

## Chapter 1

### Narayan Wagle's *Palpasa Cafe*

Patriotism is a feeling for one's own country. Many people associate patriotism with love for the land in which they are born, brought up, or currently live. People's sense of place and connection to a landscape is easy to understand as Goldstone argues, "Most of us have felt that, and it is a healthy instinct. It is difficult to care for something that one does not know well or have affection for. It is also common to talk about patriotism in terms of love and affection for one's countrywomen and men" (121). This can proceed on at two levels, either as "an assertion of differential value of people's lives or as an expression of affection for people. The former claims that the lives of people within one's nation-state are more valuable than lives of people outside it" (132). It is unacceptable by the standards of virtually all major moral philosophies and religions, which typically are based on the belief that all human life is intrinsically equally valuable.

It may be true that, especially in times of war, people act as if they believe the lives of fellow citizens that are more valuable, but that cannot be a principle on which patriotism can rest. Goldstone adds, "Culture does not map exactly onto the mostly artificial boundaries of nation-states. Indeed, in many nation-states internal differences among cultures can be a source of conflict, not unity" (131). It is difficult to imagine how patriotism could be defined as love of, or loyalty to, any particular culture or set of cultural practices. To say that patriotism is about respect for different cultural traditions is nonsensical. Respecting different cultures may be a fine principle, but it has nothing to do with love of, or loyalty to, a nation-state.

Patriotism assumes that the world is divided into little spots, each one surrounded by an iron gate. According to Robert Jensen, those who have had the

fortune of being born on some particular spot, consider themselves better, nobler, grander, and more intelligent than the living beings inhabiting any other spot (87). It is, therefore, the duty of everyone living on that chosen spot to fight, kill, and die in an attempt to impose his or her superiority upon all others. Jensen claims, “An argument against patriotism raises the question of whether nation-states are a sensible way to organize political lives” (76). The simple answer is both local and global. Politics must, over time, devolve down to levels where ordinary people can have a meaningful role in governing their own lives. At the same time, they maintain a sense of connection to the entire human family. Majority of people are driven by an understanding that the scope of high-technology and the legacy of imperialism leave people bound to each other across the globe in new ways.

The pattern of relationships between nationalism and hawkish attitudes suggested by the data did not, however, include individual aggressive activities as part of the syndrome. Respondents' own reported aggressiveness is only weakly related to both nationalism and to attitudes toward war. Marlene Megan argues, “While supporting more aggressive postures for their nation, nationalists are not more aggressive in their personal activities than were patriots. The patriots indicated willingness to subordinate personal interests to national interests but are not particularly supportive of war” (65). Both sets of findings suggest that nationalism is associated more with a competitive or militaristic approach to the world while patriotism with a more cooperative or peaceful approach to the world. The strategies that each would advocate appear to differ. In effect, the nationalists would constitute the hawks, the patriots the doves in any debate over policy.

### **Patriotism in Literature**

Various literary works discuss about patriotism. In the classical time, epical poetry, epic and long narrative poems used to foster the sense of patriotism. In those

poems the hero's sacrifice and martyrdom were celebrated. Those heroes who died for their countries were praised as martyrs. Their names were remembered by everyone. They were often represented as ideal figures for which love for their country is greater than the love for their lives. In these poetical works, heroism, patriotism and sacrificial virtues were often highlighted. Apart from the poetical works, there is another genre called dramatic literature.

In dramatic works, the theme of patriotism is highlighted by showing the tragic end of the protagonist due to his or her excessive love for his or her country. As time passed by, various other forms of genres came into light. With the passage of time, the theme of patriotism underwent change. In the modern era, when war is fought not only on sea and land but also in air, the notion of heroism is almost unappealing. Wars are often fought with advanced weapons. So the concept of heroism as understood in the traditional past has almost faded. At the time of anti-colonial movement in many third world, the sentiments of patriotism increased dramatically. In the anti-colonial or postcolonial literature, patriotism becomes a strategy to deal with the colonial oppression and exploitation.

The above discussion of nationalism, patriotism, and in-group bias suggests that loyalty not only has feelings associated with it but also images of what one's own and other groups are like. In other words, there is a cognitive as well as an affective component to loyalty. Images provide individuals with maps of the groups in their environment on which to act as Robertson states, "But these image-derived maps only really become critical to politics when they are held by larger collectivities and help define the world for those larger collectivities" (75). When these individual images become shared within a group, they become stereotypes. Stereotypes represent widespread agreement among members of a particular group about the nature of a

specific image. People are moving here to consider how individual loyalty becomes translated into a more collective phenomenon that can influence what groups of people do.

Fiction is one method of portraying war and conflict. Fictional narratives can demand to be taken seriously as an equally legitimate branch of knowledge about war by the strength of their own verve and written power. However, telling authentic fictional stories about real war is a difficult, high wire balancing act. There are dangers of never escaping history and also never developing a narrative, neither being factually correct nor descriptively interesting. Novelists may successfully walk the tightrope and, at times, go on to produce moments seemingly more authentic and powerful than the mass of typically sterile and academic reports usually spawned by war. Like travelogues, journalism and personal testimony fiction can provide another, perhaps more human way of talking about conflict and tumultuous recent history as well as in writing words against war.

### **Review of Literature**

Narayan Wagle is one of Nepal's prominent media person. During his career as journalist spanning two decades, he had travelled to many regions on reporting assignment. This experience gets projected in most of his narrative creations. *Palpasa Cafe* is a novel written by him. It tells the story of an artist, Drishya, during the height of the Nepali Civil War. The novel is partly a love story of Drishya and the first generation American Nepali, Palpasa, who has returned to the land of her parents after the September eleven terrorist attack on twin tower.

*Palpasa Cafe* is often called an anti-war novel. It describes the effects of the civil war on the Nepali countryside that Drishya travels to. Deepak Adhikari makes the following observation concerning the stylistic aspect of this novel:

Narayan Wagle, the young editor of Kantipur Daily, is a Nepali journalist who writes prolifically on the burgeoning issues of Nepalese society. Simplicity tainted with the trace of complexity is the hallmark of Wagle's writing. His style is characterized by realistic, simple and the easy flow of language. This style makes *Palpasa Cafe* an interesting reading stuff. It has so much to offer and it succeeds in doing this succinctly. It makes every information it wants to share brief and to the point. (54)

Adhikari is intensely appreciative of the style of Wagle. He holds Wagle in high regard. Wagle's style, a fusion of simplicity and complexity, serves to reinforce the lucid content which the author keeps at the center of the novel. The utter absence of ambiguity and obscurity is one of the most attractive facets of *Palpasa Café*.

Madhav Prasad Pokharel dwells upon the idyllic setting and urban confusion that are extensively described in *Palpasa Café*. He reveals his interest in the beginning and the end of the novel.

Like the protagonist's shattered dream of opening Palpasa Cafe in the idyllic hills, the novel seems promising in the outset while ends up in the maze of its own making. Conflict is only the backdrop where an artist searches meaning of his love-life. But despite having an encyclopedic knowledge of nature and painting, Wagle fails to portray Drishya as an artist. Like Wagle himself, he sounds more like a journalist; so he is an alter ego of its creator. (72)

As claimed by Pokharel, conflict serves as the background in which the inner agony and woe of characters are mentioned. The novel is oddly replete with female characters like Palpasa, Christina, Phulan, Jemina, and grandma whereas males are

not only mysteriously absent but are also nameless and faceless in the narrative. The specialty of Wagle is that he tries to twist every conversation.

Unnati Bohara exposes some of the shortcomings and limitations of the novel. She subscribes to the opinion that the author is not at home in the art of retaining strong hold in the overall structure of the novel. Bohara's critical insight is expressed in the following critical piece:

While providing elegant narrative, he fails to put the hold upon the story. Though, Drishya's homeward journey evokes nostalgia with consummate mastery, towards the end, the story gets increasingly implausible. An encounter with Palpasa in a bus as a co-passenger and the fatal ambush which spares protagonist alive and his beloved dead is much a make-believe stuff. Wagle would have been better off had he woven the denouement more plausibly. (27)

Drishya is abruptly arrested from his gallery. Intentionally unfolding story is jolted into attention due to the authorial intervention and sporadic events. The novel comes to an end leaving Phulan all alone. The epilogue is an inquiry of Palpasa's Nepali buddy from the US. The beginning of metafictional mould is captivating.

The novel works on different level and through each character. Wagle reflects on Nepali culture, values, and most important of all deals with the current fascination of the youth towards the Western culture. But the book also has characters that come back to their motherland with great zeal and enthusiasm. Within this framework, Dinesh Bhandari states,

The pressing topic that the book addresses through a series of minor characters is the effect of violence on the innocent people. The writer creates the scenes of skeletal remains of schools and hospitals after

series of bombarding and gunfire as we turn the pages. Loss of loved ones in the violence and the pain it causes is shown from different perspective like the death of Mami's children, death of the husband of a newly married woman and the tragedy of losing a best friend experienced by a child. (17)

The issue of violence and its effects in the delicate psyche of the innocent youths are crystallized in the novel. In terms of narration, Wagle is akin to his painter-protagonist Drishya. He is able to paint a broad portrait of an apocalyptic present with the note of urgency and poignancy. He colors his fictional canvas with deft strokes. He writes with thoroughness of detail and poetic imageries. But his strength appears to be his weakness.

A large and dramatic section of the novel is then given to Drishya's journeys across conflict-wrecked hills before inevitable tragedy strikes and he returns to Kathmandu. According to Kamal Malla,

Throughout long sections are taken up by dialogues between Drishya and Palpasa, or Drishya and Siddhartha. These dialogues explore individual tragedies and conflict inside the main protagonists concerning the well-worn themes of love, art and politics. These inner explorations are not well connected with the outer violent conflict in Nepal. This is symbolic of a wider indecision in the novel between portraying what Wagle the journalist saw and what Wagle the novelist wishes to write; between Wagle's journalism and his fiction. (12)

Wagle's best observed sections are in the broader canvas he paints using his journalistic brushes. He, through Drishya, writes with reflective knowing of the feverish and out-of-control atmosphere after the royal massacre and how a thick fog

of uncertainty hung over Nepali people.

Adhikari takes the entire novel as the authentic representation of war-torn society full of dramatically convincing characters. He adds the following view in this connection:

The novel also, obviously, reflects the author's own experience as a Brahmin male based largely in Kathmandu. I hope to show that Wagle's journalism background rather than his caste identity is crucial in understanding *Palpasa Café's* successes and failures. It is to Wagle's credit that he has written about what he knows and not attempted to include many different aspects of Nepal which would, incidentally, be a very boring exercise in paint-by-numbers prescriptive fiction. (17)

There are dangers of never escaping history and also never developing a narrative, neither being factually correct nor descriptively interesting. Fictional narratives can demand to be taken seriously as an equally legitimate branch of knowledge about war by the strength of their own verve and written power.

Nancy Reeves claims that Wagle portrays how deviant characters in their old age struggle to return to their past. Returning to the past is almost tantamount to returning to one's own twisted and distorted self,

The story of a man coming to terms with the mutable past, Wagle's new novel is laced with his trademark precision, dexterity and insight. It is the work of one of the world's most distinguished writers. Protagonist and his clique first met Drishya at school. They navigated the scenario drought of gawky adolescence together, trading in affectations, in-jokes, rumor and wit. Maybe the protagonist was a



little more serious than the others, certainly more intelligent, but they swore to stay friends forever. (31)

Reeves thinks that Wagle uses memory as the structuring device in the novel.

Memory is imperfect but it can always throw up surprises. The unexpected bequest conveyed by that letter leads the protagonist on a dogged search through a past suddenly turned murky. Events conspire to upset all one's vaunted truths. That is why proper initiatives should be taken at the right moment.

Andrew Sander judges the novel on the basis of authorial power to coin new terms and neologisms. In this regard, he argues,

Helps the emergence of new notion of identity and the hurdles that have arisen simultaneously in the contemporary postmodern era. To describe this new kind of psychological problem which verges on amnesia? The shifting socio-cultural horizon has bred amnesia. Many unconscious and conscious forces operate beneath the surface of identity formation. In this regard, Wagle's novel plays a paramount part. (27)

According to Sander, Wagle is dissatisfied with the languages of dominant discourses. He wants to maintain the radical sense of decorum. The underlying factors both cultural and psychological have to be exposed and studied carefully before probing into the complex web of postmodern identity.

Although all these critics and reviewers have examined this novel from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, no one has yet done study on the issue of patriotism in this novel. The endurance and fortitude demonstrated by Palpasa and Drishya in the midst of terror, insecurity and recurrent fear of facing charge as well as assault is admirable. Both the characters including others are driven by the relentless passion for proving themselves as the

capable citizens. Though circumstances have pushed them to different geography and culture, their passion, strength, vision and devotion to nation and her well-being are far more praiseworthy. They are the real heroes begotten by the local climate and domestic aura.

The purpose of this study is to examine how the pragmatic and practical sense of patriotic qualities arise in the characters who are surrounded by a plenty of challenges and setbacks. Even the characters coming from the common walks of life happen to display heroic disposition. The confrontation between setbacks and people from the normal spheres of life gives birth to the heroism in the average. This is the intended target of the present study. This study is strictly confined to the analysis of how characters like Drishya and Palpasa demonstrate endurance, vision, determination and intense will to overcome every hurdle that occurs in their lives. In their encounter with all the challenges and hurdles lies traces of heroic traits and attributes. These traits and attributes are examined excluding all the unrelated details.

This study makes use of the notion of patriotism. It utilizes the theoretical insights of those who believe in the power of patriotism generated by the pragmatic aura and atmosphere of every local culture. Analytical efforts are directed towards the exploration of truth locally and domestically determined. With this methodological conception, it proceeds to produce the thorough analysis of the text.

## Chapter 2

### Patriotism, Nationalism and Nation - State

#### The Concepts

Patriotism is an ideal that makes many thoughtful people uncomfortable. Scholars and theorists find it difficult to label themselves as patriots because patriots are uncomfortable with the rituals and symbols of national loyalty. They worry that national loyalty implies indifference or hostility to people of other nations. They condemn national chauvinism and are disturbed by the associations between patriotism, militarism, and blind allegiance. Those who have patriotic pursuit shun the word patriot. At the same time, such people do not want to be considered disloyal. They may attach great value to many of their country's political practices and traditions. They may even carry out the duties of citizenship conscientiously. They do not see themselves as unpatriotic and certainly do not want to be seen as traitors.

Ernest Renan makes the following observation regarding what patriotism is and what a patriot does:

The language of patriotism and loyalty seems to force them into a difficult choice. To say that one is not patriotic suggests that one lacks the loyalty that is appropriate to citizens. It is not surprising, then, that the ideas of non-patriotic citizens are often viewed with suspicion, for their lack of patriotism seems to imply that they possess neither loyalty nor a basic concern for the well-being of the nation. Hence, their views on national conduct and policy are suspect. It appears, then, that one must either accept patriotism in spite of its undesirable features, or place oneself in the role of an outsider, whose claims about the national welfare have an uncertain status. (45)

Patriotism is evocative of a chronic form of discomfort and a hope that the subject of patriotism can be kept out of political discussions. It is no surprise that the established authorities of all nations encourage patriotism and support the view that it is a virtue. Spokesperson for a nation wants to encourage devotion to it so that one can appeal to patriotic motives in bringing about compliance with the law and encouraging the citizens to support government policies.

Patriotism is not a virtue. Even for those not accustomed to seeing themselves as patriotic, the idea that patriotism is a vice that is somewhat shocking. Renan adds, “For most of us, our country includes not just its politics but its language, culture, familiar history, natural beauties, customs, literature, folk heroes, and personal histories. It is not surprising that most people feel some degree of love for their country” (56). Patriotism is as much an emotional experience as an intellectual conviction. It is proverbial that patriotism is an expression of love of one’s own country and readiness to defend it.

Patriotism means critique of the war effort. It is one’s patriotic duty to be true to the core commitments of democracy and the obligations democracy puts on people. In this regard, Renan further holds,

Therefore, if one wants to be patriotic, one has to exercise judgment, evaluate policies, engage in discussions and help see the best policies enacted. The student’s earlier comments exemplify these competing definitions of patriotism and its emotional dimensions. Ideology is by definition rife with contradiction. To love one’s country is of course not synonymous with an agreement to initiate military aggression in defense of one’s country. Nonetheless, in the United States the emotions of patriotism have been used to support the Bush

administration's war in Afghanistan. Patriotism in the US can also be seen as a reaction to a sense of personal and national loss. In their yearning for unity, however, patriots seem to share the intellectual rhetoric of nationalists. (65)

It is used to refer to political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments. A patriotic argument is a political doctrine built upon various assertions. It is premised on the belief that the interests and values of a nation take priority over all other interests and values.

It is not capable of taking serious enough the individual's associative relationships. It regards all individuals of the world as being of equal concern regardless of their nationality or citizenship. Given the prominence of patriotic commitments in ordinary human life, patriotism is seen as a special challenge for cosmopolitan justice. According to John Gaebler,

This love and loyalty gives compatriots priority above strangers. It is hard to see the difference with nationalism, as this also promotes the solidarity and mutual commitment towards compatriots. For nationalists, patriotism is a nation-building strategy. Patriots however are not necessarily nationalists. Patriotism can emphasize for example shared citizenship in a constitutional order. The priority given to compatriots seems to contradict with the cosmopolitan ideal of impartiality for several reasons. (66)

Patriotism provides a common identity that makes possible a sense of mutual indebtedness and mutual concern among people that are otherwise strangers. This is necessary to implement distributive principles, or in more extreme cases, to defend the nation-state in war. Secondly, cosmopolitanism seems out of touch with one's

commonsense morality. It offends one's ordinary moral conception and experience not to be able to prefer one's fellows above strangers.

Cosmopolitans who reject the relevance of particular ties and special associations seem to "prioritize a commitment to abstract principles over the concrete and personal values that make life worthwhile and meaningful. The tension between cosmopolitanism and patriotism is the confrontation of two opposing demands: while the first claims that nationality is to be factored out, the latter says that nationality is a relevant point of consideration". (101)

The best way to reconcile both is limited patriotism as it has an affinity with both demands.

The cosmopolitan idea of patriotism is commonly criticized because it fails to take seriously the ties and commitments of nationalism and patriotism. The criticism "takes the form of a dilemma: either we promote the special relations we have with our fellow citizens and reject cosmopolitan justice; or we promote cosmopolitan justice and reject nationalism and patriotism" (87). Kok-Chor Tan claims that this dilemma is false and that reconciliation is possible. He asserts,

Cosmopolitan justice sets boundaries to patriotism and nationalism without denigrating these ideals. He makes the analogy with the domestic level. As the pursuits of our personal goals and commitments are limited by distributive justice, so must the pursuits of nationalism and patriotism be limited by global distributive justice? It is only within the boundaries set by global distributive principles that nation-states have the right to self-determination. From this, it follows that liberal nationalists should be international egalitarians, promoting

political and economic equality among states. Doing so will create equal international opportunities, and will reduce the pressure on the borders of richer countries. (112)

The priority given to compatriots does not necessarily contradict the cosmopolitan ideal, according to Tan. As long as patriotism respects the borders set by global justice, it can be recognized as an associative obligation with a moral worth in itself. Cosmopolitan justice, if properly understood, can appreciate and integrate nationalist and patriotic commitments. It simply means that before personal commitments and projects may be pursued, just entitlements must be established and secured by creating the necessary global institutions. Tan is a bit hasty with equating international egalitarianism with the cosmopolitan ideal of justice, because both have different moral units.

### **Nationalism and Patriotism**

Nationalism and patriotism both show the relationship of an individual towards his or her nation. The two are often confused and frequently believed to mean the same thing. However, there is a vast difference between them. Christopher Lewis makes the following disclosure in this regard:

Nationalism means to give more importance to unity by way of a cultural background, including language and heritage. Patriotism pertains to the love for a nation, with more emphasis on values and beliefs. When talking about nationalism and patriotism, one cannot avoid the famous quotation by George Orwell, who said that nationalism is 'the worst enemy of peace'. According to him, nationalism is a feeling that one's country is superior to another in all respects, while patriotism is merely a feeling of admiration for a way

of life. (72)

These concepts show that patriotism is passive by nature and nationalism can be a little aggressive. Patriotism is based on affection and nationalism is rooted in rivalry and resentment. One can say that nationalism is militant by nature and patriotism is based on peace. Most nationalists assume that their country is better than any other, whereas patriots believe that their country is one of the best and can be improved in many ways. Patriots tend to believe in friendly relations with other countries while some nationalists do not.

In patriotism, people all over the world are considered equal but nationalism implies that only the people belonging to one's own country should be considered one's equal. A patriotic person tends to tolerate criticism and tries to learn something new from it, but a nationalist cannot tolerate any criticism and considers it an insult. Lewis goes on to add, "Nationalism makes one to think only of one's country's virtues and not its deficiencies. Nationalism can also make one contemptuous of the virtues of other nations. Patriotism, on the other hand, pertains to value responsibilities rather than just valuing loyalty towards one's own country" (131). Nationalism makes one try to find justification for mistakes made in the past, while patriotism enables people to understand both the shortcomings and improvements made.

Patriotism holds that the nation should be collectively and freely institutionally expressed, and ruled by its co-nationals. Recent events demonstrate patriotic movements retain the capacity to shake states and empires, as well as the pieties of devout conservatives and cosmopolitan liberals and socialists. Ernest Gellner's writings aimed to explain why patriotism has become the key principle of political legitimacy of times. Gellner provides lucid and persuasive accounts of why patriotism



is a necessary component of modernity and why it is the most salient principle of political legitimacy. His arguments disturbed both conservatives and secular rationalists. The reasons are not hard to find. The following extract throws light on this aspect of Gellner's view:

Nationalism relegates religion to a secondary, and even inessential, principle of a stable and legitimate political order and thus challenges traditionalist conservatism. Nationalism also suggests that law, reason, utility, material prosperity and social justice are secondary principles in establishing a stable and legitimate political order, therefore provoking persistent condemnation from rationalist liberals and socialists for some two hundred years. (109)

The negative social foundations of patriotism are thus explained by the erosion of rigid social structures.

A shared culture is now much more important in creating and sustaining social cohesion than it was. The positive social foundations are explained by economies of scale in the production of literate citizens by state-sponsored educational systems. The relevant educational system must operate in some medium, some language. Literacy is generated by state-sponsored educational systems, which are multiply facilitated if the idioms of the home and the school are the same. In turn, modern educational systems explain the cultural identifications that move so many human beings. These identifications are, however, historically recent.

The preconditions of patriotism include widespread or universal literacy, and a society committed to economic growth through its formal commitment to social mobility. Industrial society requires effective and widespread context-free communication through a common medium, a high culture. Communicative media are

placed center-stage in generating and maintaining nationalism, but the argument stresses the functionality of a shared culture for the effective operation of modern work-organizations and bureaucracies.

According to Gellner, “Patriotism is still seen as distinctive to modernity, but it is now part of a philosophy of history that distinguishes three phases in human progress, the pre-agrarian, the agrarian, and the industrial. In a considerably re-worked and non-teleological form of historical materialism” (114). Gellner maintains that each of the three key phases is associated with characteristic modes of production, coercion, culture and cognition. Nationalism is distinctive to industrial society. It is intimately connected to its mode of production. It would have made no sense in tribal societies because such societies were and are stateless. The ambition to unify the national culture and the state would therefore have been incoherent.

### **Patriotism in Nation-State**

The nation-state developed fairly recently. “Prior to the 1500s, in Europe, the nation-state as we know it did not exist. Back then, most people did not consider themselves part of a nation; they rarely left their village and knew little of the larger world. If anything, people were more likely to identify themselves with their region or local lord” (O’Brien 131). At the same time, the rulers of states frequently had little control over their countries. Instead, local feudal lords had a great deal of power, and kings often had to depend on the goodwill of their subordinates to rule. He adds, “Laws and practices varied a great deal from one part of the country to another. They explain some key events that led to the rise of the nation-state. In the early modern era, a number of monarchs began to consolidate power by weakening the feudal nobles and allying themselves with the emerging commercial classes” (131). This difficult process sometimes required violence. The consolidation of power also took a

long time. Kings and queens worked to “bring all the people of their territories under unified rule. Not surprisingly, then, the birth of the nation-state also saw the first rumblings of nationalism, as monarchs encouraged their subjects to feel loyalty toward the newly established nations” (141). The modern, integrated nation-state becomes clearly established in most of Europe during the nineteenth century.

Newly emerging nation-states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a complex relationship with the predominant transnational power of the time, the Catholic Church. At times, partial nation-states were useful tools for the Catholic Church. On several occasions, for example,

“France and Spain intervened in Italy at the invitation of the Pope. But some monarchs wanted control over their national churches in order to get absolute power. In England, the dispute over who controlled the English church led Henry VIII to break from the Pope and establish an independent Protestant church in the 1530s” (151).

This break with the Catholic Church gave the English something to rally around, thus encouraging them to develop loyalty toward the English nation-state.

In what has now become a classic in studies of nationalism, Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* traces the origins of the rise of national consciousness to the modern-industrial age of the Enlightenment in Western Europe. Following the demise of traditional, hierarchical forms of social organization associated with Christendom, Anderson attributes a “major role to economic factors that helped spread supposedly universal, homogenous and horizontal-secular notions of national space, territoriality, and citizenship” (37). Specifically, “economic change fostered the rise of social-scientific discoveries, increasingly rapid communication, and the logic of capitalism, epitomized in its ruthless and perpetual search for new

markets” (38). Known as ‘print-capitalism,’ Anderson sees an essential link between the rise of capitalism and the development of print-as-commodity.

Communication and popular literature, for instance, helped disseminate national languages, consciousness, and ideologies across a broad landmass, previously unconnected by any conception of shared experience or identity. Anderson makes the following remarks:

As a secular, non-religious phenomenon, the idea of the ‘nation’ reached a level of mass consciousness. Nationalisms, therefore, have the unique ability to traverse millions of people in and through the *interplay* of capitalist relations and modes of production, the spread of communications, or print technology which resulted in the ultimate demise of human linguistic diversity prevalent in the pre-modern era. At the same time, however, Anderson’s conception of the nation is one of a community that is socially-constructed, or imagined into being: all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined. (47)

Anderson’s approach emphasizes the role of creative imagery, invented traditions, representation, imagination, symbols, and traditions in nationalism, as a constructed narrative about the nation-state. As a phenomenon that is fundamentally historical in its constitution, the truth of national identity cannot be found in fixed racial categories, myths about origins, or certain primordial facts.

Partha Chatterjee takes the issue with Anderson’s conception of nationalism as one that pre-exists in modular forms, such that its basic tenets can easily be exported and appropriated in the postcolonial world. He states,

History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world

shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized. (216)

While appearing to oppose the colonial influence at one level, the problematic of anti-colonial nationalisms assert a form of inner sovereignty. Inner domain of national culture matters a lot in the process of understanding nationalism in local cultural context. Nonetheless, the very thematic of post-Enlightenment epistemologies and ethical systems provides a national-theoretical framework.

Chatterjee counter-argues Anderson's notion in the following words:

“Anderson's conception of nationalism as imagined comes dangerously close to idealizing discourse to the extent that the nation can be read as some sort of text, in order to uncover the legitimizing narratives that aid in its construction” (53). The political economy or materialist aspects of Anderson's theory point to underlying social-material relations. The base of these relations can be found in the workings of the capitalist-economy. It is grounded on the corresponding modes of social production. Such theories tend to conceive ideas as mere reflections, or representations of a socio-economic base.

Gaebler addresses the claim that Patriotism can supply “a sense of community to those who live in liberal societies. He concludes that nationalism is fundamentally incompatible with the liberal values of individualism and tolerance, but that the argument presented in Liberal Nationalism provides a useful critique of liberalism's cultural and psychological deficits” (55). He suggests that “neo- Aristotelian ethics offers a better description of liberal community than that afforded by nationalism. Not

so very long ago, nationalism was commonly viewed as a spent force in world politics” (88). However, its spectacular comeback in central and Eastern Europe five years ago proved this view a chimera.

The reemergence of nationalism exercises a peculiar allure for political philosophers in the West who are dissatisfied with the alleged deficiencies of liberalism. Graham Walker, for example, deplors “the neutral state’s tendency to relativize all substantive commitments by viewing them as purely a private matter of personal choice” (113).

The question remains whether patriotism is the best source from which to derive our enriched characterization of human motives and interests. Tamir seems peculiarly bound to the “notion that our quest for meaning within a community can only be supplied by identification with a cultural or ethnic group. It would be foolhardy to ignore the dismal record on nationalism in the twentieth century” (43). Neo-Aristotelian ethics offers a different means to achieve the enriching effect sought by him. Emphasizing the role of emotion in the development and exercise of judgment, practical reason is similar to the morality of community in many respects. He contends that “most importantly, it shares the conviction that the ideal vantage point from which to make moral decisions is not some Olympian impartiality, but rather a deep and reflective involvement in one's own particularity” (44). To put it differently, moral judgment is not the sure result of a rational procedure. It is always tentative, always open to revision, as new circumstances arise.

According to Hayes, patriotism mobilizes a deep and compelling emotion that is essentially religious. Like religions, nationalism involves faith in some external power, feelings of awe and reverence, and ceremonial rites. It is focused on the flag. Hayes argues that patriotism has its gods – the patron or personification of the

fatherland, its speculative theology or mythology. Hayes concludes the following parameters regarding to the inception of patriotism:

Patriotism is reflected in the description of the eternal past and everlasting future' of the nation; its notions of salvation and immortality; its canon of Holy Scripture; its feasts, fasts, processions, pilgrimages and holy days; and its supreme sacrifice. But while most world religions serve to unify, nationalism re-enshrines the earlier tribal mission of a chosen people, with its tribal selfishness and vainglory. (25)

Patriotism is a religion both in a substantive sense, insofar as it entails a quest for a kind of this-worldly collective salvation. It involves a system of beliefs and practices that distinguishes the sacred from the profane. It unites its adherents in a single moral community of the faithful. In this new religion, authenticity is the functional equivalent of sanctity. Patriotic heroes and national geniuses embody and exemplify such authenticity. It is this religious quality of nationalism that explains durability and emotional potency of national identities.

Ethnicity and nationalism have been characterized as basic sources and forms of social and cultural identification. Regarding the nexus between ethnicity and nationalism, Brubaker dwells upon the following view:

As such, they are ways of identifying oneself and others, of construing sameness and difference, and of situating and placing oneself in relation to others. Understood as perspectives on the world rather than things in the world, they are ways of understanding and identifying oneself, making sense of one's problems and predicaments, identifying one's interests, and orienting one's action. Religion, too, can be

understood in this manner. As a principle of vision and division of the social world, religion too provides a way of identifying and naming fundamental social groups, a powerful framework for imagining community, and a set of schemas, templates, and metaphors for making sense of the social world. (67)

Religion, ethnicity, and nationality can channel informal social relations in ways that generate and sustain social segmentation. The key mechanism here is religious or ethnic endogamy, whether more or less deliberately pursued from the inside, or imposed from the outside. Religious injunctions against intermarriage, together with clerical control or influence over marriage, have often helped reproduce socio-religious segmentation. This, in turn, has helped reproduce religious, ethnic, and national communities over the long run and has worked to prevent their dissolution through assimilation. Religion contributed to the origin and development of nationalism not only through the political appropriation of religious symbols and narratives but also in more indirect ways.

Patriotism is a useful concept only if it is not overstretched. If the concept is not to lose its discriminating power, it must be limited to forms of politics, ideology, or discourse that involve a central orientation to the nation. It cannot be extended to encompass all forms of politics that work in and through nation-states. There is no compelling reason to speak of nationalism unless the imagined community of the nation is widely understood as a primary focus of value, source of legitimacy, object of loyalty, and basis of identity.



## Chapter 3

### Journalistic Description of the Violence

Patriotism is the ideology of attachment to a homeland. This attachment can be a combination of many different features relating to one's own homeland, including ethnic, cultural, political or historical aspects. It encompasses a set of concepts closely related to those of nationalism. An excess of patriotism in the defense of a nation is called chauvinism. The novel, obviously, reflects the author's own experience as a Brahmin male based largely in Kathmandu. Wagle's journalism background rather than his caste identity is crucial in understanding *Palpasa Café's* successes and failures. It is to his credit that he has written about what he knows and not attempted to include many different aspects of Nepal which would, incidentally, be a very boring exercise in paint-by-numbers prescriptive fiction. Unfortunately *Palpasa Café* currently seems to be more discussed for a literary prize that it should or should not have won, as well as for its marketing process than for its actual content. One intention of translating the novel into English is surely to help foreigners, both tourist and expatriates alike, to understand what happened in the recent Nepali past.

The novel contains a short helpful glossary and does not overburden the text with overlong explanations of detail for non-Nepali like the Nepali edition the book is perhaps also aimed at the Nepali urban middle-class, whom Wagle presumably knows well, as well as diaspora Nepali. The real dedicatees of the novel are all victims of the war and the novel as a whole can be seen as a fictionalised attempt at not forgetting, during a time when, perhaps, many wish victims would move on. *Palpasa Café* is the story of a Kathmandu-based artist, Drishya, who falls in love with a Nepali American returnee, Palpasa. Along the way, Drishya also sees for himself the devastating effects of Nepal's conflict in the hills, via a mysterious old college friend (named Siddhartha)

turned Maoist.

These are the main characters who tell Wagle's story. The novel stands out primarily not as a fiction tale with authentic characters but, instead, as an embodiment of what Drishya calls "the stand... of the people who resisted the war-mongers on both sides" (213). In broad brushstrokes, like the artist Drishya, Wagle tries to use the novel to protest "against both warring sides...., my colours showing my support for the third camp" (213). The novel begins with the description of the central character, Drishya, being abducted. This is told within a post-modern introduction which, like the similarly ironical ending is deliberately out of place with the rest of the novel's straightforward narrative style. The introduction is postmodern in the sense that Wagle introduces himself as a character, a journalist who has written the true story of Drishya during the conflict.

In his final second cameo appearance within the pages, Wagle uses the format to acknowledge with a wink that he might not have done his characters justice and that "all written works are incomplete. Something's always missing. There's always more to add" (231). Using the author as character is a risky fictional device suggesting a paucity of original material and an overly self-referential style (especially for an existing full-time journalist). By limiting it to the bookends Wagle nearly carries it off but his final cameo appearance suggests a lack of confidence in his first published fictional material as well a need to spell out and reiterate his main intentions to the reader.

The main part of the novel begins with a portrayal of Drishya and Palpasa's first encounters in Goa and then moves onto Kathmandu covering Drishya's artistic and personal torments. A large and dramatic section of the novel is then given to Drishya's journeys across conflict wrecked hills before inevitable tragedy strikes and

he returns to Kathmandu. Throughout long sections are taken up by dialogues between Drishya and Palpasa, or Drishya and Siddhartha. These dialogues explore individual tragedies and conflict inside the main protagonists concerning the well-worn themes of love, art and politics. These inner explorations are not well connected with the outer violent conflict in Nepal. This is symbolic of a wider indecision in the novel between portraying what Wagle the journalist saw and what he the novelist wishes to write; between his journalism and his fiction.

Wagle's best observed sections, perhaps unintentionally, are in the broader canvas he paints using his journalistic brushes – firstly in the disappearances and general tension of post-royal massacre in Kathmandu and then of the conflict in the hills. Wagle, through Drishya, writes with reflective knowing of the feverish and out of control atmosphere after the royal massacre and how “a thick fog of uncertainty hung over us all” (72). Wagle, ever the journalist, also notices small details like how “it was risky for men to walk about without having shaved their heads in mourning” (72). He cannot help noting the cavalcade of foreign journalists suddenly arriving in Nepal, as tourists leave. The desperate journalists swarm on Durbar Marg erecting satellite censors and positioning their cameras for live telecasts.

The novel also carefully portrays the particular impact of the conflict in the hills. Wagle's descriptions of schools being blown up, emptying villages, indiscriminate bombs, abduction, and mourning Nepali families are generally hard-hitting and powerful. He finds a particularly credible voice in his description of a Maoist attack on a district headquarter. The attack is described as briskly as it happens: “I held on tightly to my cot. ‘Shoot! Shoot!’ Myriad noises assaulted my ears. The cat wailed” (132). Then, dazed and wearied, the market awakes and the shell-shocked inhabitants “looked at each other as if surprised so many people were

still alive” (133). The post-attack shock of a lodge-owner is also distressingly well-represented through her “incomprehensible mumbling,” violent “trembling” and her son having “wet his pants” (133).

As elsewhere the purple passages involve more of what Wagle the journalist saw and heard about and less of what the reader might expect a painter like Drishya to feel and note. Wagle bitingly mocks his own profession again when a helicopter full of journalists lands in the district headquarter after the Maoist attack. Hunting for fast answers they “all rushed away” herd-like before Drishya “could answer the last question” (135). The journalists demonstrate a habitually short attention span as they move from questioning Drishya to a nearby policeman to the police inspector to the chief district officer in rapid succession.

Mourning families in the hills are also closely observed such as those of his dead ritual friend, Resham. Miit-Ba is “in despair” after Resham’s death and he and his wife “sometimes...weep, sometimes they mumble strange things. There are days when they don’t say a single word and days when they never stop talking” (140).

Drishya hears about another old couple who have one son in the army and one in the rebels. As the narration goes like this, “The one in the army sent them a message saying.... they should go to Kathmandu because it’s too dangerous for him to come back here. But the old folk can’t go to Kathmandu....Their grief’s going to kill them one day” (143). Wagle wishes to tell the common tales of individual and family trauma from the conflict. Whether fiction or journalism is the best vehicle for him to do this is debatable.

*Palpasa Café*, almost incidentally, neatly notes individual stories in other aspects of modern Nepal. This includes diaspora Nepali (especially those connected to the USA), retired Gurkhas, Nepali-foreigner relationships, trekking tourists (endlessly

laughing over their photos in Thamel) and internal migration for school and work. There is a touching description of young boys entering the Kathmandu valley for the first time which leads Drishya back to his own childhood. When Drishya finds out that the young boys are from the same region as he, his “eyes welled with tears...” and say “When I entered the ‘Nepal’ valley for the first time.

There are many aspects to criticize about *Palpasa Café* and things also perhaps lost in translation too. Wagle’s main characters are not believable except as two-dimensional archetypes, railroaded into standing up for art, politics or creativity in extended and overlong dialogues. Palpasa represents the creative spirit, and the younger generation and is mostly there as the perfect foil for Drishya’s banter. Her side of the story is never told and as Wagle states in the post-modern end piece that “would have given my novel another dimension” (231). Many readers may be tempted to skip the weak characterizations and dialogues all together in order to reach his more interesting and well-written description of war-time events.

The style for the awkward dialogues model is set at the start of the novel proper when Palpasa and Drishya meet in Goa. At one point Palpasa says “Oh, didn’t I tell you where I was staying?” Drishya replies “No, and I didn’t ask.” Palpasa replies “Then you’re a fool as well!” Drishya then replies “I wasn’t before I met you”. Palpasa asks what he means and he replies “I lost my senses when I met you” (12). The dialogues barely evolve beyond this kind of he-said, she-said repartee and schoolchild level of male-female taunts. When it does Drishya is the authoritative model artist-philosopher proclaiming on the one hand that “artists care very much, especially when they find someone who appreciates their work...” (19), while later, typically, pondering aloud that “There’s energy in inner conflict.... It drives human beings to search for clarity and resolution” (30).

### **Drishya and Siddhartha about Politics**

Later the Maoist underground figure Siddhartha and Drishya argue, occasionally with verve, around the age-old debates of art and politics and whether it is “possible to create without destroying” (82). These debates are slightly more nuanced and realistic than those between Palpasa and Drishya. However, even here Siddhartha does not develop an actually existing character but, instead, is only really alive as an ideologue served up to fit Wagle’s demand for an art versus politics debate. Siddhartha, the old college friend and confirmed Maoist, sums up the difference between him and Drishya, saying “You give too much weight to the importance of the individual” (84). Drishya, the artist, believes “in the supremacy of the free individual” (84) and cannot accept violence and deaths in the name of a supposedly greater communal good.

For some reasons the language in the letters from Drishya and Palpasa appears to have been much more closely revised than passages elsewhere. For example, Drishya writes a letter filled with uncharacteristically attractive English to Palpasa via her Grandmother:

Your hopes are pinned on the gods, the farmers’ on the mountains and mine on you. I made you dance and you were happy. The day I saw you dance was the happiest day of my life. It was as though the snow on the mountains was melting in the sun and a magnificent rainbow had appeared on the horizon. (96)

There are also problems concerning the book’s narrative structure. From the end of chapter nineteen a series of devastating events occur in rapid and very unbelievable succession. The reader is asked to believe that the central character, Drishya, is spectacularly unlucky in terms of being affected by the war. Since the reader does not

know Drishya as a fully rounded character, only instead as the fountain of wise home truths around art, then one consequently care less about what happens to him or those he loves.

Wagle's simple message throughout the novel seems summed up by a boatman who rows Drishya away from death: The boatman strained against the current. "It's so sad to see war in our country," he said. "It's terrible to see our own people die. Don't you think so, bhai?" (169).

This message could have been conveyed in other ways more suited to Wagle as a journalist. As it is *Palpasa Café* ends up being an unfulfilling mixture of occasional journalistic insight, weak characterisation and poor dialogue. Fiction has something to offer as an attempt at writing another form of the truth, to be another kind of historical record and memorial for victims. *Palpasa Café* has these noble aims of writing against war, bringing home the personal devastation of the conflict and remembering the victims. A translated novel will always lose something in the process of translation and perhaps loses more when it tries to honestly write about such disputed recent history and war. However, Wagle would have been better to convey his thoughts, experiences and feelings about the war in a factual context, perhaps in the form of a travelogue or snapshots of different conflict-affected lives around the country.

Describing the nature and subject of the novel, Wagle says, "I've completed this novel based on whatever information I've been able to piece together" and adds that the story, "was [Drishya's] story, after all, and told from his perspective" (229-31). The novel takes its exposition from Goa where Drishya, a tourist, encounters Palpasa and envisages that she "will be [his] girl" (16). In the next meeting, the other day, he undergoes a series of sensations ranging from romance to disappointment.

Back to Kathmandu, Drishya engrosses in painting when a Dutch lady remarks that the colours used in his artwork “don’t seem to suit the subject matter.” Growing “increasingly depressed and reclusive,” he gets hold of “a book about the balance of color and light in traditional Nepali art” (46-50). Then, he coincidentally reaches to Palpasa’s grandmother to re-meet Palpasa and continue the romantic rapport set in Goa. But again, the relation discontinues when his childhood friend, Siddhartha, now an underground Maoist guerrilla, visits him unexpectedly after the Royal massacre in June 2001. Siddhartha insists Drishya to put aside his romantic ideology and witness the bitter realities in countryside.

Finally, Drishya yields to Siddhartha’s persistence to get awakened to a series of shocking occurrences in the countryside – forceful recruitment of the children, merciless sabotages and brutal killings of the civilians. The bleak picture finally makes him sense that Siddhartha’s request proved eyes opening, “I realized Siddhartha had done me a favour by bringing me back to these hills” (152). Fostered by this realization, he wants to see Siddhartha before he returns to Kathmandu. But due to his gaucherie against a female guide and subsequent firing during the journey, some people cordon, arrest and blindfold him. When the blindfold is lifted, he sees Siddhartha and in excitement speaks out his name, but to become a witness to the cordoners’ brutal killing of Siddhartha.

Feeling guilty but gaining stoutheartedness, Drishya evades the site “soaked in Siddhartha’s blood” (167). Finally, he reaches the bus bound for Kathmandu where he accidentally becomes copassenger with Palpasa. But, the bus during a halt for urinating gets blown in the ambush. All the passengers inside including Palpasa exterminate making Drishya a witness to another atrocity. In Kathmandu with the scars, he visits Palpasa’s grandmother to inform about the tragic incident. But seeing



the condition of the grandmother, he fails to evince the reality. While living in such a state, one day, “five strangers” who do not appear “art lovers” enter his gallery to “ask [him] a few things”. Any of his excuses turn defunct to deter their intention; they take him “by the arm” (225-27). Immediately after, Wagle hears the news of Drishya’s abduction and makes his efforts to rescue him.

### **Traumatic Experience and Political Scenario**

Experience of Wagle ensues from (a) his witnessing of traumatic experience as an editor of national daily, and (b) the impact of Drishya’s testimony over him after Siddhartha and Palpasa’s brutal murder. The author’s own compelling account on his privilege as an editor elucidates the point:

We publish stories like it every day. Today’s newspaper already carried an almost identical story; tomorrow’s would as well. It was the same thing every day: security personnel losing contact with headquarters, land mines, bomb blast, the killing of suspected spies, and deaths of victims being rushed to health posts. (6)

Dixit points out another factor that availed trauma to him: “Wagle has visited remote corners of this rugged country, bringing stories about the neglect and apathy of officialdom to the notice of a government in faraway Kathmandu” (96). Might be it is true, as Dixit has stated, but it does not mean that the novel mimetically produces Wagle’s encounter. The author himself has admonished readers not to interpret the novel along this line: “To write more honestly about Drishya’s experience, I probably should’ve trekked through the hills as he did. But I’m a busy man. I don’t have time for a long trek like that. Hence, a major source of traumatic experience for Wagle is the primary witness, Drishya. In Wagle’s case, the context comprises (a) Maoist insurgency gradually spreading to Kathmandu from their stronghold areas, and (b) the

confinement of government bodies to metropolitan and other a few locations. The political scenario in Kathmandu comprised the happenings from Royal massacre to King Gyanendra's political move in October 2002. Before the massacre, people in Kathmandu had been non-intimately familiar with Maoist undertakings because their activities were concentrated in countryside and the media had also failed to show the intensity of insurgency. The massacre made it congenial for Maoist to enter Kathmandu and accelerate their activities. The government responded to the situation in town by detaining anyone without warrants. In villages controlled by the Maoists, the security forces would reach these places very sparsely.

An examination of Wagle's perspective reveals that two factors have played their role in the selection. One can be discerned from the reiteration of Drishya's perspective on art and politics: "Art isn't politics. ... It's a medium that touches the heart and the mind simultaneously. It seeks only the synergy of brushstrokes and colours. I use colours to express beauty. I'm not involved in politics" (85). It suggests that Wagle disregards political ideology dictated writing as it violates the principle of creativity. Another agency is the politics of peace: "The stand I'd taken was that of people who resisted the warmongers on both sides. I belonged to this, third force" (213). The force signifies the community of people who presume that the insurgency and counter insurgency would not be beneficial to any side. Hence, the standpoint he holds is brokered by denouncement of any violence.

Wagle's access to the publisher and publication house provides an appropriate instance of co-relation between the two elements mentioned in the equation. When the novel was in its making, he was not only an editor but also a popular columnist of a powerful daily newspaper, Kantipur. The most accessible channel in such a context would be newspaper. But he opted for another medium as he was aware that

journalistic reporting fails to include perspectives. Dixit echoes Wagle's sense in the following admission:

As journalists in Nepal, we feel that every story of a landmine killing children, abduction of students, young women disappeared by security forces is a heartrending family tragedy. Unfortunately, by the time the deaths are reported the manner of their reporting turns them into statistics. We rarely see, hear or share the pain and personal loss of someone's loved one. (10)

Because Wagle was aware of journalism's inadequacy and could choose alternative media, he selected "the medium of a novel to get the real story across" (10). The publisher of Wagle's novel, Nepalaya, is originally an event management commercial company established in 2001. Initially, the company organized stage shows of Nepali musicians not only to raise funds for social/educational institute but also to raise social awareness. After two years of the company's operation as musical event organizer, it ventured into publication with the slogan; artists create ... rest we care.

This novel focuses on the narrative of the major character, Drishya who carries Wagle's argument forward until the author comes to replace him with the epilogue. The protagonist carries the author's narratives forward in his absence. The very narrative aspects of finger-pointing and demonizing lead the protagonist to observe only one side of the conflict, which is, inflicting side. Even in the inflicting sides, the other warring party, the security force is spared.

Therefore, *Palpasa Café*, in its narrative form without having to argue any further, is a novel evolving as a trauma literature. The conflict in the novel's settings escalated up to the unbelievable stage where long established sense of belief was challenged by the events that were taking place in the the country. What people

thought as a fictional story, something that took place in the realm of imagination, was now taking place in people's own courtyard. The sense of severe shock prevailed over the whole social atmosphere. So, there is almost no distinction between what happens in the novel and what was happening in the country in which the text is set. And to write a work of fiction weaving the real time traumatic events is to write about the trauma of that society.

There is no argument about Nepal's history was going through severe political and social change during which period the novel was set. Yet, by no mean can it be called surrender as Wagle has done, deliberately. The author does not find it necessary to answer. But he points the finger at the Maoist rebels as the other who were defeating Drishya's dreams. Yet, the reporter is defiant, for he is responsible for reporting the picture of gruesome bloodsheds to the public from the field that was taking place.

And, what a reader finds in the protagonist is not a secured citizen of Nepal but a man perpetually haunted by the image of death and destruction of his long lived values. Therefore, he perceives the people and surroundings in term of their resistance of the destructive forces. The over whelming effect of trauma is discernible among the people belong to feudal structure of Nepal society, particularly, after the event of the Royal Palace massacre.

The voice over the phone call to Drishya declares, —The country's been plunged into darkness. Everything's finished and you are still sleeping (71). The shock is audible in this voice over the phone that informs the protagonist about the Royal Massacre. The massacre of the Royals, the epitome of the feudal regime in the country, comes as a threat to the existing cultural values and system in the backdrop the Maoist war against the old regime. Now, the suppressed nationalities were rising

to claim back their long lost cultural heritage and identities. It is in this socio-political context that Drishya finds his values been threatened by the Maoist for the palace massacre at time appear to make their revolutionary path easy.

For a student of Cultural Trauma it does not come as a surprise when Drishya creates. Other out of the Maoist, but not the state security forces, because he belongs to the socio-political echelon off the feudal ruling class that is being threatened.

Drishya in the novel finds peaceful and harmonious countryside ravaged with war. More than that it is the absence of dominating mid-hill Brahmin culture and feudal system that he perceives as a loss, for the country side has fallen under the rebels' rule of law. They were trying to motivate other village youngsters to join up as well. They were emptying the village of its youth and it upset me (91).

Because there is not space for empathy in the narratives of the text, all we find is one defending the one's violent act in the course of brushing off the blames. Drishya's entire conversation with Siddhartha is spend in pursuit of former trying to paint the violent demon on the face of the latter. And Siddhartha has no other choice but defend his cause for what he is doing.

The Protagonist, a middle class who supports status-quo in the society and spends hours arguing with the rebel commander who holds onto principle that is against the conformist. Amidst their heated arguments the actual sufferings of the conflict victims have been suppressed. The arguments are based upon the characters 'political affiliation to to different warring parties, but not on the moral ground as someone affected by the traumatic infliction of the society as a whole.

However, Palpasa Café is more for objective information that for passing the story as an experience to the readers that the protagonist has lived through. It is because the narrative is overtly glossed with the author's intervention as the

protagonist rather than letting the victim to speak for themselves. For example, when Drishya reaches a village where he sees a woman wiping her tears showing at shoe on her doorsteps. He does not let the silence of the woman prevail as it would in trauma literature, but he goes onto identifying the people behind it, as he narrates,— Finally, a boy came over and explained that the shoe was a message from the guerrillas, ordering the family to send someone to join their ranks. The woman had seen it [a shoe] outside her house that morning. After that, she hadn't drank [sic] a drop of water or eaten morsel a [sic] food all day. She'd just sat there weeping (Wagle 126).

### **End of Violence and Social Reintegration**

The novel caters vicarious trauma inflicted over Wagle due to Drishya's bearing witness to the events. Drishya, a painter in a metropolitan location with Bohemian life style, encounters his childhood friend Siddhartha who has "turned to violence." He thinks that offering shelter would "invite [...] trouble from the security forces"; but finds denying the same impossible: "If I denied him shelter, I'd be inviting trouble from his people" (77). While in such a limbo, Drishya swerves his mind and decides to visit the countryside without thinking that the journey would inflict trauma on him. On the way, two terrible events bear significant scar on him: one, Siddhartha's predicament -- "He was lying in a pool of blood but was still breathing"; and the other, Palpasa's tragic fate -- "Everything seemed to be on fire. I heard people groaning [...]. Through the blaze, I could hear the horrible shrieking of the passengers trapped inside the bus [...]. In no time, all that was left was a charred skeleton" (186).

Theoretically, exposures to such traumatic happenings impart speechlessness. When any bystander narrates the events, the account resurfaces with scenes of incredible vividness, broken sentences, gestures and overwhelming behaviours. To

examine whether Drishya narrates in the same way, the paper concentrates on his bearing witness to major traumatic events – the Maoist’s attack in the district headquarters, the news of mitini’s death, Siddhartha’s treacherous murder, and Palpasa’s tragic fate. The terrible attack in the district headquarters sweats Drishya as in summer day though it is a cool night. The next morning, he witnesses the lodge owner “trembling violently” and her son with his pants wet (133).

Another narration, *i.e.*, the section which vicariously traumatizes him after he witnesses death of a small girl’s mitini, illustrates the symptoms of trauma:

This hill shouldn’t have been so hard to climb. It wasn’t that steep but my legs felt weak. I didn’t know why I felt so drained of energy. I felt as if I was walking in a funeral procession. Though I was wearing shoes, I felt as if I was stepping on hot rocks. My rucksack wasn’t really heavy but it felt like a bag of stones a drill instructor might make a recruit carry for punishment. (151)

The narration that presents Drishya’s condition after Siddhartha’s murder transcribes similar situation:

I couldn’t understand what he was trying to say. I looked into his eyes. They tore my heart out. [...] I sobbed. I screamed. I wept like a child. [...] I began to feel feverish. I felt as if I were drowning in a sea of sand” (166-67). And, the condition after Palpasa’s terrible fate speaks his predicament: My whole body was shaking like a leaf. All my dreams and desires were suddenly gone, as if they’d been a bird flying off the branch of a tree. [...] Why had I gotten on the same bus as Palpasa. [...] As the sun came up, I wished I could wake up from the nightmare. (186)

The cumulative traumatic experience, due to overwhelming and recurring registration, re-traumatizes him when he reads a letter handed by Palpasa's grandmother. It is from this point Wagle makes Drishya narrate his experience through the lens of peace politics.

Drishya, instead of acting out trauma which is reliving traumatic condition, recalls the experience using working through which according to LaCapra resorts to "conscious control, critical distance, and perspective" (95). Accounting Drishya's experience in working through mode, the narration reads, "Every movement was devoted to images. Even when I didn't have a brush in my hand, lines and colours danced in my mind. I needed to keep working on the series to remind myself I was alive" (216). Later, the narrator says, "I wanted to put hope into the figure of Palpasa. At first, I'd painted her in vermilion but it looked like blood. I couldn't even distinguish between vermilion and blood" (211).

Drishya's state of confusion as a trope for working through when qualified further by Wagle's confession that he still did not know some of the basic facts about Drishya, and "constructed [the other characters] purely from snippets of information Drishya had given me" reiterates the author's motive to further work through (231-32). Similarly, the episodic nature of Wagle's participation in Drishya's bearing witness – "I'd interviewed Drishya many times" – rectifies that working through a mode of rendering trauma is authorial intention. As a peace lover, Wagle should necessarily sanitize the scenes of atrocities. For it, in addition to the strategies discussed above, he resorts to metonymic substitution" and conjure up meta-ironic effect.

Pragmatically, the deployment of "metonymic substitution" with meta-ironic effect reduces the intensity of traumatic happening. One feels reduction in the force of



trauma when Drishya narrates Maoist attack in the district headquarters by juxtaposing it with the description of popular film figures like Manisha Koirala. In another instance, *i.e.*, while describing the people's response after a devastating attack, Wagle blends humorous situation with a pathetic event. Similarly, the frame of romantic love affair between Palpasa and Drishya serves to reduce the force of trauma and orient the readers towards working through.

The contribution of context in trauma rendition appears when Wagle describes the atrocities of security forces. As it was a time when the army had been in operation to quell the Maoist, any of the narrations concerned with army demanded sanitized. Wagle writing under such condition finds no escape from the entrapment. For instance, when Wagle needs to state who is involved in Drishya's abduction, he makes Fulan allege that the Maoist have their hand. In brief, Wagle's novel demonstrates that the whole writing is dictated by the factors mentioned above under the heading of selection, context and availability – vicarious trauma, the time of army deployment as a context and the author's perspective configured by politics of peace.

An underlying assumption in this endeavour is that the conclusion will have methodological and applicational significance. From the methodological point of view, the paper invites scholars to opt for alternative approaches because a) resort to interdisciplinary borrowing opens potential to form alternatives when questions of importing any of the canonical theories have been problematized, and b) narrative account of Maoist insurgency in Nepal is a rich field of inquiry waiting for methodological innovations.

*Paplasa Café* presents vicarious trauma filtered through the politics of peace when the country was in the hands of army. Consequently, the content elides the atrocities of the army, approximates traumatic experience of the victims and presents

Drishya's trauma in the frame of working through. It explicates the perspective of human rights activist who could bear witness to people's experience during armistice. As a result, it not only shows the security forces in negative light but also resorts to the sufferings of the civilians through identitarian inscription. Contrarily, Shah's rendition of the time between intermittent truce and violence from 2002-2006 through the perspective of ambiguous morality delineates vulnerability of security personnel, political delinquency, atrocities of the Maoist, and the suffering of common people.

### **Characters' Patriotic Feeling in *Palpasa Cafe***

*Palpasa Café* is the story of a Kathmandu-based artist, Drishya, who falls in love with a Nepali America returnee, Palpasa. Along the way Drishya also sees for himself the devastating effects of Nepal's conflict in the hills, via a mysterious old college friend (named Siddhartha) now turned Maoist. These three characters narrate the story in turns. The novel stands out primarily not as a fiction tale with authentic characters but, instead, as an embodiment of the stand of the people who resisted the war-mongers on both sides.

Even the characters coming from the common walks of life happen to display heroic disposition. The confrontation between setbacks and people from the normal spheres of life gives birth to the heroism in the average. This research deals with how sense of patriotism is projected in, this novel, especially in the protagonists. They demonstrate bold sense of willingness to face every challenge that befalls them.

Palpasa is pushed ahead by the intense sense of expressing love for her motherland. That is why she comes back to her motherland by discarding every available opportunity she gets in America. Unlike the romantic egoist driven by far-fetched ideas, they are committed to the real life. They respond to every setback

within flinching back from the normal sphere of life. The Nepalese aura and atmosphere, local culture and custom shape and sustain their heroism.

Since the characters in this novel come from the normal sphere of life, their heroism represents Nepalese heroism and heroism in the average. They are all strong and have definite sense of purpose and beliefs that make them almost too real. For instance, Palpasa is a daring woman who comes back to Nepal from the States and wants to make a significant career in documentary film making. Chhiring and Kishore on the other hand are the rising stars in their photography and singing career respectively. Palpasa's grandmother becomes the author's mouthpiece in voicing his love for his motherland. They are all so simple and life like that one is bound to find at least a character they can relate to.

In this novel, almost all the characters face plenty of expected and unexpected hurdles. Palpasa's return to Nepal is not caused solely by her love for Nepal. To dodge the growing insecurity in America following terrorist attack, she is compelled to return to her country. Drishya's ambition and professional career is not thwarted by the mounting fear of underground insurgency and state sponsored counter-insurgency. Increasing death toll due to civil war, chronic sense of fear, daily setbacks of practical life and emotional love are some of the challenges which most of the characters face.

Sense of patriotism is expressed in as the leading characters, like Palpasa and Drishya are driven by the firm sense of purpose, and definite will to overcome every hurdle of practical life. In the midst of insurmountable challenges, they do not flinch back. Rather they go on facing them. Pragmatic and practical sense of heroism mixed with the love for the country lies at the center of the novel.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Patriotism for National Peace, Progress and Solidarity**

Patriotism means supporting and being responsible for one's family, community and all levels of government with willingness to work, to volunteer, to pay your share of taxes and pay with your life if need be. It means that the majority rules, but the majority protects the rights of the minority. It means respecting one's neighbor's opinion, but not letting oneself be run over by it. The word "patriotism" refers to the love for nation at the cross of inter and intra cultural interest. If a person or anyone is guided by love for the nation he or she is discouraged to concrete on individual interest, which is especially cast. The socio-economic condition of the people who lives in there.

Peace is the concept of harmony and the absence of hostility. In a behavioral sense, peace is generally understood to be a lack of conflict and freedom from fear of violence between heterogeneous social groups. Throughout history, benevolent leaders have often exhibited a certain type of behavioral or political restraint, which in turn has often resulted in the establishment of regional peace or economic growth through various forms of agreements or peace treaties. Such behavioral restraint has often resulted in the de-escalation of conflicts, or in multilateral or bilateral peace talks. The avoidance of war or violent hostility is often the result of compromise, and is often initiated with thoughtful active listening and communication, which may tend to enable a greater genuine mutual understanding.

Progress is the process of gradually improving or getting nearer to achieving or completing something. Solidarity is unity (as of a group or class) which produces or is based on unities of interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies. It refers to the ties in a society that bind people together as one. In addition, solidarity is a core

concept in the Christian democracy political ideology.

If there is peace in the nation, the nation can concentrate on its development. In the society, if there is no any kind of conflict then the society starts conflicting to settle the conflict and progress behind. The above situation leads the people towards poverty, and also to the situation of conflict.

When there is always progress in the society, then gradually the feelings of all the people become the same that means the progress of the country. So, in this way, solidarity and progress are interrelated with each other. If the needs or demands of the people are fulfilled, after that the feelings of brotherhood is arouses. So, there is no any kind of hostility.

The novel, obviously, reflects the author's own experience as a Brahmin male based largely in Kathmandu. His journalism background rather than his caste identity is crucial in understanding *Palpasa Café's* successes and failures. It is to his credit that he has written about what he knows and not attempted to include many different aspects of Nepal which would, incidentally, be a very boring exercise in paint-by-numbers prescriptive fiction.

Along the way, Drishya sees for himself the devastating effects of Nepal's conflict in the hills, via a mysterious old college friend (named Siddhartha) turned a Maoist. These are the main characters who tell Wagle's story. The novel begins with a description of the central character, Drishya, being abducted. This is told within a post-modern introduction which, like the similarly ironical ending is deliberately out of place with the rest of the novel's straightforward narrative style. The introduction is post-modern in the sense that Wagle introduces himself as a character, a journalist who has written the true story of Drishya during the conflict. Using the author as a character is a risky fictional device suggesting a paucity of original material and an

overly self-referential style (especially for an existing full-time journalist).

By limiting it to the bookends, Wagle nearly carries it off but his final cameo appearance suggests a lack of confidence in his first published fictional material as well as a need to spell out and reiterate his main intentions to the reader. The main part of the novel begins with a portrayal of Drishya and Palpasa's first encounters in Goa and then moves onto Kathmandu covering Drishya's artistic and personal torments. A large and dramatic section of the novel is then given to Drishya's journeys across conflict-wrecked hills before inevitable tragedy strikes and he returns to Kathmandu. Throughout long sections are taken up by dialogues between Drishya and Palpasa, or Drishya and Siddhartha.

These dialogues explore individual tragedies and conflict inside the main protagonists concerning the well-worn themes of love, art and politics. These inner explorations are not well connected with the outer violent conflict in Nepal. This is symbolic of a wider indecision in the novel between portraying what Wagle as a journalist saw and what he as a novelist wishes to write between his journalism and his fiction. His best observed sections, perhaps unintentionally, are in the broader canvas he paints using his journalistic brushes – firstly in the disappearances and general tension of post-royal massacre in Kathmandu and then of the conflict in the hills.

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