

## **I. Preview of Traumatic Events in *Echoes of Pain***

The novel basically focuses on the torture and trauma along with the associated issues of hallucinations, nightmares, madness, assaults, arrests, and attempts at suicides. Set in the valley of Kathmandu, with many facets of city life, the novel covers the period of about two and a half years – a few months before the advent of democracy and the rest after it. Realistically portraying the Nepalese life of the 1990s, it takes up the issues of Nepalese social and political life such as corrupt Nepali politics, the corrupt police department, the opportunist and self promoting Human Rights Workers, the greedy taxiwallahs, and the most unfeeling house owners of Kathmandu. It also raises the issues of justice, righteousness, religion, God and devotion. It makes use of many cultural markers by the use of Nepalese language, Nepali dress, Nepali food, Nepalese rituals, worship and so on. Dr Thapaliya presents the case of torture and pain: the feeling before one is about to torture or one is about to be tortured, the act of torturing, its immediate effect on both the torturer and the tortured, the trauma that re-surfaces later on, and the final resolution. It ends with justice in the form of reconciliation allowing the characters to live their normal life. It discusses the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the way to get relief out of it. And the writer, Ravi Thapaliya, a medical person by profession engaged in the rehabilitation program of PTSD patients, has used his experience to work out a well-planned resolution at the end of the novel giving it a happy ending.

The mentality of the traumatized characters- Vivas Thapa and Agni- is well brought out by the novelist. Vivas is caught for no crime and handed down to the Interrogation Unit of Police Department in the pro-democratic days of Nepal. He is tortured in a narrow ‘timeless’ cell of the unit by another simple but misled doctor Agni of the Teaching Hospital because of the lure of money offered by a sly sadist,

and a psycho Mr. Bonza, chief interrogator of the unit. During the process of interrogation, Vivas undergoes untold sufferings – physical as well as mental. The torturer Agni suffers no less mentally: “Pain was equally painful for him” (104). He too cries at the suffering of the tortured. Although not immediately but afterwards, even the pleasure seeking Bonza suffers: he eventually gives up his job, meets a guru, changes his attitude of life and works off his resolution getting reconciled not only with both Agni and Vivas but also with Premie, another victim of his cruel torture.

A man who happened to believe that one “couldn’t be in pleasure until others are in pain” (333). For pleasure is a ‘relative phenomenon’ and depends on the grief of others, Bonza comes to the realization that the pleasure he is seeking still remains far from him. Convinced before his death, he should talk it out with his victims, he welcomes them at his new residence at Sallaghari, plays the role of good host and confesses his crime, answers the torturing questions of the Agni as to why he was made the scapegoat and provides relief to all. All the characters – particularly Rita and Preetishma – know for sure that pain kills pain. Nothing else soothes you more than others acknowledging your pain. It clearly demonstrates the absurdity of acts. To come out of the adverse effect of trauma, the characters need to ‘act out’ or ‘work through’ the painful experiences.

Deepak Adhikari in “Echoes of Painful Nepali society” deals with the issues of corrupt Nepali politics, the corrupt police department and the most unfeeling house owners of Kathmandu and so on. Furthermore, he remarks:

Set in the valley of Kathmandu, with many facets of the city life, the novel covers a period of about two and a half years-a few months before the advent of democracy and the rest after it. Realistically portraying the Nepalese life of 1940s, it takes up the issues of Nepalese

corrupt politics, the corrupt police department, the opportunist and self promoting Human Rights workers, the greedy Taxiwallas, and the most unfeeling house owners of Kathmandu valley. (9)

Likewise, Gunakar Bhusal exposes local life and culture of Nepalese society in this novel. And, he asserts that the plot and characterization make a complete story. In this regard, he comments:

In *Echoes of pain* Thapaliya digs deep into the facets of human relationships. The novel is set in Kathmandu, but the theme crosses the frontiers. Thapaliya portrays the local life and culture in this novel. Each of the characters is powerful, and the interactions between them are chillingly intense. *Echoes of Pain* depicts the truth with a well-plotted story. (22)

Similarly, Krishna Prasad Acharya and Krishna Bahadur Basnet demonstrate the morbid human instinct in the novel, *Echoes of Pain*. They write:

*Echoes of Pain* explores the morbid human instinct that pleases to see pain and suffering in others. It depicts the fact that the disintegration, however, is bilateral. Agni, a surgeon in a teaching hospital, is enticed into working as an interrogator. His life begins to change insidiously, right from the first day of dealing with Vivas, his first victim. (55)

From the above critical analysis, the novel has been analyzed from various perspectives: issues of corrupt Nepalese society, local life and culture and the issues of morbid human instincts. But, none of these writings attempt to focus on torture and trauma along with the issues of hallucinations, nightmares, madness and attempts at suicide.

Primarily, the objectives of this study is to bring the post traumatic stress disorder and the way to get relief out of it of the major characters such as Vivas, Agni and Bonza dai. And the traumatic experiences or events remain at the heart of repeated seeing. Moreover, the study also aims at showing to come out of the adverse effect of trauma, the characters need to “act out” or “work through” the painful experiences as Dr. Ramesh is instrumental in the process of acting out or working through of the trauma of both Agani and Vivas.

Cathy Caruth, Dominic LaCapra and others, basing their theory of trauma on Freud’s psychoanalysis, speak about the need for “acting out” or “working through” of the trauma for leading a healthy life. Giving the general definition of trauma in her essay “Traumatic Awakening,” Caruth says:

Trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomenon. Apart from the psychological dimension of sufferings, traumatic experience suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may take the form of belatedness. (208)

The traumatic experience is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility which remain at the heart of repetitive seeing. The experience of the soldiers faced with the sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in the repeated nightmares is a central image of trauma (Caruth 181). This explanation based on the theory of trauma attempted by Freud on *Moses and Monotheism*, states that memory of a traumatic event can be lost over time (latency) but then regained in a symptomatic form when triggered by some similar event (Berger 570).

This regained trauma can be a means to work off the traumatic experience. The process involved is known as working through or acting out of the traumatic experience. Acting out means creating a therapeutic situation that re-traumatizes the victim with the witnessing and experiencing of the earlier scene of violence. LaCapra talks about 'working through' rather than 'acting out'. In it, like in 'acting out' the creating of therapeutic setting is involved but here there is an imperative to recognize the symptom and the trauma as one's own, to acknowledge that the trauma is still active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects (Berger 576).

The author very meticulously creates the character of Bonza Dai and the surroundings of his dwelling place to enact the destructive drama of the pain and the torture. Particularly unforgettable is the characterization of Bonza. His cool, calculating, manipulative, and sinister way of dealing with people, his epicurean/Machiavellian philosophy of life, his odd experiments on torture, his cold logic, his grand life style, his exotic menu, his wonderful sense of hospitality, his queer sense of business and human relationship are disturbingly fascinating.

Another strong point of the novel is, in my opinion, its evocation of atmosphere and realistic rendition of torture. The terrible atmosphere that surrounds by the hedges of cacti, the bull dog Bhote, his assistant Sirdar, and his own formidable face and gait lingers in the memory of the reader long after they finished reading the novel. Dr Thapaliya describes the chief interrogator thus:

A pipe between his lips, a meticulously maintained moustache, a few scars on his face, his hair styled with gel- although the large area of his forehead was already desolate, Bonza looked typically fearsome. The features along with the rumours that he has connection with the underground people lend Bonza's personality an aura of danger no less

associated with his dwelling place- a big house painted yellow and red.

(60)

In such a dangerous place, although much hospitality is given to Agni including expensive drink, rare meat and exotic food item, he finds it difficult sometimes even swallow the wonderful food. The cold manners of Bonza and the uneasy- almost sinister- atmosphere prevailing in the place turn the warm hospitality of Bonza into a cold meeting. If this is the case with warm and hospitality we can imagine his torture cells. Dr Thapaliya describes the chamber where Vivas is kept in the following words:

The room that Vivas was kept in was strange. It didn't have a window or even a hole in it that he can see a bit of the sky. He would have to live on a very little air. It was lit with an old bulb hanging high above on the ceilings... the bulbs glowed forever. There was no morning. Not a day. Not even night. It was a timeless dimension. The timelessness was killing him. . . . It was not possible to live without time. (62-63)

At a place of such timeless dimension "Vivas is supplied breakfasts one after another lunches in a row so as to drive him mad" (97). Agni is the one employed for methodological and a scientific torture. He is allowed to inflict any sort of torture on Vivas except murder. One of the scenes of the torture is described by the author as follows:

With all his strength Agni drove the pin into his finger. Agni scared himself first. He yelled before Vivas could know that it was hurting him. Agni had thought that the pin would go in easily; but it wasn't so. It was difficult to push it in. Not only morally, physically too. There was resistance. Only half of the pin went in before the pin bent.

Perhaps it hit the bone, distal phalanx. Blood oozes out profusely.

(100)

Agni and Vivas who are numbed because of the shock experience in the beginning suffer of trauma belatedly as explained by Caruth. They suffer from nightmares and hallucinations. Literally, they go mad. In their madness, they torture their family members, too. If Vivas nearly accuses his wife of adultery, Agni accuses his own of spying against him. Preetishma, Vivas's wife, contemplates suicide and even buys metacid to end her life. Rita, Agni's wife, gets stabbed by Agni. Both of them lose the taste of life, of living, of time, of space and existence. If freedom becomes torture for Vivas, love becomes revenge for Agni. Moreover, everything is painful for Vivas- not only the torture of Agni but even the kisses of Preetishma. Agni and Vivas – the torturer and the tortured – need the much therapeutic cure.

Dr Ramesh Thapa provides the same on the time. He is instrumental in the process of 'acting out' or 'working through' of the trauma of both Agni and Vivas. Dr Thapa brings the traumatic victims together and helps them come out of their shock by making them let out the truth and speak out the facts. Through owning up everything and speaking out before one another they work off their trauma and prepare themselves to lead their normal life. Many people do not get this opportunity of reconciliation but Dr Thapaliya's characters get it and thus they are luckier than many fictional characters as well as real life people.

Moreover, the novel's ruthless rendition of the scenes of torture and madness are redeemed by the scenes of human love and charity so sincerely advocated by the theorists like Amitav Ghosh and Karahassan in their scholarly writings. Gosh, for example, in "The Ghosts of the Mrs. Gandhi" says that the writer of the violence shouldn't try to fan the fire of violence; he/she should rather try to calm it down by

showing little works of humanism- the acts of kindness and charity that are undertaken even under the shadow of the violence- amidst the scenes of death and destruction for violence everywhere is resisted (50). And it is the Ghosh's opinion that a significant number of people always oppose the repugnant violence and try to re-affirm humanity. Dr. Thapaliya exactly does so despite his representation of violence or torture in its stark reality. It seems he has found a language at once to "accommodate both violence and the civilized and willed response to it" which, in Ghosh's opinion, is a challenging task for a writer (50). In *Echoes of Pain*, violence is judiciously interspersed with the scenes of happy family drama. In the end of the novel, almost all the characters gather at Bonza's residence who is now Bodh ram. They have dinner. They reveal everything in front of each other and congratulate each other. This is how; they work off the traumatic experience by confessing everything in front of each other.

There are scenes in the novel when the family of Vivas and Agni celebrate birthdays at their homes or go for restaurants for special lunch or dinner. There are joyous occasion between the father and the daughter when they play happily together. The novel incorporates many little acts of kindness, too. The selfless love of her uncle, Mr.Karki for Preetishma and the help he renders to find the whereabouts of the Vivas after the latter disappears, the love and the understanding shared by Rita and Preetishma despite the fact that their husbands have become the arch enemies of each other, can touch the core of the heart of anybody that is borne as a human beings. Also, the understanding shown by Premie and the service he renders Bonza dai, although the latter has ruined his life, surgeon DD's forgiving of Agni, the help extended by Bonza dai himself in revoking the medical job of Agni, etc, provide the supreme examples of human love and forgiveness.



One special things need mention about the good characters in the novel, particularly, the Devi-like women characters- Rita and Preetishma. Rita loves her husband despite his murder attempt on her and restores him to normal and healthy family life of order and conjugal happiness. Preetishma too endures all the tortuous acts of her husbands, the brutal censors of the society and restrains herself from committing suicide to bring back her husband to the life of normalcy and joy. Both the heroines share the pain of their spouses being much eager to suffer with them. They help recover their husbands completely out of their physical and mental wounds. Their love is so powerful that the storm of devastation in family life is evaded by it. In this logic, the novel pleads for living. In "Afterwords" the author says;

Life is much more important. Much more beautiful. You just can't compare it . . . . The real meaning of life is to live . . . . Killing of real men belittlesevery other things . . . . The moment we think others dispensible, we are making ourselves less indispensible . . . you have to let others live if you think you should live. (Afterwords)

Although this study entails the general concept regarding torture and trauma envisioned by certain critics and theorists, it does not aim at providing a wholesome analysis of it. This study demonstrates the torture and traumatic effect and its resolution only from delightful side. That is, many people do not get this opportunity of reconciliation even in real life but Dr. Thapaliya's characters get it.

This study makes significant contribution in three aspects of concern. First, the study probes into the essential notion of torture and trauma. Second, the study is significant because it unfolds the issues of torture and trauma along with associated issues of hallucinations, nightmares, madness and attempts at suicide. At the same time it also provides the way to get relief out of it. Lastly, this study works as a

secondary material to the upcoming researchers dealing with the same issues the project entails.

In the following chapter entitled “Traumatic Experience: the Torturer and the Tortured”, it is argued that both the torturer and the tortured get affected with hallucinations, nightmares, madness, assaults, and attempts at suicide. Dr. Ramesh Thapa becomes the means in the process of 'acting out' or 'working through' of the trauma of the central characters, both Agin and Vivas. Dr. Thapa helps come out of their shock and trauma by making them let out the truth. In the process, both the parties are affected by the traumatic experiences. The thesis concludes that this is the well-planned resolution in the novel for the characters suffered by the traumatic experiences. And, violence is judiciously interspersed with the scene of human love and charity and confession.

## II. Traumatic Experience: the Torturer and the Tortured

Dr. Thapaliya skillfully presents the case of torture and pain: the act of torturing, its immediate effect on both the torturer and tortured the trauma that resurfaces later on, and the final resolution. It ends with justice in the form of reconciliation allowing the characters to live their normal life. That is to say, it discusses the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the way to get relief out of it. To come out of the adverse effect of trauma, the characters need to 'act out' or 'work through' the painful experience. And, in this novel *Echoes of Pain*, through owning up everything and speaking out before one another they work off or act out their trauma and prepare themselves to lead their normal life. Many people do not get this opportunity of reconciliation but Dr Thapaliya's characters get it and they are luckier than many fictional characters as well as real life people. Giving a general definition of trauma in her essay "Traumatic Awakening", Caruth says:

Trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomenon. Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it, that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form belatedness. (208)

In her opinion, what can simply be seen or what can know are not the only things involved there. The experience of the soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in repeated nightmares is a central image of trauma (Caruth 181). This

explanation, based on the theory of the trauma attempted by Freud in *Mosses and Monotheism*, states that the memory of a traumatic event can be lost over time (latency) but then regained in a symptomatic form when triggered by some similar event (Berger 570). In this way, each national catastrophe involves and transforms memories of other catastrophe, so that history becomes a complex entanglement of crimes inflicted and suffered, with each catastrophe understood – that is misunderstood- in the context of repressed memories of previous one.

This regained trauma can be a means to work off the painful experience. The process involved is known as working through or acting out of the traumatic experience. Acting out means creating a therapeutic situation that retraumatizes the victim with the witnessing and experiencing of the earlier scenes of violence. LaCapra talks about ‘working through’ rather than ‘acting out.

In her essay, “Trauma , Absence, Loss” LaCapra asserts: “Acknowledging and affirming – or working through – absence as absence requires the recognition of both the dubious nature of ultimate solutions and the necessary anxiety that cannot be eliminated from self or projected into others” (708). In it like acting out the creating of therapeutic setting is carried out but here there is an imperative to recognize the symptom and the trauma as one’s own, to acknowledge that the trauma is still active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects (Berger 576).

The mentality of the traumatized characters- Vivas Thapa and Agni- is well brought out by the novelists. Vivas, a simple music teacher at the Lalit Kala Academy and leading an ordinary life of domestic simplicity , quietness and love with his loving son Sarbon and angelic wife Preetishma is caught for no crime of his and handed down to the Interrogation Unit of the police department in pro- democratic days of Nepal. He is tortured in a narrow ‘timeless’ cell of the Unit by another simple

but misled character doctor Agni of the Teaching Hospital because of the lure of the money offered by the sadist and a psycho Mr. Bonza, chief interrogator of the unit. During the interrogation, Vivas undergoes untold sufferings- physical as well as mental. The torturer Agni suffers no less mentally. Pain was equally painful for him . It was not anything different for him. He too cries at the suffering of the tortured: “He spoke and reached his handkerchief to mop the sweat. The air-coller could do nothing to the heat coming from under the skin” (55).

Although not immediately but afterwards, even the pleasure seeking Bonza suffers: he eventually gives up his job, meets a guru, and changes his attitude of life and work off his resolutions getting reconciled not only with both Agni and Vivas but also with Premie, another victim of his cruel torture. He is the man who happened to believe that one “could not be in pleasure until others are in pain. It was a relative phenomenon. If others are too happy, you’re in grief. And the vice-versa” (333). Bonza comes to the realization that the pleasure he is seeking still remains far from him. Convinced that before his death, he should talk it out with his victims, he welcomes them at his new residency in Shallaghari, plays the role of a good host and confesses his crime, answers the torturing question of Agni as to why he was made an scapegoat and provides relief to all.

The author very meticulously creates the character of Bonza Dai and the surroundings of his dwelling place to enact the destructive drama of pain and torture. One of the strongest points of the novel is the creation of the threatening characters such as that of Sirdar and Bonza Dai. The readers may sometimes feel that such dangerous characters might be lurking around their neighborhood to make their peaceful existence impossible. Particularly unforgettable is the characterization of Bonza. His cool, calculating, manipulative, and sinister way of dealing with people,

his epicurean/Machiavelian philosophy of life, his odd experiments on torture, his cold logic, his wonderful sense of hospitality, his queer sense of business and human relationship are disturbingly fascinating.

Grown up as a *khaate* in the street and scavenging for food the whole day on the roadside, Bonza enjoyed killing dogs as a boy. He was picked up by a policeman and given a home and a name. He enjoyed the police department later, betrayed his god father to get promotion and finally became the chief interrogator. As an officer, he was never loyal to the nation or people. He sold the military secrets to the foreigners and now he is engaged in selling the findings of “torture research” to the foreign people for money. He has travelled a lot and gained much experience. But he seemed to have learnt only crooked things. Perhaps because of his hellish past, he has negative opinion about the people. For him, “people are all objects” (7), “all of them are criminals unless proven otherwise” (57). He considers his job to be to fool the “bloody human rights people” . . . and the lawyers and the court” (8). Once he says:

What else could give more pleasure than to see a doctor piercing pain into somebody’s fingers. Killing two birds with one stone; although I now hate using violent phrases like this. I would enjoy a doctor’s burning conscience, together with the victim’s pain . . . . I believed money had greater power than I had imagined. I think God didn’t have to create any other sin after he created money. (334)

Bonza’s opinion about ethics and oaths are that they are “a poor man’s boundaries, a coward’s justification” (22). Disillusioned at a later phase of life, however, he retreats to a seclude place in the countryside and awaits his peaceful exit from the world.

Another strong point of the novel is its evocation of atmosphere and realistic rendition of torture. Terrible atmosphere that surrounds the torture cell of the Bonza,

his own house surrounded by the hedges of cacti, the Bull dog bhote, his assistant Sirdir and his own formidable face and gait linger in the memory of the readers long after they have finished the novel. Dr. Thapaliya describes the chief interrogator thus: “A pipe between his lips, a meticulously maintained moustache, a few scars on his face, his hair styled with gel- although a large area of his forehead was already desolate, Bonza looked typically fearsome” (60). There is the rumors that he has connection with underground people lend Bonza’s personality an aura of danger no less associated with his dwelling place- a big house painted yellow and red. Here is the description of the place surrounding Bonza’s house:

Bonza had plenty of cacti in his garden. Indeed, a lot of cacti. Different species, different colors. The garden was well manicured. But still, it was a monotonously ‘cactus’ . . . . When they were at the threshold, a colossal creature came to his notice . . . . Well, a little too wild, like me, hee, heeee! . . . . But in spite of his desolation, the house was well maintained. It was deceptive, as it didn’t look as affluent from outside. Inside was different. It looked almost dangerous. (5-6)

In such a dangerous place, although much hospitality is given to Agni including expensive drink, rare meat, and exotic food item, he finds it difficult sometimes even to swallow the wonderful food. The cold manners of Bonza and the uneasy- almost sinister- atmosphere prevailing in the place turn the warm hospitality of Bonza into a cold meeting creating nausea- like feeling in Agni. If this is the case with his warmth and hospitality we can imagine his torture cells. Dr. Thapaliya describes the chamber where Vivas is kept in the following words:

The room that Vivas was kept in was strange. It didn’t have a window or even a hole in it so that he can see a bit of the sky. He would have to

live on a very little air. It was lit with an old bulb hanging high above on the ceilings . . . . The bulbs glowed forever. There was no morning. No day. Not even light. It was a timeless dimension . . . . The timelessness was killing him . . . . It was not possible to live without time. (62-63)

At such a place of timeless dimension, “Vivas is supplied breakfast one after another lunches in a row so as to drive him mad” (62). Agni is one employed for methodological and scientific torture of Vivas. He is allowed to inflict any sort of torture on Vivas except murder. In his chilling voice, Bonza directs that “you can do anything to bring in a good result. Any damn thing. Anything short of killing” (97). One of the scenes of the torture is described by the author as follows:

With all his strength Agni drove the pin into the finger. Agni scared himself first. He yelled before Vivas could know that it was hurting him. Agni had thought that the pin would go in easily; but it wasn't so. It was difficult to push it in. Not only morally, physically too. There was resistance. Only half of the pin went in before the pin bent. Perhaps it hit the bone, distal phalanx. Blood oozed out profusely.

(101)

From the above description, Dr thapaliya describes the chamber where Vivas is kept. In fact, the writer has presented the torturous situation that undergoes with the Vivas. And, of course it is because of such torturous circumstances that the traumatic effect remains in their mind which gets expressed later on. It means that Vivas has to undergo such painful operation regularly.

Violence is an action which is intended to hurt people. In fact, it dismantles the general situation of way of life. The act of violence brings disorder, anarchy,



killing, pain, suffering and torture to the people. The idea like suicide, matricide, patricide, rape, murder, exile, loot, segregation, pain, torture, jail, crucifixion all occurred due to violence.

Moreover, violent act occurs of obsess mentality. That's why, its result may give pain and suffering to those who are victimized by such event. Violence is the source for creating trauma. Trauma occurs aftermath of violence. It is a haunting memory of the event that tortured physically and mentally. In the novel, Agni and Vivas lose sense of life because of the traumatic violence. That's why, Rita, Agni's wife gets stabbed by Agni himself and Preetisma has to face the situation of success by using metacid.

The finger keeps bleeding and the pin remains flashing on the tip of the swollen finger for a long time. Vivas has to undergo such painful operations regularly. He feels that "all his existence was used up by pain" (101). This is the evocation of atmosphere and realistic rendition of torture. The terrible atmosphere that surrounds the torture cell of Bonza lingers in the memory of the readers long after they have finished reading the novel. Thus trauma is a special form of memory. The event has event only, not meaning. It produces emotion- 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. Caruth in her essay "Why Trauma Now" 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 hallucinations.

In Cathy Caruth's psychoanalytic theory of trauma, it is not the experience itself that produces traumatic effect, but rather the remembrance of it. In her account there is always a time lapse, a period of "latency" in which forgetting is

characteristics, between an event and the experience of the trauma. As reflective process, trauma links past to present through representation and imagination. In psychological account, this can lead to a distorted identity formation, where “certain subject positions may become especially prominent or even overwhelming , for example, those of victim or perpetrator . . . wherein one is possessed by the past and tends to repeat it compulsively as if it were fully present” (12).

Cathy caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* is concerned principally with questions of reference and representation. This is full of brilliant insights. Caruth’s introduction, “the wound and the voice”, opens new ground on a problematic explored by Geoffery Hartman, Elaine Scarry, and Slavoj- the relation between pain and language, in its narrative, historical, and ethical dimension. Caruth argues that trauma as it first appears is incomprehensible. It is only later, after a period of latency, that it can be placed in a narrative: “The impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located” (8).

Traumatic narrative then, is strongly referential, but not in any simple or direct way, and the construction of a history develops from this delayed response to trauma, which permits “history to arise where immediate understanding may not” (11). Agni and Vivas who are almost numbed because of the shock experience in the beginning suffer belatedly as explained by Caruth. They suffer from madness and hallucinations. Literally, they go mad. In their madness, they torture their family members, too. If Vivas nearly accuses his wife of adultery, Agni accuses his own of spying against him. Preetishma, vivas’s wife, contemplates suicide and even buys Metacid to end her life. Rita, Agni’s wife, gets stabbed by her beloved Raja. Both of them lose the sense of taste, almost of life, of living, of time, of space and existence. If freedom becomes torture for Vivas, love becomes revenge for Agni. Moreover, everything becomes

painful for Vivas- not only the pins of Agni but even the soft kisses of Preetishma.

Agni and Vivas – the torturer and the tortured – need the much therapeutic cure.

That is to say, Caruth defines trauma as an experience consisting of two components that the trauma victim never manages to reconcile with each other. A severe mental and may be also physical injury which the victim seems to overcome remarkably well is followed by belated onset of symptoms that sometimes appear to bear no causal relationship to the original injury. At first sight, Caruth thus appears to define trauma in ways that are quite compatible with psychological research on trauma and post-traumatic stress.

Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* represents the most influential, perhaps the foundational text. All the key elements of the new trauma discourse are the first time fully developed in this volume. Caruth includes in her book extensive reference to psychological studies of trauma, but this interdisciplinary gesture is immediately undermined by a very selective and often de-contextualized appropriation of the empirical literature. Caruth believes, for example, that the trauma experience will and should remain inaccessible to representation. Their conclusions nicely exhibit Caruth's deconstructive axioms but they are not born out in clinical literature. Many psychologists and therapists agree that traumatic experiences may be truthfully represented in every day narrative language, for insistence as the result of successful therapy.

Caruth is most certainly not responsible for this development but her model has been empathically and apodictically embraced in a wide range of academic settings, uniting poststructuralist –inclined sociologists, political scientists, educators, and many cultural and literary studies experts under the sign of trauma. Like Caruth, Winsberg believes that trauma is “always already inscribed in memory” and has

particular epistemological value, although, again following Caruth, he quickly adds that any conscious representation of trauma remains by definition “inadequate” because “trauma is the inaccessible truth of remembering” (204).

In the novel, after the traumatic interrogation process, Vivas could not spell out everything that happens with him. In fact, the truth about the torturous environment exists but he can not spell out. The act of physical violence, which is received by Vivas is very much terrific that one could not face him who have weakened sensibility. His physical condition is very much terrific that he bears unbearable torture and pain. Trauma of the separation and remembering those past events of home sweet home makes him full of loss.

Many scholars have not properly understood or fail to respect the peculiar, contradictory logic of trauma according to which truth exists but cannot and may not be spelled out. In his assessment, academics writing on philosophy and history have the purpose to ‘make us forget about the traumatic flipside of all memory.’ And in this respect differ from literary texts which are capable of exploring the interdependency between trauma and memory in more honest and productive fashion (206).

Edkins emphasizes appropriately that “it is people , in their physicality and their vulnerability , that experience the trauma , both bodily and psychic and it should be to them that the memories belong” (100). Since “trauma is clearly disruptive of settled stories” (107).Trauma disrupts the settled stories. In the novel, Dr.Thapaliya presents the disruption of the settled stories of Vivas thapa and Agni. Vivas is the music teacher at the lalit Kala Academy. And Agni is also leading a normal life. But because of the traumatic violence, both get disturbed mentally as well as physically. During the process of interrogation, Vivas undergoes untold sufferings- physical and

mental. The torturer Agni suffers no less mentally. Whatsoever, these traumatic violence occurred mainly because of the impact of violent act that resulted into catastrophe, disorder, death, and separation. And the impact of such events on the individual, the community and society as a whole, including the effects on fundamental beliefs about safety and well being.

Obviously, there are important exceptions in the field of trauma studies and in this context we would like to highlight the work of Dominik Lacapra, who has very successfully applied psychological and psychoanalytical concepts in his analysis of Holocaust memory. Lacapra has also identified one of the fundamental conceptual errors at the core of the deconstructive trauma discourse. Many advocates of the concepts of the cultural trauma conflate the psychological challenges that all human beings face in their everyday life, especially in the process of maturation, with the extraordinary psychological ordeal, for example, by victims of extreme violence.

Empirically speaking, however, in most societies and under most historical circumstances only a small part of the population suffers from what clinical criteria define as a post-traumatic stress. Empirical studies have shown that survivors of extreme violence are particularly likely to belong to this part of the population and experience severe symptoms of mental disaster. At the same time, it is also true that the post-traumatic symptoms of various sorts can be caused by many different factors, including seemingly ordinary and pedestrian experiences, but that fact makes it all the more important to differentiate empirically and conceptually between different forms of violence and their social and psychological consequences.

In the novel, Dr. Thapaliya presents the social and psychological effects of the traumatized mentality of the characters like Agni and Vivas. In their madness they torture their family members, too. In fact, they go mad. There is the mental

devastation of the major characters such as Vivas , Agni and even Bonza dai. The whole theme of torture, trauma and the consequent suffering of the family members of Vivas and Agni no doubt is about the darker side of human life. Preetishma endures all the torture of her husband, the brutal censor of society and restrains herself from committing suicide.

Psychological and sociological consequences, for example, can be grasped through the character of Agni in the novel. The writer describes the psychological devastation of Agni. The writer writes: "Agni was indeed devastated. All the foundation of his justification to work with Bonza had collapsed. He'd never thought that people might be innocent. He'd never given it a second thought. He'd never bothered to see the other side of the coin" (192).

In this light, Agni is not prepared to think of any of the consequences now. It is all finished for him. He hears DD's abuses so he closes the window and closes his ears with his hands. This is how the traumatic events have devastating psychological and social consequences. In this case, LaCapra does not talk about full recovery, in her essay "Trauma, Loss, Absence", She argues:

Conversly, absence at a 'foundational' level cannot simply be derived from particular historical losses; however, much it may be suggested as its recognition prompted by their magnitude and the intensity of one's response to them. When absence is converted into loss, one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of a new totality of fully unified community. (698)

But, Dr. Ramesh Thapa brings the traumatic victims together and helps them come out of their shock by making them let out the truth and speak out the facts. Through owning up everything and speaking out before one another they work off their trauma

and prepare to lead their normal life. Dominic Lacapra, Cathy Caruth, and Kalital all confront the Freudian ambivalence toward the event (an ambivalence, though leased on different premises seen in poststructuralist theory), and all, in different ways, regard events, their aftermaths, and their representations as crucial to interpreting personal and social histories. But trauma is not another word for disaster. The idea of catastrophe as trauma provides a method of interpretation; for it points that the effects of an event may be dispersed and manifested in many forms not obviously associated with event. This dispersed occurs across time. So that an event experienced as shattering may actually produce its full impact only years later. This representation and temporal hermeneutics of the symptoms has powerful implications for contemporary theory. In its emphasis on the retrospective reconstructions of the traumatic events (for the event cannot be comprehended when it occurs), a traumatic analysis is both construction and empirical (Berger 572).

Lacapra's theory of trauma focuses on three psychoanalytic topics: the return of the repressed; acting out versus working through; and the dynamics of transference. Lacapra is mainly concerned with the return of the repressed as discourse, rather than with physical returns of the repressed such as the genocidal repetition in Cambodia and Bosnia, and he outlines the possibilities for the return of historical trauma as discourse. There is, on the one hand, the "redemptive, fetishistic narrative that excludes or marginalizes trauma through a teleological story" (192). Examples of this mode, for example, are the works of nationalist German historians like Ernst Nolte who, while not denying the Holocaust, subordinates it to the narrative of the German sacrifice and tragedy, and apologists for Paul de Man, Martin Heidegger (like Shoshona Felman and Derrida). On the other hand, Lacapra points to the "construction of all history as . . . trauma and an insistence that there is no alternative

to symptomatic acting out and the repetition compulsion other than an imaginary . . . and redemptive meaning” (193).

Lacapra sets out to describe a way to work through trauma that does not “deny the irreducibility of loss or the role of paradox and aporia but avoids becoming “compulsively fixated” (193). It’s a very thin line, for Lacapra acknowledges a certain value in acting out. If there is no acting out at all, no repetition of the traumatic description, the resulting account of the historical trauma will be that teleological, redemptive, fetishizing that denies the trauma’s reality. It happened, but it had no lasting effects; look, we’re all better now, even better than before! Transference in psychoanalysis is itself a return of the repressed, or rather a more conscious summoning of the repressed; transference repeats or acts out a past event or relationships in a new, therapeutic setting that allows for critical evaluation and change. Transference is the occasion for working through the symptom and the trauma as one’s own, to acknowledge that the trauma is still active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects. Many people do not get this opportunity of reconciliation but Dr. Thapaliya’s characters get it and thus they are luckier than many fictional characters as well as real life people.

Judith Herman argues in her critically acclaimed ‘Trauma and Recovery’ that the ‘ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness’ (1) and when she maintains that for victims of ongoing, inescapable abuse “the ordinary relations of body and mind, reality and imagination, knowledge and memory no longer hold” (96). And the experience of violence as that resists conscious recognition. Trauma and Violence thus represents Herman’s attempt to actively advance our understanding of violence and victimization, and is thus meant to supplement our current understanding of post-traumatic disorder (PTSD). While



recognizing the diagnostic importance of PTSD, Herman is, nonetheless, critical of its classificatory emphasis on events ‘outside the range of human experience’ since by definition certain victim experiences are left out. As she argues that “this definition has proved to be inaccurate. Rape, battery and other forms of sexual and domestic violence are so common part of women’s lives that they can hardly be described as outside the range of ordinary experience” (33). As it currently stands, then, PTSD still does not ‘fit accurately enough’ the symptoms associated with the brutally quotidian experience of sexual and domestic violence, the latter of which is often far more complicated because the victim finds it difficult to escape (119).

Herman when she maintains that “certain violation of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud”; they are “unspeakable” (1). It was an extremely imposed silence. Cathy Winkler argues, for example, that silence is “the choice of most victims’ because they fear the consequences of reporting” (287). Thus she writes, “silence is a method of protection” (12). In this logic, in the novel the victimized character Vivas says no but people didn’t know why he said no. “Vivas was regaining consciousness, which did not come alone. Pain was coming back too. Ah, it was consciousness behind all the troubles. He hated it. He hated to be conscious. He wanted to be stone . . . . He was shaking his head and hand to say no. But people did not know why he had to say. What no?” (127).

In the above lines, the writer presents silence as the choice of most victims. It is because they have the fear of reporting. While reporting, they feel psychological and social devastation. In this logic, silence becomes their method of protection. In this light, Vivas hates to be conscious. He wants to be stone. That is to say, Vivas remains aware of the pain and the troubles that come along with the consciousness.

While acknowledging that silence is imposed externally, Roberto Culberston also argues – by drawing from her own experience of childhood sexual abuse that silence is “an external one in which the victim attempts to suppress what is recalled or finds it repressed by some part of himself which functions as stranger, hiding self from the self’s experience according to unfathomable criteria and requirements” (169). It is therefore, Vivas asserts, “I’ll accept any crime. Just tell me please. Give me a blank paper. I’ll sign on it. I am any criminal you want” (100).

Culberston argues that when ‘mind and body’ conspire to “deny in important way the terror of the experience”, the memories of the violence are “left apart from the story” (174). To this end, Trauma theory repeats the moral logic of identity politics , and in so doing works within a framework established by liberal individualism, as critics of identity politics have always maintained and is certainly flagged by Armstrong as a logic of hierarchy and enumeration .

Drawing information from Wendy Brown’s “State of Inquiry” and her claim that personal testimony politics is a project that cannot desire a future for itself because logically it cannot free itself from the past, Motwitt is unsettled by the failure of trauma theorists to reflect upon their common turf with liberalism , so that he maintains “if we are ever to find ‘the real killers’, it will be because a movement has emerged that refuses to argue with the rights on its own terms” (84).

Likewise, A victim goes through unimaginable complexity. In the novel, Vivas goes through complex situation:

Vivas turned his head to the other side . . . . Vivas closed his eyes. He breathed heavily for a while. It was far too complex situation. Having undergone such prolonged torture, he finally heard the allegation through the doctor who claimed to have saved his life. May be he did,

he didn't care. Life was a redundant phenomenon now. Even Preetishma and Sarbon were surreal existence for him. (141)

A sense of complexity can be glimpsed, for example, by considering the work of the feminist philosopher Susan J. Brison, who speculates on her rape experience in her book, "Aftermath: violence and the Remaking of the self." Written in the early 1990s and in the relative aftermath of attack, Brison begins by saying that rape requires "the illumination provided by a victim's perspective" (4), even though she acknowledges that imagining what it is like to be a rape victim is no simple matter, since much of what a victim goes through is unimaginable.

According to Herman the desire to deny the reality of violence is such that the victim is quite capable of forgetting what has happened, and if not forgetting it, the victim is as likely to find the experience unspeakable, but this poses a fundamental problematic: for how do we guarantee the reality of violence if, at best, it is no longer the reality you imagine and if at worst it disappears without traces? She maintains that "atrocities, however, refuses to be buried. Equally powerful as the desire to deny atrocities is the conviction that denial does not work. Folk wisdom is filled with ghosts who refuse to rest in their graves until their societies are told murder will out" (1).

Violence, according to Herman, will always announce its presence, its force being such that no matter how we might prefer to wish it away as reality, it will return to haunt us. Importantly, here, Herman works to personify history by figuring 'atrocities' as 'ghosts' that are always speaking to us. So while she is ready to admit that violence alters the relations of 'body and mind', reality and imagination, and knowledge and memory', these altered states of consciousness permit the elaboration

of a prodigious array of symptoms simultaneously conceal and reveal their origins ; they speak in a disguised language of secrets too terrible for words” (96).

Cathy Caruth argues that an attempt to gain access to a traumatic history is a ‘project of listening beyond the pathology of individual suffering’, to the reality of the history than in its cries can only be proclaimed in unassailable form’. In other words, it is a project of critical reading and listening precisely because there is an attempt to get beyond privileging the individual as the site of trauma.

Jane Kilby in “violence and the cultural politics of trauma” believes that via the work of trauma theorists such as Caruth, as well as, Shoshana felman and Dori Laub , that it is now possible to separate our understanding of violence and victimization from the percepts of liberal modernism and thereby meet Mardorossian’s demand to retheorize ‘the meaning of the categories such as “victim and experience rather than merely criticize their use” (772).

Similarly, the issue of trauma and the traumatic experiences can be grasped through the literary techniques that the writer has used in the novel. Geoffery H. Hartman in his essay “On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies” argues that traumatic experiences are expressed through the figurative or poetic language and perhaps symbolic process in general, as something other than an enhanced imaging or vicarious repetition of the prior (non) experience. In this logic, he writes:

The disjunction between experiencing (phenomenological or empirical) and understanding (thoughtful naming, in which words replace things, or their images),is what figurative language expresses and explores. The artistic representation modifies that part of our desire for knowledge which is driven by images. (79)

In the same way, Ravi Thapaliya in *Echoes of Pain* metaphorically uses the words ‘theater’ and ‘operating room’ to refer to the timeless cell of the interrogative units. The two words provide the whole traumatic scenario and events in the novel. That is the place where both the Agni and Vivas, the torturer and the tortured, have experienced the traumatic events. By using such figurative language, the writer explores the traumatic situation that the characters undergo. In fact, the room is neither the theater nor the operating room. It is the timeless cells of Interrogative units where the characters of the novel undergo various sorts of traumatic experience.

Hartman asserts the figurative language to the cognition of trauma. The knowledge of trauma or the knowledge which comes from that source is composed of two contradictory elements. One is the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced. It seems to have bypassed perception and consciousness, and falls directly into the psycho. The other is the kind of memory of the event, in the form of perpetual trooping of it by the bypassed or severely split (dissociated) psyche. On the level of poetics, literal and figurative may correspond to the two types of cognition.

What is the relevance of trauma theory for reading or practical criticism? This much is known: in literature, as in life, the simplest event can resonate mysteriously, be invested with aura, and tend toward the symbolic. The symbolic, in the sense, is not a denial of literal or referential but its uncanny intensification. The reason for this convertibility of literal and symbolic is the traumatizing already mentioned which constantly shatters basic trust yet always, in a symbolic mode, picks up the pieces.

In short, we gain a clearer view of the relation of the literature to mental functioning in several key areas, including reference, subjectivity, and narration. It means that traumatic characters need the narration process to overcome the traumatic experiences time and again. In this logic, In the essay, “Narrating pain: The power of

catharsis”, Richard Kearney explores ways in which narrative retelling and remembering might provide cathartic release for sufferers of trauma. This is crucial to our understanding of catharsis. It is the matter of retrieving painful truths- through the gap of narrative mimesis. Narrative catharsis is a way of making absent things present in a unique balancing of compassion and dispassion, of identification and contemplation, of particular emotion and universal understanding. It is the task which, if finely and delicately achieved, may proffer some measure of healing.

In the same way, the characters in the novel narrate their traumatic experience time and again which ultimately makes them feel the healing. For example, when Vivas is put in the timeless cell of the interrogation unit, Preetishma, Vivas’s wife, becomes restless thinking about her husband. Once Agni’s wife, Rita tells her that she has seen the photo of Vivas in Agni’s bag. Preetishma becomes keen to know the story. Then, Rita narrates everything there. At the same time, Preetishma too narrates the events of phone calls and the arrest of Vivas without any crime. At the time of narrating, they remain silent time and again. That is to say, traumatic experiences come in pause, silence and disturbance in language. When Rita narrates the event about Vivas, Preetishma finds the absent Vivas present. This is the power of narration.

Not only this much, in the end of the novel, these traumatic characters- Vivas, Agni, Preetishma and Bonza- finely and delicately narrate their traumatic experience which offers them healing and normal life. The characters like Agni, Vivas, Preetishma, Rita and Bonza Dai narrate their traumatic experiences in front of each other and work off their traumatic consequences. For example, Bonza Dai narrates about in the following ways:

Let me start my story. I was an orphan since childhood . . . I was picked up by a policeman. Yeah, I betrayed my godfather and

promoted myself. Yeah, I wanted pleasure . . . . What else could give more pleasure than to see a doctor piercing pins into somebody's finger. Killing two birds with one stone. Now I feel free. Free enough.

(333-334)

Trauma thus works within the orbit of literary studies, has definite answers. But instead of seeking premature knowledge, it stays longer in the negative and allows disturbances of language and mind the quality of time we give to literature. The questioning of reference, or more positively our ability to constitute preferentiality of a literary kind, indicates the nearness of dream or trauma; negative narratibility defines a temporal structure that tends to collapse, to implode into a charged traumatic core. This fading always indicates a disturbance vis-à-vis the symbolic order.

That is to say, traumatic events or experiences come with the disturbances of language. In the novel, the doctor Agni mumbles in the custody clinic. Even though he is a torturer, he also experiences the traumatic experiences in return. In such traumatic situation, he becomes nervous and trembling. Even if he is there, he takes fifteen minutes to enter the timeless cells of interrogation unit. And Agni is just thinking. He is unable to speak for a long time. Even if when he speaks, he uses several pauses in his speech:

Actual surgery- is much more difficult than mere theory, even in an optimal environment. Here, I was going to operate, in Bonza's cells. Well, the liability was low, but still it was a surgery. This is my own field, and I shouldn't be failed. But . . . I am feeling nervous and trembling. I am unable to speak and do anything. (125)

On the other hand, Vivas, the tortured, in the timeless cells of interrogation unit has disturbance in the language. He starts with, "Are you . . ." (132). And he tries to speak

loudly but he can't. While torturing Vivas, Agni time and again remains silent. He says to Bonza, "Well, this terrible smell and . . . I . . ." (132). Agni wants to tell Sarita about the torture research but he couldn't speak. It is because of the traumatic experience that he has faced in the torturing custody.

This means, trauma studies a concern for the absence or intermittences in speech (or of conscious knowledge in speech); for the obliquity or residual muteness of flowers of speech and other euphemism mode; for the uncanny role of accidents; and for literature as a testimonial act that transmits knowledge in a form that is not scientific and doesn't coincide with either a totally realistic or analytic form of representation. There is something very contemporary about trauma studies, reflecting our sense that violence is coming ever nearer, like a storm- a storm that may already have moved into the core of our being. The reality of violence, not simply as external fate, but intrinsic to the psychological development of the human species, and contaminating its institution.

Thus trauma enables one to recount events and perhaps to evoke experience, typically through non-linear movements that allow trauma to register in language and its hesitations, indirections, pauses, and silences. And particularly by bearing witness and giving testimony, narrative may help per formatively to create openings in existence that didn't exist before. In the novel, the traumatized characters- Vivas and Agni- remain silent time and again. When Agni asks Vivas about the bank robbery, Vivas remain silent and we can find the hesitations and indirections in the writer's illustration of the Vivas situation:

Vivas closed his eyes. He breathed heavily for a while. It was far more complex situation. Having undergone such prolonged torture, he finally heard the allegations through this doctor who claimed to have



saved his wife. May be he did, but Vivas didn't care. Life was a redundant phenomenon now. Even Preetishma and Sarboon were surreal existence for him. (140)

Similarly Preetishma is not able to speak in her traumatic situation of losing her husband, Vivas. While meeting with Maharaj, she says, "Tell me Maharaj, he is alive . . ." (152). She uses the sentences like – "But, please-" and "If sir is free . . ." (153). It is because she has undergone the traumatic experiences. That is why we can find the pauses, hesitations, and silences in her speech. On the other hand, Vivas wants to accept the crime that he hasn't done. Here, his acceptance of crime means that he wants to remain silent. However, the more he accepts the less true it seems. It sounds absolutely artificial. Moreover, Bonza couldn't find the appropriate words and he says, "It's about, you know . . ." (191).

Likewise, both Agni and Vivas utter unclear phrases now and then. And in traumatic effect, Agni asks Vivas whether he has killed him or not. But Vivas lies flat to look at Agni. Not only this much, the writer has used short dialogues to show the fragmentation and emptiness in the lives of the characters. For example, Preetishma and Vivas talk in the following ways: "I guess someone called?" She asked, "No. No. No one called," He replied, "Why did you pull the chord?" She asked, "It's ok. Okay", He replied (187). In the house, Agni feels that someone is calling him time and again. But no one has called him. This is what the effect of traumatic events. He clearly hears, "Doctor, doctor, oh, doctor, eh doctor!" (193).

In an 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 an account is formed. Testimony makes truth claims about experience or at

least one's memory of it and, more tenuously, about events (although one clearly expects someone who claims to be a survivor to have lived through certain events in actuality). Still, the most difficult and moving moments of testimony involve not truth claims but experiential evidence- the apparent relieving of the past, as the witness, going back to an unbearable scene, is overwhelmed by emotion and for a time unable to speak.

Literature may well explore the traumatic, including the fragmentation, emptiness, or evocation of the experience. It may also explore in a particularly telling and unsettling way the affective or emotional dimensions of experience and understanding. In literature and art, one may observe the role of a practice that is especially pronounced in the recent past but may also be found earlier, notably in testimonial art, to wit, experimental, gripping, and risky symbolic emulation of trauma in what might be called traumatized or posttraumatic writing or signification.

Although Thapaliya says that his art is gloomy- which it undoubtedly is to a certain extent- there is the light at the end of the tunnel. It not only promises hope, it enacts hope even after the mental devastation of the major characters such as Vivas, Agni, and even Bonza Dai. If like Bonza –who earlier enjoyed torturing innocent people such as Vivas and Agni and who delighted at the sight of a doctor inflicting pain on a patient and also derived pleasure listening to the groan of the patient /victim – confesses his crime and capable enough to live happily together with the Premies whom he once tortured. For example, Bonza confesses everything in front of other characters and feels free and works things out:

Let me start my story. I was an orphan since childhood. I was only two-year-old when my parents died in a cholera epidemic . . . I used to enjoy the dog-killing. I was picked by a policeman. Yeah, I betrayed

my own godfather . . . . I always wanted pleasure. I was working for those people who did all that dirty business . . . . I told you that Vivas was the bank robber . . . . Vivas was the last person I tortured . . . . I feel free now, free enough. (334-335)

Similarly, other characters like Agni, Vivas and Preetishma share their things and work out their traumatic experience. Preetishma asserts:

I have a small story too. At one point, I decided to commit suicide. I do not think I can say why. Vivas baba was at his worst. I grabbed Sarbon and headed for my parent's home . . . first I bought some Metacid and then went to see my uncle. He had his leg cut off. He said that he still felt the leg there and it was the most painful part. It was weird . . . . I realized we are supposed to live. (336-337)

Likewise, the writer manages the situation of confession between Vivas and Agni, the tortured and the torturer. Vivas goes to Agni's house and there happens conversation. Vivas asks, "I suppose you are Agni and you are Bhauju" (318). Here Agni could see the details to be convinced that it was the same chap. The slanted scar over his chin was the cut when he hurled him to the bench. He got the scar over his forehead, and on his cheek. In any case, Agni finally greeted him back. When Vivas says that he has come for the friendship. Both accept their traumatic experience and the post traumatic stress. After revealing everything in front of each other, they work out their traumatic experiences.

Moreover, the novel's ruthless rendition of the scenes of torture and madness are redeemed by the scenes of human love and charity so sincerely advocated by the theorists like Amitav Ghosh and Karahassan in their scholarly writings. Gosh, for example, in "The Ghosts of the Mrs. Gandhi", says that the writer of the violence

shouldn't try to fan the fire of violence; he/she should rather try to calm it down by showing little works of humanism- the acts of kindness and charity that are undertaken even under the shadow of the violence- amidst the scenes of death and destruction for violence everywhere is resisted (50). And it is the Ghosh's opinion that a significant number of people always oppose the repugnant violence and try to re-affirm humanity. Dr. Thapaliya exactly does so despite his representation of violence or torture in its stark reality. It seems he has found a language at once to "accommodate both violence and the civilized and willed response to it" which, in Ghosh's opinion, is a challenging task for a writer (50). In *Echoes of Pain*, violence is judiciously interspersed with the scenes of happy family drama. In the end of the novel, almost all the characters gather at Bonza's residence who is now Bodh ram. They have dinner. They reveal everything in front of each other and congratulate each other. This is how they work out the traumatic experience by confessing everything in front of each other.

There are scenes in the novel when the family of Vivas and Agni celebrate birthdays at their homes or go for restaurants for special lunch or dinner. There are joyous occasion between the father and the daughter when they play happily together. The novel incorporates many little acts of kindness, too. The selfless love of her uncle, Mr.Karki for Preetishma and the help he renders to find the whereabouts of the Vivas after the latter disappears, the love and the understanding shared by Rita and Preetishma despite the fact that their husbands have become the arch enemies of each other, can touch the core of the heart of anybody that is borne as a human beings. Also, the understanding shown by Premie and the service he renders Bonza dai, although the latter has ruined his life, surgeon DD's forgiving of Agni, the help extended by Bonza dai himself in revoking the medical job of Agni, etc, provide the supreme examples of human love and forgiveness.

One special thing needs to be mentioned about the good characters in the novel, particularly, the Devi-like women characters- Rita and Preetishma. Rita loves her

husband despite his murder attempt on her and restores him to normal and healthy family life of order and conjugal happiness. Preetishma too endures all the tortuous acts of her husbands, the brutal censors of the society and restrains herself from committing suicide to bring back her husband to the life of normalcy and joy. Both the heroines share the pain of their spouses being much eager to suffer with them. They help recover their husbands completely out of their physical and mental wounds. Their love is so powerful that the storm of devastation in family life is evaded by it. In this logic, the novel pleads for living. Dr. Thapaliya here makes his point clear. Homo sapiens should learn to respect their fellow beings. They should take others life seriously. If we respect the life of others, our life too will be respected. If we look down upon their life and try to dispense with it, we shall be meted out similar treatment. We should respect all lives and allow everybody to live since the life is the most beautiful and important of all.

The root cause of all evils is described to be money, the filthy lucre that leads Agni astray. Bonza and Agni lose their human dignity and degenerate themselves into greedy beasts by pushing themselves into the bottomless pit of inhuman cruelty because of the lure and power of money. The character Bonza speaks about the money:

Well, I never imagined I could persuade you, Agni. But when you said yes, I believed money had greater power than I had ever imagined. I think god did not have to create any other sin after he created money. It was not much, Agni. I was prepared to give you much more if you have bargained. I had enough funds there. I had teamed up with those agents who were essentially people like me. We would share our stories, and sell the torture photos, stories and even videos. (334)

### **III. Trauma and Resolution in *Echoes of Pain***

Dr. Ravi Thapaliya's *Echoes of Pain* asserts the story of torture and trauma and the way to surpass the bitter experiences of nightmarish suffering and pain. The Psychology of traumatized characters has been explored in the novel. The act of torturing has its immediate effects upon the torturer Agni. Although not immediately but afterwards, Bonza suffers. He eventually gives up his job and is convinced that before his death, he should talk it out with his victim, he welcomes them at his new residence in Sallaghari. He plays the roles of a good host and confesses his crimes, answers the torturing questions of Agni as to why he was made the scapegoat and provides relief to all. That is to say it discusses the act of torture and trauma, the post traumatic stress disorder and the way to get rid of it. Through owning of everything and speaking out before one another the characters work off their trauma and prepare themselves to lead normal life. Along with confessing everything before one and another, the incorporation of the sense of human love, joyous occasion, charity and kindness redeem the traumatic experiences of the characters.

In the novel, the characters like Vivas Thapa and Agni are well described by the novelists. Vivas is caught for no crime of his and handed down to the Interrogation Unit of Police Department in the pro-democratic days of Nepal. He is tortured in a narrow 'timeless' cell of the unit by another misled doctor Agni of the Teaching Hospital. He gets seduced by the lure of money offered by a psycho Mr. Bonza, chief interrogator of the unit. During the process of interrogation, Vivas suffers both mentally and physically. The torturer Agni suffers no less mentally. This act of torturing disrupts the settled story of Agni and Vivas as defined by Jenney Edkins. Both Agni and Vivas do not have proper attention to their family affection

and love. They feel alone and frightened. It means that they are mentally disturbed because of the torturing act.

Agni and Vivas suffer belatedly as explained by Caruth. They suffer from nightmares and hallucinations. In their hallucinations, they torture their family members, too. If Vivas nearly accuses his wife of adultery, Agni accuses his own of spying against him. Preetishma, Vivas's wife, contemplates suicide and even buys metacid to end her life. Rita, Agni's wife, gets stabbed by Agni. Both of them lose the taste of life, of living, of time, of space and existence. If freedom becomes torture for Vivas, love becomes revenge for Agni. Moreover, everything is painful for Vivas- not only the torture of Agni but even the kisses of Preetishma. Agni and Vivas – the torturer and the tortured – need the much therapeutic cure. Dr Ramesh Thapa provides the same therapeutic cure on the time. Dr Thapa brings the traumatic victims together and helps them come out of their shock by making them let out the truth and speak out the facts. Through owning up everything and speaking out before one another they work off their trauma and prepare themselves to lead their normal life.

Moreover, the novel provides the scenes of human love and charity advocated by the theorists like Amitav Ghosh and Karahassan in their scholarly writings. Ghosh, for example, in "The Ghosts of the Mrs. Gandhi" says that the writer of the violence shouldn't try to fan the fire of violence; he/she should rather try to calm it down by showing little works of humanism- the acts of kindness and charity that are undertaken even under the shadow of the violence- amidst the scenes of death and destruction for violence everywhere is resisted. And it is the Ghosh's opinion that a significant number of people always oppose the repugnant violence and try to re-affirm humanity. Dr. Thapaliya exactly does so despite his representation of violence or torture in its stark reality. It seems he has found a language at once to

accommodate both violence and the civilized and willed response to it which, in Ghosh's opinion, is a challenging task for a writer (50). In *Echoes of Pain*, violence is judiciously interspersed with the scenes of happy family drama. In the end of the novel, almost all the characters gather at Bonza's residence who is now Bodh ram. They have dinner. They reveal everything in front of each other and congratulate each other. This is how they act out the traumatic experience by confessing everything in front of each other.

The main cause of evil is portrayed to be money. Bonza and Agni lose their human values and love and degenerate themselves into greedy beasts. They push themselves into an inhuman being. And this is all because of the lure of money. About money, Bonza Dai says that he believes money has greater power than he ever imagined. He thinks that god don't have to create any other sin after the creation of money.

Summing up, the author's ability to handle the subject of torture and trauma, the powerful creation of the characters and the atmosphere, the realistic rendition of torture's scene, its effect on the family, the psychology of the traumatized people, the illustration of the techniques of relief, the incorporation of the scenes of human love and family joy and the little acts of charity make the novel to study the subject of trauma and the scientific way to act out or work off its adverse effect.



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