

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**Trauma of the Vietnam War: A Discursive Analysis of *The Things
They Carried* and Myers' *Walking Point***

A thesis submitted Central Department of English

Tribhuvan University in partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of M. Phil. of Arts in English

By

Lila Dhar Mahat

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

December 2011

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Faculties of Humanities and Social Science

This thesis titled **Trauma of the Vietnam War: A Discursive Analysis of *The Things They Carried* and Myers' Walking Point** submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Lila Dhar Mahat, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Beerendra Pandey, Associate Professor, for his supervision and guidance to conduct this research. Without his incessant guidelines, suggestion and corrections, this thesis would not be completed.

I express my thanks to Dr. Ammaraj Joshi, Head of the Central Department of English, Kirtipur, for providing me the opportunity to conduct this research on the subject of my interest. I, equally, would like to express my thanks to Dr. Anirudra Thapa, co-ordinator of M. Phil. Programme, for his co-operation. I, also, would like to express my thanks to Dr. Sanjeev Uprety for his suggestions.

At last, I am glad to my wife, Kalpana and brothers, Tanka Mahat and Indra Bahadur Devkota for their support and suggestions to conduct this research work.

Lila Dhar Mahat

Abstract

This thesis examines two works – Tim O’Briens’ *The Things They Carried* and Thomas Myers’ *Walking Point* -- to explore reality of the Vietnam War. The researcher attempts to present both of these narratives as the best example of literary representation of the trauma of violence of the Vietnam War. O’Brien problematizes the trauma of the violence through retelling the stories of the war and Myers attempts to deconstruct the myth of cultural history of the Vietnam War. Their major intention is to avoid the misreading, misunderstandings and misremembering of the Vietnam War. These narratives not only represent the fact but also construct a meaning about the violence of the Vietnam War. O’Brien’s focusing on the aesthetic of trauma and morality, captures the specificity of the violence of war. Its narrativization brings to the fore the human dimension. The authenticity and validity of the war, which find no room in the official documents and recorded history, is captured in these narratives. The usual absence not only finds sufficient space in the texts of O’Brien and Myers but also the narrativization of the trauma of war is aesthetically of a superior order.

Content

	Page
Acknowledgement	
Abstract	
Chapter One: Introduction: Literature of Violence, Trauma and Vietnam War	1-14
Chapter Two: Narrativization and Aesthetic of Trauma	15-27
Chapter Three: Trauma, Vietnam War and A Discursive Analysis of the Narratives	28-65
Chapter Four: Conclusion: Capturing the Realism of the Vietnam War	66-70
Works Cited	