

Chapter I. Introduction

This research is an inquiry into Narayan Wagle's novel *Palpasa Café*. It tries to see the Nepalese history in the form of fiction. This novel, in this sense, is an example of fiction as history and history as fiction. History and historical facts are presented in the novel through its narrative. The novel depicts the social-political agenda of the country through the fictional characterization. By fictionalizing the historical events, Wagle suggests that history, once it takes the form of words, can be viewed as a fictional entity. Historical events are presented in the form of details that support fiction. The main purpose of Wagle is to show the situation of Nepali people caught in the grip of war. Wagle tries to show what the reality was through his imagination. Wagle recreates the history by fictionalizing the events in different ways.

(i) Narayan Wagle: A Short Literary Background

Narayan Wagle, journalist and novelist was born in Dharampani, Tanahun in central part of Nepal, in the mid mountain area. He spent his childhood with his parents pleasantly. He got ample opportunities to observe the natural scenery round his native village. His country world was his education. The scenes and sights of nature which he thus observed early in his life were never forgotten. His novel *Palpasa Café* is predominantly dealing with geography, landscape, folkways, agricultural pursuits, quaint peasantry as a background for the frame of his characters. The somber beauty of the country and quaintness of peasant ways and thought penetrated his spirit and became the very ground and substance of his imagination.

Wagle is the editor of Kathmandu's most circulated Nepali-language newspaper, Kantipur. He started as a rookie reporter in the same publication where he is the editor now.

The novel *Palpasa Café* has clinched the most coveted literary award in Nepali literature, the Madan Puraskar for the year 2061. *Palpasa Cafe* became the fastest selling book in the Nepali book publication history.

Every artist constructs his work within certain convention which we must accept before we are in a position to estimate his success. All novelists write novel in different ages, by taking different ranks, they have different temperament and aims. Similarly, Wagle has laid his scene in an agricultural mid mountain area and his characters are children of soil as well as the Maoist held territory.

Wagle chose to select unhappy theme for his novel. His novel *palpasa café* is his famous work which is full of gloom and tragedy. He shows the suffering of Nepali people caught in the grip of war. It addresses the effect of violence on the innocent people in the period of Maoist insurgency initiated by the Maoist.

Among the Nepali novelists of today, what can be easily and clearly said is that he is the only realist to be considered, so far as the depiction of life in the mid-mountain area is concerned. Whether his career began as journalist, his strict training as a journalist has been enormous service to him in the construction of his novels. There are other novelists in society whose realism is as genuine as Wagle but they aren't so fortunate in their subject.

Everything written by wagle in the novel is fresh and striking. The life of the agricultural area in mid-mountain region is a new field for the novelist, but what seems to be interesting here is that knowingly or unknowingly, Wagle has mastered over the rural mid-mountain area by giving the details of farming and painted with all vividness of powerful imagination. So it would be pleasant to compare him with his contemporaries and to endeavor to show why we believe him to stand both in breadth and depth of genius supreme among his living rivals.

The first reason for considering Wagle's greatness is that he possesses a great and individual style. He has a unique power of presenting the situation in an experimental way. Similar view is expressed by the critic Bishnu Sapkota in an essay called *Palpasa café: A postmodern war narrative* about the novel:

From a literary critical point of view, *Palpasa Café* needs to be read on two levels: a postmodern work of fiction and a narrative of war.

Postmodern novels are avant-garde, experimental in their forms [...]

Now *Palpasa Café* as a war-narrative, the novel has a silent preamble that it is important to look at individual life ravished by the pangs of war. (4)

The second quality of our novelist's greatness is his power of narration. Wagle has constructed the double narrative technique. Sanjev Uprety about the narrative technique comments:

Narayan Wagle's excellent experimental Nepali novel *Palpasa Café* consists of two overlapping narratives: the story of Narayan, a journalist who is writing a novel about his painter friend named Drishya; and the story of Drishya himself who journeys into the Maoist-held territory and is abducted by some men-possibly security forces- after coming back to Kathmandu. The story of Narayan- who seems to be a textual reflection of the journalist author Narayan Wagle himself –appears at the beginning of the novel and also towards the end. This story forms the outer frame of the novel, or the borders of a canvass within which the inner narrative, or the story of Drishya is told. (4)

The third quality of Wagle that can be mentioned here is his power of characterization. His gallery of portrait of characters (male /female) is unique so far as his presentation is concerned. As regards Wagle's characterization what Dipika Shrestha writes in an essay entitled *Palpasa Café* is really very interesting to note:

One of the strong point of the book is its characterization. They are all strong and have definite sense of purpose and beliefs that make them almost too real [...] The novel works on different level and through each character, Wagle reflects on our culture, values [...] Another pressing topic that the book addresses through a series of minor characters is the effect of violence on the innocent people. (11)

The fourth and last of Wagle's greatness in his novel is an autobiographical element. There are many textual evidences to suggest that Drishya and the novelist Wagle are aspects of the same personality. The language they use is very similar and they talk to the girls they meet in an almost identical manner. Both are caught in a middle ground between the Maoists and the security forces and there is a possibility that the novelists Wagle-like Drishya before him – might now be abducted.

Realistic, simple and the easy flow of language makes it an interesting. It has so much to offer and it succeeds in doing this succinctly, making every information, it wants to share in brief and to the point.

The novelist is a maker. He is making an imitation, an imitation of life of man on earth. He is making, as if a working model of life as he sees and feels it, his conclusions about it being expressed in the characters he invents the situation in which he places them, and in the very words he chooses for those purposes although novelists have given many reasons for writing novels.

No writer can escape the influences of his environment, social cultural, political and intellectual movement. Every writer is a product of the age in which he is born and bred in which he works and creates. His writings express his age in various ways, and his works can't be understood without an understanding of the time in which he wrote and lived. This is more so the case with the novel which reflects the time spirit to a much greater extent than the other art forms. Basically what happens is that literature is said to be the mirror of society. It depicts the social condition and often vigorously the various problems that are of the greatest significance to the people composing that society.

Wagle wrote his novel in an age which was full of various problems and of conflicts. The Maoist insurgency initiated by the Maoist created a powerful and stirring effect on the thought of the generation. The Maoist insurgency and the Nepal army's search against the Maoist movement gradually destroyed the productive thought of the people of Nepal. It means the end of peace and co-operation and increasing the war, revolution in the country. This revolution brought in their wake of problems. There had been risen the problem of terror, horror, fear, tear, frustration, depression and a significant increase in vice and crime. The love between human and human, co-operation between the citizens which is neither easy to understand nor very difficult to understand had evaporated. This also helps to show the suffering of Nepali people which Wagle has depicted in the novel by creating the characters like Siddhartha, Lahure kaka, Miit Ba and Miitini-mother, Hari Lal, a little girl, the lodge owner and a newly married woman who lost her husband immediately after the marriage. Therefore, Wagle was touched with the prevailing situation of the contemporary society in which time the novel is written.

One can say that whatever Wagle has written and presented in his novel is concerned with truth and reality. Wagle was first a journalist and with his ripe experiences about life, he appeared in the field of literature. He had seen life more closely. No doubt, the condition of the nation, the ruling system of king Gyanendra as well as the imposition of censorship in free press, had deeply affected him. In his every step, he is pure and sincere of the past.

(ii)Context:

Texts have commonly a 'context'- the literary, intellectual, political circumstances which surround their composition or which they evoke. Interpreting and evaluating a text is a challenging job, because to interpret not only its social and historical contexts, but every possible phenomenon that the writer might have undergone its context.

Literary texts are often charming, uplifting but they are often troubling, challenging and confronting. Historical critics begin from the commonsensical notion that there is certainly something outside the text and the historical facts help us to make sense of what literature is. So, by reconstructing past, understanding the historical context of a text we are able to see more clearly through the lens of critics' eyes. Thus, historical criticism seeks direct connections between text and historical events.

Every age has certain relationship with its past. History leaves us some traces whenever we approach it from the perspective of present. A created text always belongs to the past age. Such text need to be approached from the present time for the sake of studying.

The text is the production of certain historical operation. How the social, political and cultural currents of certain historical moments, while the text was being

created, influence the writing are studied in it. We have to locate the text as a historical phenomenon, identifying texts references to history, actual people, political events, economic developments and so on. In this connection, a historicist tries to group a literary work as it reflects a historical moment produced a particular work of literary art. From this view point, the literary critic necessarily studies historicity directly or indirectly. Artist, always peculiarly sensitive to the atmosphere of their environment, was affected by that atmosphere of doubt and apprehension.

The period after 1995 is one of the most remarkable period in the history of Nepal. Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) had adopted the doctrine of armed struggle in this period. They had launched the people's war against the government in the country. The government had wasted the valuable period in designing and launching the counter offensive program against the insurgents.

This situation had made people worried and the people are not satisfied with the manner and model of the system in totality. More than a thousand precious lives had been brutally murdered and million worth of financial assets both in public and private sectors, had been plundered or destroyed. Terror has been created all over the country both by insurgents and counter-insurgents. Dipta Prakash Shah, in an article entitled *Maoist Insurgency: War of Attrition* writes:

Scenario existing in the country is very grim and ruling elites are at confusion in taking abrupt and right decisions to solace the suffering of the people. The government has failed in its mission in maintaining the basic needs of the country such as security and order, economic reforms, social upliftment and even proportionate allocation and distribution of the state resources in the backwards and remote parts of the country. (4)

Complaining the Maoist insurgency, the critic Shyam Shrestha predicts that the insurgency is doomed to failure ultimately and balances to the Maoist leaders that they are the naïve revolutionaries. Shrestha analyzes the Maoist insurgency moving ahead in the blind hope. Shrestha remarks:

In a country where earlier even five deaths have created a nationwide distress, today, even as scores die, the polity to be shaker out of its somnolence[...]The Maoists have a false sense that they are on the right track only because of the object failure of mainstream parliamentary politics over the past couple of years. An objective and conscious revolutionary movement is not possible and a revolutionary theory to suit the country cannot be developed without understanding how Nepali society and the class struggle is developing.(56-57)

Shrestha has clarified one serious issue that previously Nepal was peaceful country. The death of single person would brought the fear and tear to the people but in this Maoist insurgency, the death of dozen people are neglected, nobody are there to console them because this death, abduction, killing became the common activities in this period.

Nepalese are widely recognized as a peace-loving people. They never fail to co-operate with others also. However, this peaceful country had fallen into horrible violence for the past few years. The brutal killings of Nepalese by their own brothers had left all Nepalese stunned. Many parents had lost their caretaking sons. Many wives were turned into widows. Many sons at the same time had lost their loving fathers, they are compelled to be orphans. Many brothers and sisters had lost their affectionate brothers forever.

Every night were passed with uneasy silence that grips our society. All the people had shrunk with the sense of fear. All newly wed brides had suspicion in their innocent eyes that their husbands, lying beside them might be shot dead anytime . A mother in tears might have been thinking her son is fighting for the nation but was swallowing every drop of tears with the fear that her son may come in the list of the dead.

The country and the politics is just a piece of cake for people in power who for taste of power fail to understand the real needs of the country and its people. In the crossfire between the 'people in power' and 'those who want to be powerful'; the sufferers are the civilians. Manjushree Thapa in an essay *The war in the west* gives the suffering of a human face through the narratives by victims of both government and Maoist violence. Thapa writes:

Fifteen men from Sumsherganj were tortured by Maoists on 9th July; two were killed. Two sisters that AI documented as having been raped at the Chisapani barracks in April were allegedly threatened after the AI report came out. Villagers claim that official reports of certain 'encounters' have been faked, and that evidence has been planted in their houses by security forces. Banke is 13th on a list of districts with the highest insurgency-related deaths. INSEC puts the death toll here as of November 2002 at 108. 99 of these deaths were caused by the state, and 9 by the Maoists. (325)

Nature has gifted our country. There are enormous potentialities that can be exploited to develop our nation further. If united, we can actively compete with the developed nations in a few years since all Nepalese are renowned for their hard-

work. On top of this, they have immense affection for their nation. They are ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of their nation.

Nepal, a landlocked and developing country which cannot move ahead without the foreign aid western Donors are investing the millions of dollars for the development of Nepal, but the Maoist insurgency became the barrier to invest in the development project to the Maoist affected areas . So, western Donors are waiting for the violence to end before they can move in to provide aid to the Maoist affected areas. In this sense, one of the critic Mohan Mainali in the essay entitled *Development Vs the Maoists* asserts:

It seems that Nepali times wants the US Ambassador and other donors to move to Maoist-affected areas with development packages, and the US Ambassador said he and other donors are ready to do that both agree that the Maoist-affected areas desperately need donors. Nepali Times would like them to take action immediately, while donors want to wait until the Maoist issue is resolved. (125)

Again Mainali continues:

I strongly believe that donors, including Americans, should not be allowed to operate in the poverty-stricken rural areas of Nepal, not before the Maoist issue is solved to the government's satisfaction, and not even after the issue is solved as desired by the donors. (126)

On February 1, 2005, King Gyanendra, who became the constitutional monarch after the massacre, Sacked the prime minister and seized executive powers, claiming the incompetence of elected leaders was hindering his army's counter insurgency operations. Political leaders were jailed and strict censorship imposed. Overnight, Nepal's press went from being one of the freest in the world to having

armed soldiers sitting in newsroom vetting every story. There is enough evidence of human rights abuse at a wide level and the killing of innocents in the name of fighting the insurgency. While distinguishing between Maoist and someone who may seem to be a Maoist may be difficult on the ground, that does not absolve a democratic government of its indifference to humanitarian laws it is committed to. Kanak-Mani Dixit in an essay entitled *Insurgents and Innocents: The Nepali Army's Battle with the Maobaadi* adds:

[...] The fact is, it is difficult to distinguish between villagers who may have by force of circumstances become Maoist supporters, and who are actual Maoist cadre. Many villagers who are being killed for being Maoists are peasants with no ideological grounding to be class warriors, roped in as supporters through coercion and blackmail. (308)

The sparks of revolt that first appeared in Rolpa, Rukum, Gorkha, and Sindhuli Districts had grown into a full-fledged fire that was threatening to scorch the entire country. With a handful of exceptions, the 'people's war' had spread to almost all of the 75 districts in Nepal, influencing every sector of the national fabric.

In the period of an armed insurgency, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had managed to establish itself as a formidable alternative political force. An effective two-pronged strategy consisting of both political and military program is responsible for its phenomenal success. Mao Zedong's principle that the party, the people's army and a united front are the three weapons for a people's revolution has been embraced by the CPN (Maoist). While the party itself is involved in spreading the party's ideology as well as formulating policies related to the 'people's war', the 'people's army is responsible for attacking 'enemies' and defending the areas under its control .

The third arm of the 'people's war', the united front, consolidates friendly forces with a view to creating the prerequisites for the proposed 'people's government'.

As a modern reader in the context of 21st century, one should give the importance to how the novel or any work of art is composed rather than what is written. The text is not only a literary fact, but also a social one and the novel is produced within a context which includes the life of the author, the audience for whom he writes, and the background relationships of various social, historical and political factors. The literary text therefore is enmeshed in circumstance both in its production by the writer and reception by the reader. Such circumstances include sets of relations among author, audience and social context: the political and ideological complexion of these and their position in the sequence of events which we call history.

In this novel also the events depicted are historically determined and also create a version of history. Wagle has written the story which is a poignant and powerful reclamation of the past and a clear sighted gaze at man's relationship with history. In *Palpasa Café*, he sets out to elucidate historical bases and truths to expose the effect of violence on the innocent people in the period of Maoist insurgency initiated by the Maoists.

Hence, the theories of New Historicism can assist this research in its attempt to see the historicity of *Palpasa Café* and textuality of Nepali history in the novel. The research can be significant in the sense that it will try to explore the depiction of many truths, ignored by so-called mainstream history.

Chapter II: Theoretical Modality

History as Fiction

The particular moment, as well as description and texts creation is historically important because historical forces shape literary texts and the texts reflect the historical forces. But the author is free to depict them with the confinement of pros and cons.

Postmodern literary historians focus on the contextual studies. They use them to dissolve historical generalizations. They show the diverse contexts-regional, local, class, professional, institutional that are present in the trait of past life. They consider different particularities shaped by the contexts. Whatever the object of historical inquiry, it breaks down into innumerable, differentiated objects, heterogeneous particulars, periods, movements, traditions, and other concepts, hitherto used by literary historians to synthesize works. Since the practice of literary texts is themselves inherently historical. It is in this sense that Belsey says, "History is seen as the recovered presence of pure, extra-discursive, representative experience, how it usually felt" (404).

History is the result of the interplay of man with his environment and with his fellowman man has always expressed himself in terms of certain basic needs such as foods, clothing, and shelter, social and political organization, knowledge of his environment and transmission of such knowledge, self expression and religious and philosophical beliefs. The historian E. Shreedharan in a book entitled *A text book of Historiography* points out:

History is the historian's reconstruction of the past. The principal materials of reconstruction at the disposal of the historian are records or remains that the past has left behind. They serve him as evidence of

facts that he establishes. The records are of a rich variety buildings, inscriptions, medals, coins, edicts, chronicles, travelogues, decrees, treaties, official correspondence, private letters and diaries. (3)

History is the living past of man. It is the attempt made by man through centuries to reconstruct, describe, and interpret his own past. There have been differences in the nature and quality as well as the quantity of historical literature in the different ages and among different people. These differences have generally reflected changes in social life and beliefs and the presence or absence of a sense of history.

The historicity of texts basically refers to the cultural specificity, the social embodiment of all modes of writing whether it is social, political and economical or religious—not only the texts that critics study but also text in which we study them. The textuality of history is related with past. But the relation between past and present is not coherent but exhibits discontinuities breaks; by this, they hope to distance other earlier text and so sharpen their ability to detect its difference form their present, ideological assumptions.

New historicists and their critics acknowledge the importance of literary text, but they also analyze the text with an eye to history. There is an inseparable relationship between literature and history. There is no primary and secondary characteristics between history and literature because literature is to be embedded within history. In this respect, New Historicism is not new to some extant because majority of critics between 1920s and 1950s focused on the works historical content and base their interpretations on the interplay between the text and the historical contexts. The historical criticism being practiced in the 1950s however, Wasn't the

same as the historical criticism of 1930s and 1950s. In this respect, M.H. Abrams in a book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* writes:

New historicism, since the early 1920s, has been the accepted name for a mode of literature study that its proponents oppose to the formalism they attribute both to the new criticism and to the critical deconstruction that followed it. In place of dealing with a text in isolation from its historical context, New Historicists attend primarily to the historical and cultural conditions of its production and also of its later critical interpretations and evaluations. This is not to an earlier kind of literary scholarship for the views and practices of the New Historicists differ markedly from these of former scholars who had used political and intellectual history as a 'background' to account for the characteristic subject matter of literature at a particular time and place. (248)

Indeed, the very word 'new' still serves many useful purposes in defining contemporary historical criticism; it is in distinguishing it from such older forms of historicism. One can hardly understand the text without some sense of time and place in which it is completed, and one can hardly understand the context without trying to understand historical development. Because historical criticism considers how military, social, cultural, economic, scientific, intellectual, literary and every other kind of history might help us to understand the text, author as well as the literary environment.

New Historicists also tend to define the discipline of history more broadly than the predecessors. They view history as a social science and the social sciences are

being treated as properly historical distinct from the history that is relevant to it because literature is part of history and can't be separated from without loss.

They have erased the line dividing historical and literary materials; showing not only that the production of the of William Shakespeare's historical plays was both a political act and historical events. Instead of dealing history as a set of fixed, objective and stable thing; New Historicists deal the text with a diversity of dissonant voice. Again Abrams emphasizes:

History is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events which can be used as the "background" to explain the literature of an era or which can be adverted to (as in an earlier type of Marxist criticism) as the "material" conditions that, in a simple and unilateral way, particularities of a literary text. In contrast to such views, a literary text is said by new historicists to be "embedded" in its context, as an interactive component within the network of institutions, beliefs, and cultural power-relations, practices and products that in their ensemble constitutes what we call history. (250)

For the narrative historian, the historical method consists in the investigation of the documents in order to determine what is the true or most plausible story that can be told about the events of which they are evidence. A true narrative account, on this view, is not so much a product of the historian's poetic talents, as the narrative account of imaginary events is conceived to be, as a necessary result of a proper application of historical "method". The form of the discourse, the narrative, adds nothing to the content of the representation, but is rather a simulacrum of the structure and processes of real events and insofar as this representation resembles the events of which it is a representation, it can be taken as a true account. The story told in the

narrative is a mimesis of the story lived in some region of historical reality, and insofar as it is an accurate imitation it is to be considered a truthful account thereof.

The amount of narrative in a given history will vary and its function will change depending upon whether it is conceived as an end in itself or only a means to some other end. Obviously, the amount of narrative will be greatest in accounts designed to tell a story, least in those intended to provide an analysis of the events of which it treats. Where the aim in view is the telling of a story, the problem of narrativity turns on the issue of whether historical events can be truthfully represented as manifesting the structures and processes of these met with more commonly in certain kinds of imaginative discourses that is, such fictions as the epic, the folk tale, myth, romance, tragedy, comedy, farce, and the like . The content of historical stories is real events, events that really happened rather than imaginary events, events invented by the narrator. By giving the emphasizing upon the history and narrative what Hayden White in an article *Narrative in Historical Theory* is equally important to mention here:

The form of the story told was supposed to be necessitated by the form of the story enacted by historical agents. After the historian had discovered the true story of “what happened” and accurately represented it in a narrative, he might abandon the narration manner of speaking and addressing the reader directly, speaking in his own voice, and representing his considered opinion as a students of human affairs, dilate on what the story he had told indicated about the nature of the period, place, agents, agencies, and processes (Social, political, cultural and so forth) that he had studied. (3-4)

The fiction writer draws from the same list of words as the historian. But the fiction writer uses their implicit definitions differently. Conceptually, the meaning maybe the same. But neither the fiction writer nor the historian develops concepts: they compose processes out of events. Like history, fiction has to remain fairly faithful to the dictates of the dictionary. But it is not limited by the conditions of human knowledge. It can choose its discontinuities, what to say and what not to say, how to say and how not to say it.

The relationship between literary or dramatic texts and history, understood as a specific history of events. While historians may believe their narratives to be objective, their narration itself cannot escape the implications of 'textuality': that is, of the medium of language. By 'deconstructing' historian's texts, Hayden White in an essay *Introduction to Metahistory* claims to show how they are silently organized according to familiar narrative and hence fictive patterns, such as 'plot'. He further argues, "Historical stories trace the sequence of events that lead from inaugurations to terminations of social and cultural processes in a way that chronicles are not required to do" (445).

To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was.' It means to seize hold of memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger . Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers.

The consequences flow from the fact that history tries to be true. The historian's picture must be localized in space and time . The world of fiction is not purely imaginary, but overlaps with the world of history; in the case of realistic fiction, the overlap is especially large, and welcomed. All history must be consistent

with itself; there is only one historical world. To the responsible historian, there is only one historical world; if there weren't, disagreements with other historians would simply be alternative, and compatible constructs. But to us, as we read historians of differing schools, it often grows painfully obvious that they have not succeeded in adjusting their constructs to one another. The historian's picture stands in relation to something called evidence. This is the crucial difference, though there are occasions on which the novelist uses evidence too. Laurence Lerner in *History and Fiction* observes "I have claimed that any text can be related to at least three contexts" its ideology, its strategies of writing and social reality" (438).

The word 'text' can be reinterpreted so as to distinguish between the work of artists and others, depending upon what is known or can be ascertained about the conditions of production and consumption, as well as the surrounding social institutions. The literature is 'time – and place – specific', hence historical analysis is a necessary and essential function of any advanced practical criticism; Jerome McGann in *TheText, the poem, and the problem of Historical Method* opines:

The fact is that the works of an artist are produced at various time and places and by many different sorts of people, in a variety of different textual constitutions. Each of these text is the locus of a process of artistic production and consumption involving the originary author, other people (his audience, publisher) and certain social institutions. (456)

The stage that historicist criticism has now reached is one which is keen to become more learned in past attempts to depart from a purely linear account of history, a chronology, in order to detect the art of historiography at work. An analysis of its rhetoric has thus become increasingly important. The tropes history uses, the

choices it makes between the different kind of available narrative, the realism which concerns of the present can bestow on supposedly correlative movements of the past are considered part of history's content. Critical fashion, in other words, may be historically informative, and the most critical aspect of historicism concerns the question of whether past and present concerns are so inextricable that they are in fact trooping each-other.

Historicism is a dialectical movement of thought. Its effort is threefold: First of all it encourages a properly historical understanding of the past: the past should be grasped on its own terms. Historical properties should be observed, anachronisms should be avoided. Secondly, though, it grasps the nettle of hindsight. We can not really pretend to understand the past on its own terms because we know so much more of what happened afterwards. Recovery of the exact boundaries of past knowledge would require an artificial forgetfulness of our difference from it. Historicism therefore next addresses the question of the degree to which hindsight should be allowed to revise our understanding of the past. Another third act of qualification is set in motion, one which this time investigates the degree to which knowledge of the past should be allowed reorientate or change present understanding rather than just confirm it. Historical criticism achieves its end by contextualizing its interpretation of literary expression by reference to events or other discourses contemporary with that expression.

New Historicism also rejected any notion of historical progress or teleology, and broke away from the literary historiography based on the study of genres and figures. In the same way, the culture in which New Historicism situated literary texts was itself regarded as a textual construct. Hence, New Historicism refused to accord

any kind of unity or homogeneity to history or culture, viewing both as harboring networks of contradictory, competing and unreconciled forces and interests.

Thus, like fiction, history is textualized; therefore, it is a kind of human fabrication. The writer interprets the past, presents it in a written form and makes it intelligible to the readers. History therefore is always contaminated, oblique and subjective. The assumptions such as neutrality of language and absence of domineering, ideologies narrating voice are contested by New Historicism. Its view of history stresses on the impossibility of an all embracing and totalizing account of the past. The history cannot be represented in pure form, for it always romances with respect in pure form, for it always romances with respect to the narrator's prejudices and preoccupations. So, the proclamation of universal truth in history can no longer sustain. What is available to us is only different version and perspective of interpretation of history. Different factors manipulate the representation of history.

Michel Foucault developed a theory of discourse in relation to the power structures operating in a society. His main thesis is that discourse is involved to power. He views that discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political power operate through discourse. The discourse therefore is inseparable from power because discourse is the ordering force that governs every institution. This enables institutions to exercise power and dominate. Those who possess the authority to define discourse exclude others who are not in power. Discourse informs us of the state of affairs. So it is informative or misinformative. Discourse also tells us of the propriety or impropriety, of something and consequently influences our attitude, opinion and behavior. The exclusive function of discourse is to serve as a transparent representation of things and ideas standing outside it. Therefore it is directive too.

M.H. Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* Writes:

Discourse has become the focal term along critics who oppose the deconstructive concept of a “general text” that functions independently of particular historical condition. Instead they conceive of discourse as social parlance, or language-in-uses and consider it to be both the product and the manifestation not of timeless linguistic system, but of particular social condition, class structures, and power-relationships that alter in the course of history. (262)

Foucault believes that we can never possess an objective knowledge of history “because historical writings are always entangled in tropes” (102). Discourse is produced within a real world of power struggle. It is used as a means to gain or, sometimes even to subvert power. For Foucault, discourse is a central human activity. He is interested in the process how discursive practices change over time.

Foucault opened up an avenue away in the post deconstruction impasse of literary theories by reaching beyond the traditional hierarchy of history over literature. Foucault denies that history can ever be objectively known. Historical writing can never be a science. All discourses, including history, according to Foucault, “are produced within a real world of power struggle [...] Claims to objectivity made on behalf of specific discourses are always spurious: there are no absolutely ‘true’ discourses, only less or more powerful ones” (102).

The social, moral and religious disciplines always control human behavior directly by means of discourse. So people at times cannot do whatever they feel like doing. The discursive formations have enabled institutions to yield power and domination by defining and excluding ‘the other’. Discourses, according to Foucault, are produced in which concepts of madness, criminality, and sexual abnormality and so on are defined in relation to sanity, justice and sexual normality. Such discursive

formations determine and constraint the forms of knowledge and types of normality of a particular period. These discursive practices also have the power. Truth is being told with “facts” to back it up, but a “teller” constructs that truth and chooses those facts. In fact, the teller of a story or history also constructs those very facts by giving a particular meaning to events.

According to Foucault, truth is not outside power, or lacking in power. It is rather a thing of this world which is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints in a society. So each society has its own regime of truth. Furthermore, power diffuses itself in the system of authority and the effects of truth are produced within discourses. But the discourses themselves are neither true nor false. Foucault argues, “Truth is linked in a circular relation with system of power which produces and sustains it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it “(1145). Thus Foucault sees truth as a product of relations of power and it changes as systems change. Both literature and history are narratives and they are in the form of discourses. They are entangled in the power relations of their time. Literary works are not secondary reflections of any coherent world –view but the active participants in the continual remaking of meanings. In short, all texts, including history and literature, are simply the discourses through which the ruling class seeks the power to govern and control. Hence the dividing line between history and literature is of effaced.

Foucault’s notions of ‘power’ and ‘discourse’ were particularly formative to develop a critical approach to literature known as New Historicism in the 1970s and early 1980s. These literary critics, New Historicists, are more interested in the relationship between history and literature. They tried to reconstruct the bridge between literature and history dismantled by new critics, structuralists and

deconstructionists. As with old historicism, new Historicism argues that we cannot know texts separate from their historical context. But unlike old historicists, new historicists insist that all interpretation is subjectively filtered through one's own set of historically conditioned view points. Hence, there is no "objective" history.

Stephen Greenblatt begins his most theoretical statement about New Historicism in *New Historicism: Towards a Poetics of Culture*, by stating that his methodology is, at best a practice rather than a doctrine: "One of the peculiar characteristics of the 'New Historicism' in literary studies is precisely now unresolved and in some ways disingenuous it has been – I have been – about the relation to literary theory" (1). He goes on to point out some of the influences on the school (Michel Foucault and others) while distinguishing the approach from both Marxist critics like Fredric Jameson and post structuralist critics like Jean-Francois Lyotard. On the one hand, he questions Jameson's characterization of capitalism as a force seeking to establish a false separation between private and public spheres or between aesthetic and political domains, while rejecting Jameson's belief in a utopian future moment when we will finally achieve a classless future, stating that post structuralism "has raised serious questions about such a vision, challenging both its underlying oppositions and the primal organic unity that it posits as either paradisaic origin or utopian, eschatological end" (3). On the other hand, Greenblatt questions Lyotard's tendency to associate capitalism with the effort to impose a single language onto all experience, thus destroying all differences between people or cultural spheres as well as all differences between aesthetics and politics. Greenblatt argues that both Jameson and Lyotard employ history in an effort to support one theoretical view point that in turn leads to their monolithic and contradictory versions of capitalism.

The difference between Jameson's capitalism, the perpetrator of separate discursive domains, the agent of privacy, psychology, and the individual, and Lyotard's capitalism, the enemy of such domains and the destroyer of privacy psychology, and the individual, may in part be traced to a difference between Marxist and post structuralist projects. Jameson, seeking to expose the fallaciousness of a separate artistic sphere and to celebrate the materialist integration of all discourses, finds capitalism at root of the false integration. "History functions in both cases as a convenient anecdotal ornament upon a theoretical structure, and capitalism appears not as a complex social and economic development in the West but as a malign philosophical principle" (5).

Greenblatt argues that New Historicism works to remain always attuned to the contradictions of any historical moment, including these moments dominated by capitalism. On the issue of the relation between private and public or between the aesthetic and political realms, Greenbelt argue:

The effortless invocation of two apparently contradictory accounts of art is characteristic of American capitalism in the late twentieth century and an outcome of long-term tendencies in the relationship of art and capital; in the same moment a working distinction between the aesthetic and the real is established and abrogated. (7)

What characterizes capitalism is, rather, a circulation between the two apparently contradictory versions of capitalism that Greenbelt associates with Jameson and Lyotard : " I am suggesting that the oscillation between totalizing and difference, uniformity and the diversity of names, unitary truth and a proliferation of distinct entities – in short, between Lyotard's capitalism and Jameson's -is built into the poetics of every day behavior in America" (8).

The result of such attunement to the contradictions of any given historical moment lead Greenblatt (and other New Historicists) into a number of basic premises: (a) one should begin with specific details, anecdotes, and examples in order to avoid a totalizing version of history; (b) one should proceed from such details to illustrate how they are tied up with larger contradictory forces in a given time period, no matter how apparently innocuous the details may seem at first; (c) one should remain self-conscious about one's methodologies, thus resisting “ a historicism based upon faith in the transparency of signs and interpretative procedures” (12); (d) one should be suspicious of libratory narratives; everything is, on some level, caught up in the circulations of power in a given time period, and (e) all cultural products, whether they are high art, political documents, personal letters or trash, are a part of larger discursive structures and, so, can offer clues to the ideological contradictions of a given time period. In introduction to *The Power of forms in the English Renaissance*, Greenblatt differentiated New Historicism from New Criticism and earlier Historicism:

Both of these earlier modes of analysis, engaged in a project of uniting disparate and contradictory element into an organic whole, whether in the text itself or in its historical background. The earlier historicism, more over, viewed the resulting totality or unity as a historical fact rather than the product of interpretation or of the ideological learning's of certain groups. (763)

The goal of New Historicism, for Greenblatt, is to put cultural objects in some interesting relationship to social and historical processes. He distinguished between the New Historicism and the old principally by the contention that the new correctly holds that at no stage of history is there. One single political vision rather each

cultural environment which the Old Historicism regarded as historical fact is, instead, a creation of the historian.

Louis Montrose, a prominent New Historicist critic, views literature and history as fully interdependent. He thinks "New Historicism" has been constituted as an academic site of ideological struggle between containment and subversion. "Within the context of the containment-subversion debate, my own position has been that a closed and static, monolithic and homogeneous notion of ideology must be replaced by one that is heterogeneous and unstable, permeable and procession" (404). He further argues that:

All texts are embedded in specific historical, social and material context. Literary texts too are the material products of specific historical conditions. Literary texts therefore must be treated along with its historical context. Likewise, by the textuality of histories, he means that access to a full and authentic past is never possible. (410)

Montrose, in his study of Elizabethan drama, focuses on how Elizabethan culture involves bringing oppositions and otherness into visibility so as to reinforce the norms of the dominant Elizabethan power. This type of cultural structure is dispersed across a whole range of texts, from literature to travel writing. Montrose, thus, sees the impossibility of subverting the dominant culture when he says that "a text creates the culture by which it is created, saves the fantasies by which it is shaped, begets that by which it is begotten" (169). Montrose emphasizes that literary texts act out the concerns of ruling class by reproducing and renewing the powerful discourses which sustain the system. According to Montrose, we live in history and that the form and pressure of history, are made manifest in our subjective thoughts

and actions, in our beliefs and desires” (394). Our knowledge and understanding is part of history.

According to New Historicists, “The idea of a uniform and harmonious culture is a myth imposed on history and propagated by ruling classes in their own interests” (105). So the New Historicists focus not on history but on histories. New Historicism, thus, is characterized by, as Louis Montrose says “a shift from history to histories” (411). This is to say that history is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events. New Historicists assert that the historians, like the authors of literary texts, possess a subjective view. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. So they can no longer claim that their study of the past is detached and objective.

Furthermore, literary texts present the dominant ideas of particular time by representing alternatives or deviations as threatening. The New Historicist tend to examine widely different texts in order to show that those texts play a key role in mediating power relations within the state only to contain and make safe that subversion.

The narrator of Palpasa café referring to the men he know in his trip to village but more specifically he hints at his villagers as well as his beloved Palpasa to reveal the pictiable condition and pathetic plight of nepali people during themaoist insurgence. The narrater drishya . Travels to his home village to meet siddartha and finds it tern apart by war, the nepali psyche irreversibly scared by atrocities, xecutions, disapparences abductions, landmines and people conght in the crossfire that we read about every day . But bcause these events happen to characters we have grown to know intimately . The incidents seem mor real than the headdlies .

After many years, drishya reached at his village . His village

IV . conclusion

The main focus of this dissertation paper is to study the historical dimension of Narayan Wagle's novelist. He has tried to place his novel in the social context which has already disintegrated because of fluctuation occurring in different fields when he was writing the novel. The awareness of his novels' immediate social context and historical background with a sensitivity to textual details that are accurate and historically faithful record. The historicity is the major concern of this dissertation.

In the preceding chapters, we saw that Wagle's main focus in *Palpasa Café* has been to question the basic relationship between historical actuality and fiction. The novel is a tale of old and new power centered on the history of Maoist insurgency in Nepal. It follows the suffering of Nepali people caught in the grip of war. In fact, in *Palpasa Café*, Wagle recreates the history as a meaningful fiction. The fiction is made from the source of historical background of Maoist insurgency in Nepal and its impact upon the common people.

Wagle shows the local incidents during the Maoist insurgency and its impact upon the common people. The main character of the novel, Drishya, travels to his home village to meet his friend Siddhartha and finds it torn apart by war. The Nepali psyche is irreversibly scarred by the violence. In his trip to his village, Drishya finds his fertile land is changed into the barren land, his beautiful village is now become a place of terror where he found all the boys and girls have joined in the Maoist guerrilla. The author minutely portrays how the current political conflict between the Maoists and the government has deteriorated the situation in the country and affecting the daily lives of common masses in rural areas.

Wagle's best features are in the broader canvas he paints firstly in the disappearances and general tension of post-royal massacre Kathmandu and then, of the

conflict in the hills- Wagle's descriptions of schools being blown up, emptying villages, indiscriminate bombs, Maoist attacks on district headquarters and mourning Nepali families are extremely hard hitting and powerful. By presenting the pathetic condition of the Nepal's Wagle makes it clear that he hates the conflict within the country what is going on but he has nothing to say about the future because he is conscious that history, with all happenings does not move in linear fashion. Historical predictions may not come true with such mingling of historical reality with the lives of fictional characters, Wagle has blurred the demarcation between history and fiction.

Moreover the story is told from the point of view of the character Drishya, the Maoist underground figure Siddhartha and Drishya argue engagingly around the age-old debates of art and politics and whether it is "possible to create without destroying". 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." Drishya believes "in the supremacy of the free individual" (84) and cannot accept violence and deaths in the name of supposedly greater communal good. Wagle too runs with this thread and privileges the individual victims' stories above all other narratives.

Palpasa Café is the story of an artist, Drishyan who falls in love with a Nepali American returned to Palpasa and also, via a college friend, sees the effects of Nepal's conflict in the hills. The book stands out primarily as an alternative account of the war in Nepal and an embodiment of what the central character, Drishya calls "the stand of the people who resisted the war mongers on both sides the story weaves both the complexities of ongoing conflict and its consequences.

Recreating history in fiction is necessary to deserve some perception of life and culture. Here in the novel Drishya's narration is an act of revising the history

. Following Foucault who believes that history should be used as a parody, Wagle parodies the Nepali history in *Palpasa café*.

New historicists assert that the historians, like the authors of literary texts possess a subjective view. Though different important events of history have been referred, he creates his own presentation of the event.

The story progresses ahead with unexpected twists and turns and series of coincidences. Though the scenes appear simple, they bear many marvelous points that trench. The novel *Pulbasa café* has its share of message and visions for a youthful living along with the suffering we had to go through in the hands of the Maoist and the then government. Wagle creates the scenes of skeletal remains of schools and hospitals after series of bombarding and gun fire. Loss of loved ones in the violence and the pain it causes is shown from different perspectives 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.

Thus, the story presents the suffering of Nepali people caught in the grip of war. The novel dramatizes the Maoist movement of Nepal and portrays the lives of Nepali people in the context of Maoist insurgency by fictionalizing the history. The author presents his own version of the Nepali history.

Abstract

In *Palpasa Café*, by fictionalizing the historical events, Narayan Wagle has suggested that, history after being expressed in the form of words, can be viewed as a fictional entity . The novel dramatizes the Maoist movement of Nepal and portrays of the life of Nepali people in the context of Maoist insurgency . Doing so, Wagle has succeeded to conflate history as evolution and to blur the demarcation between history and fiction.

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They have made the villagers their prisoners . No. One can go any where without their permission its' simply a dictatorship . It shows how they d run the country if they evercome to power . And that could only be achieved at the barrel of a gun, not with the support of the people. She adds, "I saw fear and tension in every ones eyes . When people feel like that, what can really be achieved? They re even opraid of girl with cameral such cowards (105).

Wagle has in xcellent capacity to provide a true picture of our nations trauma . In this conflict, the story of a landmine killing children, abduction of peo;le, young women disappeared bomb explosion, gun shooot etc are the common activities . From the Maoists side they are moving ahead to fight with the state and similarly . the state is couner attacking to those rebels. So, in between them, the victim is the common men . Wagle presents the stery of palpasa who died in bomb xplosion . Drishya became only the spectator of this explosion . He could do nothing palpasa was inside the bus and the bus was tapped in an ambush. Hundred of people lost their life, their hundred of woives and sons bcame helpless hundred of father and mother sank in the depth of tear . No one in the bus could have survivd, the bus collapsed, all that was left was its charred skeleton, no one in the bus screaming anymore. The narrator says :

Through the goaze, I could har the errible shrieking of the passangers trapped inside the bus . I thought I could hear palpasa's voice above the rest and the sound almost drove me insane people wer running away but a stood there helplessly, unable to move, unable to think . out bus had been caught in an amblish . (186)

Acthally the ambuish was targeted to police jeep . Near the bus, the police jeep was arrived. But their trarget bcame wrong . The police jeep was safe . Just after the explosion, several police got out and started firing towards the hills where the

rebels were stayed, edering all the people to stay whre they are . but why is it necessary now The rebels who had tropped the bus left the place and the police who are the targeted persons are safe now . The victim are the pdinary people who have no any crime and not commit any mistakes too.

During their insurgency cy, mavists have given the tramuma to the common people though the activities of the Maoists are not against the common people but for the welfare of the Nepalese that couldnot be properly magged . About this explosion, one of the policeman speaks . “ It was us they were trying to ambusn we survived by a matter of seconds . are driver must’ve sensed something . He swerved just in time other wise it wouldhave been us” (187).

By explaining the cause of writing the novel *Palpasa café*, he takes an incident of fireflight in the mountains, As he taken dictation from a district reporterabout the firefight, he thinks: “ Nothing new here . Everyday it is the same To morrow’s paper will be the same as this morning’s. Th same steries of an army patrol being ambushed . Suspected spy excecuted by Maoists, bomb going off somewhere . He are just chnonicleres of carnage “ (97).

In *Palpasa café*, Drishy’s character has been portrayed as a moderninst here . A dreamer, a painter, a citizen of the country, he visited the hills during the moist insurgency . After so many years, he visited his village where he found the Geanitful village is changing into barren land . H dreamed of making the village into a coffee plantation. The village was looking for a further . It deserved prospercity and he could contributed to it . He wanted to give new life to his village “ . Th heingts of the hills and depts. Of the valley s had taught me the essence of life. The place in the hills where I was born had life . The place in the hills where I was born had tukned into a coffee plantation . I wanted to my art to to contribute to the trans formation (120).

Drishya returns back to valley from Maoist hel- territory . Though he is mentally divested by the death of the girl Palpasa whom he loves, he continues to paint and plans to establish an art and internet cafe in the hilly region of his birthplace . It is this café that he wants to name Palpasa café. His plans however, are shattered as the some people who might be security men abduct him from his gallery .

The van moved less than a hundred meters down the road when two of the men pushed my head down towards my neck and blindfolded me. No. one could see me in that van . I didn't know where I was being taken or why . I didn't care where they took me . I only hoped it had a window . All I wanted was to be able to tell day from night . (228)

In such a way, Wagle expresses his hatred and disgust over the policies and activities of the Maoists and the state . In his opinion. The Maoists are destroying infrastructure of the nation and torturing to the citizens Siddhartha is the representative of Maoist leader Siddhartha had his own opinion regarding their insurgence in Nepal . Though the movement was directed toward public welfare, his view about was quite different from that of the people's war his friend Drishya . As he says, “ the important question is : what is being destroyed ? to cure this diseased country, Its fundamental structures must be changed . And that's what we are doing “ (82).

Wagle found that the existence of the villagers in the village is in great trouble .

Wagle has sought to bring many issues of that confused time in to the focus of text that description and he has based his text on the basis of historicity . Here is something much more than the crude and sentimental version of the rape of the village because of the Maoist movement . Wagle has carried from a broken hope to another through a series of painful events .

Wagles narrative, though is not trilling, but his descriptive powers are as great as ever . By the cause of his descriptive power the reader thinks the the reader himself is involved in the activities . Within the description of Maoists attack on the barrack, bomb explosion, wwagle makes us that we are directly involved in the cenes, events . As has ben observed in the preceding chapter, along with foucalt, that texts are discourses produced by some agency of anther anther and and launched in to the social context .it is meant of be addressed to any one who reads it, the text, mor effen than not tries to project some sort of meaning though it is open to interpretations depending upon the experience of the raider the social or cultural contexts . The discourse, by way of using the power of language, only replects the reality but also creates its own reality which is to say that to produce discourse is to establish the knowledge of the world. Foucaults notions of power and discourse are particularly formative of new historicist thinking. In bring 'powr' in foucaults work is the fundamental force which drives all human xperience, the desire to dominate and control .

Because each discourse emerges only in response to some material conditions, the response to some material conditions, the discourse of old and new power center, the maoist's adoption of the arm struggle had its own bases . First, the nation was ruled by the elites and only handful of people had the facility provided by the nation . To provide the equal opportunity of the citizens, Maoists have established their own institution in the maoist affected areas by rejecting the order of government. Here the government is taken a old power center . Second, to eliminate the presentation of the government, Maoist had admittd the boys and girls to fight against, the old power center, which is called peoples' wor, siddartha hints at this discovers of old and new power center when he sap " Sth" ultimate blame restswith the old power center " (76).

Siddhartha “had turned in to violence” (77) because his wnts todismontle the old power center and establishe the new poer center .

By convincipthe father of girl, siddhartha wants to admit the girl in his party. Sidartha uses the language to central grils fathers as well as to reflect the reality. When siddhartha asks with the old man for his daughters involvement, the old man for his dayhters involvement, the old man replies, “ my son and I will be alone if you take her,”(88). The old man shows his regative response to send his daughter with siddhartha . “ I haven’t even given her a decent education . I feel bad about that “ (88).

What makes the language as the reflective of reality is power . There. The old man represents the citizen of old power conter and siddhartha is the representative of new power center . Here is the constant sruggle between old and new power conter which creates discouse and generates the power By convincing the old man, siddhartha say:

Will never get anywhere till state power rests in the hands of the people . Your daughter had to leave school while the children of the high and mighty are studying in America. It ‘s they who’ll become doctors, edginess, members of the planning commission and the political leadery of the future. They’ll hijack the development of the country You’ll marry your daughter off one day and even after that there ‘ ll be no future for her except tillis the land . Will she be able to send her children to good schools ? Generatioons will continue to live like this in the hills, as long as the rich keep running the country . (29)

Wagles choice of the term “ Old and new power conter” as an to justify the ideology of the maoist movement . The passange also indicates that the Maoists are on the battle to serve the recessity of the common people . th maists are on against the

hegemony of rich people to the poor people which also justifies the class conflict .

And hence, maoist think themselves as the servant of the common people . It was with the discourse of power center. That they Maoists want to deliver the facility which human is right of any citizens become their power politics.

To the mainstream history of Nepal, however, the main function of the discourse was to exercise corporate power and institutional violence . The government of Nepal wanted to stop violence by expanding the number of soldiers in the name of counter attack. The hidden motive of the novelist Wagle by showing the conflict and battle between the maoist guerrillas and the governments is the condition of Nepali common.

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