violations from the Maoist side; the members of different political parties tell her time and again about the restrictions imposed on their parties by Maoist; the hotel owners and villagers tell her that the Maoist eat at their place but don't pay for the bill and the like.

Despite the facts that she is concerned about the difficulties faced by the political parties at the Maobadi hands, she belittles this concern by elaborated details of the violence perpetrated by the army. When people say that CPN-UML will win if the elections are held after disarming the Maobadies, she shows great surprise. (3)

The author's bourgeois cynicism wilts in the face of this expression of female empowerment growing out of the barrel of a gun, "All my irritation at the Maoists fell away with this. If I had grown up in one of these villages, and were young, uneducated, unqualified for employment of any kind, and as a female, denied equality with men — hell, I would have joined the Maoists, too," she declares. "The other political parties had not offered better options, and neither had the government. Join the Maoists is what any spirited girl would do." Living under the shared values of Maobadies, Thapa narrates the event of killing and violence belittling the army.

Despite traveling through villages which have borne the brunt of the RNA's repression, she never came across anyone who was not a Maoist who acknowledged supporting the insurgents. She writes:

He sat down beside us, and began to talk in a low, intent voice: 'Last year they shot the ward chairman, Dilli Prasad Acharya,' he told us. 'He wasn't even a Maoist. He was in the UML. It was about three in the afternoon, and he was washing his hands at a house before having a snack. It was this kind of courtyard.' The boy pointed around him. The other men had fallen silent to listen to him. 'The army shot him,' the boy said. 'He died on the spot. 'His wife was pregnant,' one of the older men added. 'She gave birth to their

son three days later.’(208-9)

Power seeks to control memory; to keep it in the realm of politics. In trauma and the memory of politics explore instances when memory has functioned to challenge the politics of the state. Memory can be harnessed as a form of resistance. She criticizes up on Nepal Police’s operation Romeo, which unleashed a wave of terror against the villagers of Rolpa and Rokum Districts and thousands of people were displaced from their homes as the police raided villages and arrested suspected Maoists, detaining them illegally and subjecting them to torture. She further adds:

‘His wife was pregnant,’ one of the older men added. ‘She gave birth to their son three days later.’

‘Why did they shoot him?’ I asked. ‘I mean, why him in particular?’ Troops from the Manma army garrison were on a week-long patrol to the area, the boy said. ‘They just shot anyone who was outdoors in those days. They didn’t know who they were shooting. They didn’t care. They shot Dilli sir from across the village. From that distance, how could they know if someone is Maoist?’

‘That’s not all,’ he continued, urgently. ‘Two days before that, a student-like me, he was of my age-was studying a guess paper for his exams on the roof of a house. He saw the army walking by on a patrol, so he decided to go inside. In his room, he was looking at himself in the mirror, like this’-he patted his hair, mimicking the boy-‘when army came into the room and asked him why he’d gone indoors. They took him to the stone tap below the village and shot him dead. (209)

Her narrative technique raised broader questions about the nexus of trauma, memory and representation. Traumatic memories of certain people cannot stand up to a factual-or even physical, in the sense of a connection to a particular place-account of reality. This lends further credence to ethical memories of the victims and professional historiography. The relationship of history and memory has long been a central feature of ethical memory.

Using 'Trauma' she attempts to bridge the memories of the survivors to the scientific tools of the historian and social scientist. Though, giving different example she tries to claim the emotional traumas that lie at the heart of the trauma mode, namely emotional dissociation, there is a twist, as she substituted the events in ethical ground. Personal trauma has moved via cultural trauma to structural trauma. There seems to be a longing for identification with those who suffered. Like "child abuse," "spousal abuse," and other campaigns for the recognition of victims, the campaign to recognize the "Holocaust" has visible events. All these events are vitally connected to the shared community of Maobadi.

Nothing sums up the elegiac nature of her narrative better than the dirge of an old widow in western Nepal who tells Thapa the sad story of her family's destruction. "Her elder son and daughter-in-law had been shot dead by security forces because the villagers, on some grudge, had reported them as Maoists"(209), she writes.

Fearing for their lives, her second son and one of her daughters fled the village, never to return. "Her entire life had fallen apart around her. After telling me her story in almost one breath, she chanted over and over, 'My truth has been destroyed... My truth has been destroyed'"(210). This metaphor — of the destruction of truth — is a recurrent theme in the book and the culprits are many.

On the road to Manma in Kalikot, the author spoke to villagers who provided a chilling account of the Army's atrocities — of how soldiers in 2002 had killed innocent men, raped women, burnt more than 30 houses and dropped bombs on the village by helicopter. Asked about Maoist violence, villagers said there had only been one instance — the killing, under rather brutal circumstances, of a man suspected of being an informer. Thapa claims that atrocities and abuse were so widespread and systematic in the state security forces, they appeared to form the core of the counter-insurgency: cast a wide net, and surely some Maoists would be caught.

Ramakrishnan, A. k., professor of School of International Relations, Mahatma Gandhi University writes: “This history of despair of contemporary Nepal is lived through a narrative catharsis by Manjushree Thapa [...] the personal and the political merge. *Forget Kathmandu* doesn't allow the reader to forget either the past or the immediate present”. Thapa has an incredible skill for weaving and telling stories. Stories of contemporary and past Nepali politics are told here in such a personal tone that we tend to share these agonies of politics. These are stories of struggle, of pathos, of triumphs, of gloom and finally, some hope. Her utter dislike for monarchy and deep support of the Maoists mark the tone of political arguments and conversations. That is her politics of narrative. She writes:

‘Tell them about the Badi fellow,’ an old man said to the boy.

‘Sahadev Badi,’ said the boy. ‘He was killed on the same day. He was originally Dailekh District, but he had settled down here, marrying a local woman. The army thought he was a Maoist. They think everyone from outside is a Maoist, you see. They took him from the house, down to the river.’ His face spoiled and he paused

briefly. 'They made him dig a pit. Then they made him sit inside it, crouching, like this.' he curled into himself. 'Then they poured kerosene on him and set him on fire.' After another pause, he said, 'They buried him in the pit that he himself had dug.'(210)

The memory of the event trauma is presented here in such a way that as if we are witnessing the event. The narrative became more real from the perspective of morality but her narrative is guided through ethical memory. She examines the implications of these commemorations in terms of language, political power, sovereignty and nationalism. She argues that some forms of remembering do not ignore the horror of what happened but rather use memory to promote change and to challenge the political systems that produced the violence of wars and genocides in the first place.

The Maoists also destroyed a local bridge, but villagers rejoiced despite the inconvenience this caused them. "It's been a relief since the bridge was bombed," a boy told Thapa. "Before that, the Army used to come here on weekly patrols... (they) would beat men and boys, they'd speak roughly to women... call them whores"(211).

To narrate different events in a sympathetic tone through local person, especially children, widow women, old men etc she is trying to arouse sympathy towards the victims from the community group. The way of narrating trauma is, politically, creating truth. She writes:

'I was at home when the army came by on patrol. My niece, a child of six, ran into the house in fear. They chased after her, firing at my house. They even came to the door, and thrust their SLRs inside, firing. My mother was shot in the knee. My niece was shot near the

stomach.’ She said, ‘All because a child of six had run from them! They came in later, and searched up and down for their weapons. When they didn’t find any, they told us we shouldn’t run when we see them, and they left.’ (212)

In exploring the lives of those who may be experiencing hidden trauma I would argue that as researchers we need to be far more observant of ethical principles than other investigators such as journalists. Memory is a key construct in the examination of the effects of any trauma since it requires not only the careful re-telling by the traumatized person but also the reconstructing of experience over time. Here also Thapa shows the atrocities of army depending up on the ethical memory. She adds;

A helicopter flew over the village, hovering over the stretch between its upper and lower reaches. An 11-years-old boy was standing close to his house, near his front porch, when a bottle-shaped explosive fell out of the helicopter. It landed in the fields near the house, exploding, and shrapnel struck the boy in the back. The helicopter went onto drop four more explosives in different parts of the village, the women said. ‘All the crops were burned’.

(213)

For her, the army is cruel because they kill innocent people in every village they go for patrol. Here, the boy who was killed by the explosion has no role in war and destruction but killed without reason. Thousands of children are killed in war, both by army and Maobadis but Thapa failed to show the real picture of traumatic village due to the lack of balance. She never talks about the destruction caused by Maobadis. Witnessing violence done to others and surviving can seen to be as

traumatic as suffering brutality oneself. She represents the army as the criminals exercising brutality over women in contrast to Wagle's representation of the Maobadis as the anathema to women.

#### IV. Conclusion

Events that give rise to what we categorize today as symptoms of trauma generally involve force and violence. Often this is a threat to those people involved, their lives and integrity, as rape, torture or child abuse; sometimes it also involves witnessing the horrific deaths of others. In most of the cases, they were perpetrators of violence rather than victims. But it seems that to be called traumatic, to produce what are seen as symptoms of trauma-an event has to be more than just a situation of utter powerlessness. Events of the sort we call traumatic are overwhelming but they are also a revelation. They strip away the diverse commonly accepted meanings by which we lead our lives in our various communities. On the other hand, contemporary forms of political community have an ironic connection with the events that we have been discussing.

There is always a politics of representation in every piece of writing. Wagle's narrative in *Palpasa Café* is always guided by the mainstream ideological instances that he is accustomed to, eventually making his writing a mere reflection of the representation of his ideology. For instance, Thapa, in *Forget Kathmandu* has close affiliation with Maoist's ideology and this supports Maoist's act and blame opposition parties' view, showing Army forces as cruel and barbaric, whereas Wagle present the horrific sight of Maoist's activities and shows the army forces as the agent to end the terrorism. Every interpretation, therefore, is the mere representation of one's perspective depending on ethical memory.

This thesis analyses the cultural politics of memory in *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu*, during the period when people's war confronted the terror and other difficult episodes from the Nepalese past most fully. Using published literature and a variety of archival sources, the article focuses on the different

understandings of traumatic memory that emerged in party political discourse, literary criticism and literary works themselves. While emphasizing the contested meanings of trauma and memory in the period, the thesis argues that writer's authorities and editing and censorship practices ultimately led literature of the period to narrate the overcoming of trauma that narrativization of traumatic memory in both *Palpasa Café* and *Forget Kathmandu* is contaminated with the language of demonization which has been used largely against the Maoists in *Palpasa Café* and conversely against the Nepalese Army in *Forget Kathmandu*. .

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