



RESEARCH ARTICLE

**RECONSTRUCTING NATION AND SELF: MEMORY, MOBILITY, AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN *FORGET KATHMANDU***Chabi Sharma^{1*}, Dr. Parul Mishra²^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of English, SoLA, GD Goenka University, GurugramEmail: chabisharma333@gmail.com²Associate Professor, Department of English, SoLA, GD Goenka University, GurugramEmail: parul.mishra@gdgu.orgDOI: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2026.13302>**ABSTRACT****Article history:**

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Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* offers a profound exploration of the interconnected processes of Memory, mobility, and identity formation within the socio-political landscape of contemporary Nepal. Situated against the backdrop of democratic transition, political instability, the royal massacre, and civil conflict, the research on the novel incorporates memoir, travel narrative, historiography, and political commentary to examine how personal experiences intersect with national history. Applying Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity, this study seeks to understand how identity emerges not as a fixed essence but as a dynamic process of becoming, shaped by historical Memory, displacement, migration, and socio-political transformation. The study discloses that memory functions as a critical mechanism by adopting a qualitative methodology based on close textual analysis, through which individuals interpret traumatic events, negotiate belonging, and reconstruct both personal and collective identities. The study also demonstrates how mobility through migration, exile, displacement, and transnational movement creates hybrid forms of cultural attachment and challenges essentialist ideas of nationhood. Accordingly, Nepal is portrayed in the book as a contested and changing society where democratic goals, fractured histories, and varied cultural experiences constantly alter perceptions of oneself and the country. The novel's unique narratives of identification emphasise the fluid, negotiated character of belonging in a society that is changing quickly by highlighting the interaction between Memory and mobility. The study contributes to ongoing discussions in postcolonial studies, memory studies, and South Asian literary criticism by demonstrating how personal narratives become powerful sites for reconstructing nationhood, cultural identity, and democratic consciousness.

Keywords: *Memory, Mobility, Identity Formation, Nationhood, Cultural Hybridity.**Author(s) retain the copyright of this article. Copyright© 2026 VEDA Publications.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

The relationship between Memory, mobility, and identity has emerged as a central concern within contemporary postcolonial and diasporic studies. Scholars increasingly recognize that identities are not fixed entities but dynamic constructions shaped by historical experiences, cultural encounters, and political transformations. Within South Asian literary studies, narratives of migration, displacement, and national belonging have received considerable attention due to their capacity to illuminate the complexities of selfhood in changing socio-political contexts. Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* provides a compelling exploration of these concerns through its examination of Nepal's democratic struggles and the personal experiences intertwined with them.

Several scholars have examined the significance of Memory in shaping cultural and national identities. Stuart Hall argues that cultural identity should be understood not as a stable essence but as a process of becoming, constantly produced through representation and historical positioning (Hall 225). Hall's formulation is particularly useful in understanding how identities emerge through negotiations between past experiences and present realities. Similarly, Benedict Anderson conceptualizes the nation as an imagined political community constructed through shared narratives and collective memories (Anderson 6). His argument suggests that national identity depends upon symbolic forms of belonging rather than objective cultural unity.

Research on mobility and transnationalism further illuminates the significance of movement in identity formation. James Clifford contends that

contemporary identities are increasingly characterized by routes rather than roots, emphasizing mobility as a defining feature of modern subjectivity (Clifford 302). This perspective challenges traditional understandings of nationhood by foregrounding movement, migration, and cultural exchange. Likewise, Homi K. Bhabha argues that cultural identities emerge within the "third space" of negotiation, where fixed categories of nation and culture are continually disrupted and reconfigured (Bhabha 56). His concept of hybridity highlights the transformative potential of intercultural encounters.

Recent scholarship on Nepali literature has similarly emphasized the relationship between personal Memory and national history. Sushmita Chatterjee observes that contemporary Nepali narratives frequently intertwine autobiographical recollections with political transformations, thereby revealing the interconnectedness of private and public experiences (Chatterjee 112). Likewise, Pramod Mishra notes that postcolonial South Asian texts increasingly challenge monolithic conceptions of national identity by foregrounding multiplicity and fragmentation (Mishra 89). These observations resonate strongly with Thapa's text, which presents Nepal as a site of competing memories, aspirations, and identities.

This article examines how *Forget Kathmandu* reconstructs the nation and self through Memory, mobility, and identity formation. Drawing upon Stuart Hall's theoretical framework, it argues that identity in Thapa's narrative is not a fixed category but an ongoing process shaped by historical Memory, cultural mobility, and political transformation. Through textual analysis, the study demonstrates



how personal recollections intertwine with collective histories to produce fluid, evolving forms of belonging.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative research methodology based on textual analysis and close reading. The primary text for analysis is Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*. The study is informed by Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity and representation, which conceptualizes identity as a process of becoming rather than a fixed state. Hall's framework enables an examination of how identity is constructed through Memory, representation, and historical positioning.

Close reading is employed to analyze narrative structures, thematic patterns, and representations of Memory, mobility, and nationhood. Particular attention is given to passages that illustrate the interaction between personal experiences and collective histories. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of symbolic meanings, narrative strategies, and ideological implications within the text. Secondary sources on postcolonial theory, nationalism, cultural identity, and South Asian literary studies are used to contextualize the analysis and support critical interpretations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Review proceeds on three prongs: research articles, reviews and criticisms, and theses. Based on the reviewed literature, trauma, Memory, and collective identity are closely interconnected in *Forget Kathmandu*. While existing studies show that traumatic memories shape personal and national identities, limited attention has been given to the

combined role of Memory and mobility in identity reconstruction. This study addresses that gap by examining identity as a dynamic process shaped by Memory, movement, and historical change.

Recent scholarship on trauma, Memory, and collective identity provides an important theoretical foundation for examining Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*. Written during a period of political instability, democratic uncertainty, violence, and social transformation in Nepal, the text demonstrates how individual lives become inseparable from broader historical processes. Within trauma studies, Memory is not understood merely as a recollection of past events; rather, it functions as a dynamic mechanism through which individuals and communities reconstruct meaning, identity, and belonging. As Govinda Raj Bhattarai observes, literary narratives frequently preserve "pain, fear and terror, and scenes of death," reflecting the "psychological horror and trauma that millions underwent," experiences that remain "unforgettable in their memory" (Bhattarai 10). Bhattarai's insight is particularly relevant to *Forget Kathmandu*, where personal recollections and national crises intersect, revealing how traumatic historical experiences become embedded in both personal consciousness and collective cultural Memory.

The persistence of trauma in Memory has been extensively discussed by scholars working within psychology and trauma theory. Charles L. Whitfield argues that traumatic experiences are "encoded and stored in long-term memory" and often remain more powerful than ordinary experiences (Whitfield 21). His formulation suggests that the narrator's



reflections on political upheaval, democratic struggles, and social unrest are not simply historical observations but manifestations of deeply internalized experiences that continue to shape identity and perception. Extending this understanding, James Berger employs Freud's concept of latency to explain how traumatic memories may appear absent while continuing to exert influence through delayed effects. According to Berger, catastrophic events often transform memories of earlier catastrophes, creating "a complex estrangement of crimes inflicted and suffered" (Berger 21). This perspective is especially useful for understanding how recurring political crises in Nepal reactivate older historical wounds, producing layers of anxiety and uncertainty that reverberate throughout Thapa's narrative.

The relationship between trauma and historical consciousness is further developed by Cathy Caruth and Geoffrey Hartman. Caruth contends that trauma exceeds individual experience because "history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's trauma" (Caruth 23). Her emphasis on relationality is significant for Forget Kathmandu, where personal experiences are continuously connected to the suffering, aspirations, and struggles of the wider Nepali community. The narrator's memories become a means of understanding not only herself but also the collective experiences of a nation in transition. Similarly, Hartman argues that trauma produces a temporal disjunction between an event and its comprehension, leading narratives to revisit experiences that can never be fully understood or articulated (Hartman 25). This insight helps explain the fragmented and reflective structure of Thapa's

memoir, where meaning emerges through repeated engagement with historical events rather than through a straightforward chronological account.

While trauma is often experienced individually, scholars have increasingly emphasized its collective and cultural dimensions. Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of cultural trauma is particularly relevant in this regard. Alexander argues that cultural trauma occurs when a community experiences a devastating event that leaves "indelible marks upon their group consciousness" and fundamentally reshapes collective identity (Alexander 27). Nepal's democratic struggles, civil conflict, and political violence can be interpreted through this framework, as these events profoundly altered public consciousness and generated new understandings of nationhood and belonging. Such transformations demonstrate that Memory is not merely retrospective but actively involved in the construction of social and political identities.

The ethical and political significance of remembering traumatic histories has likewise attracted considerable scholarly attention. Avishai Margalit maintains that "morality is long on geography and short on memory" (Margalit 30), emphasizing the ethical responsibility of preserving memories of suffering. Duncan Bell similarly argues that traumatic memories shape political consciousness and influence contemporary social realities (Bell 33). Complementing these perspectives, W. James Booth contends that justice requires remembrance because Memory protects victims' experiences from disappearing into the "dark void of silence" (Booth 34). Together, these scholars highlight Memory as an ethical practice that



preserves historical experiences while simultaneously contributing to the formation of collective identities. Their insights provide a valuable framework for understanding how Thapa's narrative transforms personal recollection into a broader engagement with national history and democratic aspiration.

Building upon these theoretical perspectives, scholars examining Forget Kathmandu have primarily focused on the text as a political memoir, testimony, and narrative of democratic crisis. One influential study describes the work as "a mongrel of historiography, reportage, travel writing, and journal writing" (Thapa 15), emphasizing its hybrid narrative structure. This characterization is significant because it demonstrates how Thapa transcends conventional autobiography by weaving together personal Memory, political commentary, historical reflection, and travel narrative. Such hybridity allows the text to represent the complexities of national transformation while simultaneously documenting individual experiences.

Related scholarship has further interpreted the narrator as a "political witness" whose role is to document and illuminate the suffering of ordinary people during periods of conflict (Margalit 166). This perspective foregrounds the ethics of witnessing and positions the memoir as a form of social engagement rather than mere personal reflection. Through her observations, the narrator records the anxieties, uncertainties, and consequences of political turmoil, thereby preserving experiences that might otherwise remain marginalized within official historical narratives.

Scholars also note that Thapa develops a distinctive mode of war writing that resists simplistic

binaries of hero and villain, good and evil, thereby capturing the complexity of Nepal's civil conflict (56–57). Rather than offering straightforward political judgments, the text reveals the multiple perspectives, contradictions, and ambiguities that characterize periods of social upheaval. Consequently, the memoir has been interpreted as an attempt to expose the psychological and social consequences of "bad politics" while simultaneously contributing to healing and recovery at both individual and collective levels (55). This emphasis on recovery underscores the text's engagement with trauma not merely as a condition of suffering but also as a process through which meaning and resilience can emerge.

The intimate relationship between political crisis and personal identity is particularly evident in studies that focus on the narrator's emotional experiences. The narrator recalls feeling "unhappy," "lost," and trapped within "a mist of anxiety," illustrating how political instability profoundly influences individual subjectivity (65). Her subsequent desire to connect her "aimless" existence to larger collective narratives reflects an ongoing effort to locate personal meaning within national history (66). Such moments reveal that identity formation in the text is inseparable from broader political and cultural transformations. Moreover, Thapa's critique of "a democracy lacking democracy" (66) demonstrates her commitment to democratic ideals, while her attention to journalists, women, conflict victims, and marginalized communities highlights an inclusive vision of nation-building grounded in justice and social responsibility (67–68).



Beyond literary studies, Bajracharya's ethnographic investigation of violence in the Kathmandu Valley provides important contextual insights into the social realities represented in Thapa's memoir. Bajracharya demonstrates how violence becomes embedded within everyday practices, public discourse, and social spaces, producing conditions of chronic political uncertainty and fear. Rumour, insecurity, and state repression shape public consciousness and interpersonal relationships, particularly during periods of crisis. These observations complement literary analyses of *Forget Kathmandu* by illustrating the broader social environment within which memories of violence, displacement, and political instability are formed and sustained.

Taken together, existing scholarship has made significant contributions to understanding trauma, Memory, political violence, and democratic struggle in *Forget Kathmandu*. The studies discussed above illuminate the text's role as political testimony, cultural critique, and narrative of collective suffering. However, the interconnected processes through which Memory and mobility contribute to the reconstruction of both personal and national identities remain comparatively underexplored. Since the memoir is deeply concerned with movement across geographical, political, and psychological spaces, a closer examination of the relationship among Memory, mobility, and identity formation can provide a richer understanding of how the self and the nation are continuously reconstructed in response to historical change. Such an approach aligns productively with Stuart Hall's conception of cultural identity as an ongoing process of becoming

rather than a fixed state of being, thereby offering a valuable framework for analysing identity formation in contemporary Nepal.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* is a powerful narrative that intersects personal Memory with national history to explore the reconstruction of identity in times of political uncertainty and social transformation. The text emerges from the turbulent context of Nepal's democratic transition, the royal massacre of 2001, and the broader crisis of nationhood that accompanied the rise of insurgency and political instability. Rather than presenting history as a fixed sequence of events, Thapa portrays the nation as a contested space where Memory, mobility, displacement, and identity are continuously negotiated. Through autobiographical reflection and historical narration, the text reveals how individuals reconstruct their sense of self while simultaneously participating in the nation's reconstruction. The selected quotations demonstrate that experiences of migration, exile, political uncertainty, and historical remembrance deeply influence the formation of both personal and collective identities.

The narrative begins by foregrounding the widespread disruptions caused by political conflict. Thapa notes that "Hundreds of thousands were displaced from their towns and villages" (11). This statement highlights the profound social consequences of violence and instability. Displacement functions not merely as a physical movement from one location to another but also as a disruption of cultural belonging and social continuity. The forced mobility experienced by many Nepalis



destabilizes traditional notions of home and identity. In diaspora studies, Bhabha notes that "displacement often initiates a process through which individuals renegotiate their relationship with place, memory, and community" (23). The quotation, therefore, establishes mobility as a central condition shaping both individual and national consciousness. The nation itself appears fragmented as citizens are uprooted from familiar social and cultural environments. Such displacement compels individuals to reconstruct their identities in relation to changing political realities and uncertain futures.

The uncertainty surrounding Nepal's political condition is further emphasized when Thapa observes that "The events in Nepal mystified the world, including Nepalis" (11). This statement suggests that national crises produce epistemological uncertainty. Citizens struggle not only to understand political developments but also to interpret their implications for collective identity. The fact that Nepalis themselves are "mystified" indicates a rupture between lived experience and public understanding. National identity can no longer rely upon stable historical narratives because the meanings of political events remain contested and ambiguous. Consequently, identity formation becomes an ongoing interpretative process in which individuals attempt to make sense of rapidly changing realities.

Thapa reinforces this complexity by asserting that "The truth is that this is a complicated country" (11). Rather than reducing Nepal to simplistic political or cultural categories, the narrative recognizes multiple histories, ethnicities, ideologies, and experiences that coexist within the nation. The statement challenges

essentialist notions of national identity and suggests that belonging is inherently plural and dynamic. The nation emerges as "a heterogeneous construct shaped by competing memories and political aspirations" (Vertovec 24). Such complexity necessitates continuous negotiation between personal and collective understandings of identity.

The limitations of public knowledge become evident when Thapa writes that "Public understanding still lagged behind events—especially at times of crisis" (13). This observation highlights the gap between historical events and their interpretation. National identity is often constructed through narratives that explain collective experiences; however, during periods of crisis, these narratives become fragmented. Citizens are forced to rely upon speculation, rumor, and incomplete information. Consequently, Memory becomes an important mechanism for reconstructing meaning. Personal recollections and individual experiences supplement official histories, enabling people to navigate uncertainty and maintain a sense of continuity amidst disruption.

The theme of existential uncertainty appears explicitly when Thapa remarks, "Like many Nepalis, I had grown tired of what Edward Said has called the perplexity of living" (15). This quotation reveals the psychological consequences of prolonged political instability. The phrase "perplexity of living" captures the disorientation experienced by individuals whose lives are shaped by uncertainty and contradiction. Identity formation occurs within this atmosphere of ambiguity. Rather than emerging from stable social structures, the self develops through negotiation with constantly changing political and cultural



realities. The reference to Edward Said also connects Nepal's experience to broader postcolonial concerns regarding displacement, marginality, and fractured belonging.

A significant aspect of identity reconstruction in the text involves physical mobility and migration. Thapa explains, "I left Nepal so that I might write in favour of democracy without fear" (15). This statement demonstrates how movement across national borders becomes a strategy for preserving political agency and intellectual freedom. Migration is not portrayed solely as economic mobility; rather, it serves to sustain democratic ideals and personal autonomy. The narrator's departure illustrates how identity can be reconstructed through distance. By leaving Nepal, the author gains a new perspective from which to engage with national issues critically. Mobility thus becomes both a geographical and intellectual process.

The experience of exile extends beyond the narrator. Thapa notes that "Many other dissidents soon gathered in India" (15). This quotation highlights the formation of transnational communities united by shared political commitments. Exile creates alternative spaces where national identities are debated and reimagined. India becomes a site from which democratic aspirations are articulated and sustained. These diasporic networks demonstrate that national identity is not confined within territorial boundaries; rather, it is continually reconstructed across transnational spaces.

At the same time, not everyone leaves. Thapa observes that "others chose to stay in Nepal and go underground" (15). This contrast reveals multiple

forms of resistance and belonging. While some individuals reconstruct identity through migration, others maintain their commitment to the nation through clandestine political engagement. Both responses reflect attempts to negotiate political oppression while preserving personal and collective agency. Identity formation, therefore, emerges as a complex process shaped by diverse strategies of survival and resistance.

Political isolation further intensifies the experience of fragmentation. Thapa writes that "The country was forcibly cut off from the rest of the world" (15). This isolation limits cultural exchange and constrains access to information, producing a sense of national enclosure. Yet the statement also underscores the significance of transnational connections. The desire to remain connected to global democratic discourses becomes central to the reconstruction of both the self and the nation. The closure of national boundaries paradoxically increases awareness of global interconnectedness and the importance of transnational mobility.

The narrative also explores migration through more personal and intimate experiences. Thapa recounts that a couple "had decided, on a hormone-driven whim, to have the baby in the United States" (19). Although presented humorously, the decision reflects broader aspirations associated with mobility and global citizenship. Birth in the United States symbolizes access to opportunities unavailable within Nepal's unstable political environment. Migration thus becomes linked to future-oriented identity formation. Parents imagine alternative possibilities for their children by positioning them within transnational networks of belonging.



Similarly, the statement "They were leaving in a few days" (19) captures the anticipation of departure and the uncertainty associated with migration. Leaving home involves both loss and possibility. It requires "individuals to negotiate attachments to familiar places while imagining new forms of belonging" (Appadurai 31) elsewhere. Such experiences contribute to the emergence of hybrid identities that transcend singular national affiliations.

The royal massacre functions as a pivotal moment in the narrative's exploration of Memory and nationhood. Thapa notes that "Everyone wanted to know what had happened at the palace" (23). The collective desire for explanation demonstrates how national crises become sites of memory formation. Citizens seek narratives that can restore coherence to disrupted historical understandings. Memory becomes essential for reconstructing both personal and collective identities in the aftermath of trauma.

This concern is reinforced by the question, "How would this affect democracy?" (23). The uncertainty surrounding democratic futures reflects broader anxieties regarding national identity. Democracy is imagined not merely as a political system but as a framework through which citizens understand their relationship to the nation. The crisis, therefore, prompts reflection upon the values and aspirations that define collective belonging.

Historical Memory plays a crucial role in this process. Thapa recalls that "Gyanendra had once been king before, at the age of three, in 1950–51, when his grandfather King Tribhuvan had gone into exile in India" (23). The reference to exile demonstrates how "mobility has long shaped Nepal's political history" (William R 20). The nation's past is

marked by movements across borders, suggesting that migration is not an exceptional phenomenon but a recurring element of national development. Similarly, the observation that "The boy-king had been stripped of the crown upon his grandfather's return" (23) highlights the cyclical nature of political power and historical Memory. Present events are interpreted through recollections of earlier crises, illustrating how Memory informs contemporary identity formation.

The emotional impact of the royal massacre becomes evident when Thapa confesses, "I, like everyone I knew, fell under its sway" (31). This statement demonstrates the capacity of national trauma to reshape individual consciousness. Personal identities become intertwined with collective experiences of grief, uncertainty, and speculation. The self is reconstructed through engagement with national events that disrupt ordinary life.

This disruption is further emphasized in the observation that "The lives we'd all been leading till the massacre had fallen by the wayside" (33). The quotation suggests that historical crises can fundamentally alter social realities and personal trajectories—previous assumptions about identity, stability, and belonging become untenable. Individuals must therefore reconstruct their understanding of themselves and their nation in response to changing circumstances.

The narrative also acknowledges the cultural dimensions of identity. Thapa observes that "The Nepalis were a deeply religious people" (33). Religion provides a framework through which communities interpret crisis and maintain continuity. Cultural traditions become resources for negotiating



uncertainty and preserving collective identity. However, these traditions coexist with political transformation, producing complex interactions between continuity and change.

Collective responses to the crisis are vividly captured in the image: "People were crammed at the windows of all the houses" (35). This scene illustrates the communal nature of memory formation. National events are experienced collectively, generating shared narratives that contribute to the reconstruction of social identity. Public participation in witnessing and interpreting events reinforces a sense of collective belonging even amidst uncertainty. Mobility reappears when the narrator reflects, "I thought of my pregnant friend and her husband, planning to leave in a few days' time" (39). Significantly, this reflection is followed by the confession, "I envied them" (39). The expression of envy reveals migration as an imagined escape from political instability. Mobility becomes associated with freedom, security, and alternative futures. However, the desire to leave also underscores dissatisfaction with existing national conditions, revealing tensions between attachment and departure.

The psychological effects of crisis are encapsulated in the observation that "Psychologically everyone was lingering" (39). Even when physical movement occurs, emotional and psychological attachments remain. "Identity formation involves negotiating these lingering connections to people, places, and memories" (Freire 12). The quotation demonstrates that mobility does not erase belonging; rather, it transforms the ways individuals relate to their homeland. Political narratives concerning national unity emerge in the claim that "This is a

foreign move to bring instability and break national unity" (39). Such statements illustrate how crises often generate competing interpretations of identity and belonging. Appeals to national unity reveal anxieties about fragmentation while simultaneously attempting to reinforce collective cohesion.

Thapa's reflections on political transformation suggest possibilities for national renewal. She writes that "It seemed possible that the country might shrug off the scraps and relics of that past" (47). The quotation imagines the nation as capable of reinventing itself by critically engaging with historical legacies. Identity reconstruction involves not only remembering the past but also reinterpreting it in light of contemporary aspirations. This hope is further articulated in the assertion that "This massacre, this coup... might yet coalesce into a left/liberal movement for a republican Nepal" (47). Crisis becomes a catalyst for political imagination and social change. The nation is reconstructed through collective efforts to envision more democratic and inclusive futures.

The challenges of historical knowledge remain central to the narrative. Thapa notes that "This person is haunted by the realization that much knowledge is incomplete in Nepal" (65). Identity formation is complicated by gaps in historical understanding. Individuals must construct meaning despite incomplete information, relying upon Memory, interpretation, and critical reflection. This concern culminates in the warning that "The truth has been lost many times to speculation and can easily be lost again" (65). The statement underscores the fragility of historical Memory and the importance of preserving diverse narratives. National identity



depends upon ongoing efforts to recover, interpret, and transmit collective experiences. Perhaps the most significant reflection on identity appears when Thapa admits, "Even in 1990 we did not quite know who we were" (67). This confession encapsulates the central argument of the text: identity is not fixed but continually reconstructed through engagement with history, Memory, mobility, and political change. The uncertainty regarding collective self-understanding reflects the dynamic nature of nationhood itself.

Finally, the statement that "Kathmandu became the seat of the emerging nation of Nepal" (73) situates identity formation within historical processes of state-building. Kathmandu symbolizes both continuity and transformation, serving as a site where diverse memories, cultures, and political aspirations converge. The nation emerges not as a completed entity but as an ongoing project shaped by the experiences of its citizens.

The analysis demonstrates that *Forget Kathmandu* presents nationhood and identity as dynamic and contested constructs shaped by Memory and mobility. Memory enables individuals to interpret political upheavals and reconstruct personal and collective identities, while migration and displacement foster hybrid forms of belonging that connect local and global experiences. Thapa shows how national crises, particularly the royal massacre, reshape political consciousness and notions of democracy, history, and belonging. Ultimately, identity and nation emerge as ongoing projects continuously negotiated through lived experiences and reflections.

CONCLUSION

Manjushree Thapa's *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* offers a compelling exploration of the interconnected processes of personal and national identity formation in contemporary Nepal. Through the fusion of memoir, political commentary, travel narrative, and cultural reflection, Thapa demonstrates that both the self and the nation are dynamic constructs continuously shaped by Memory, mobility, historical experience, and social interaction. Drawing on Stuart Hall's concept of cultural identity as a process of becoming, this study argues that identity in the text remains fluid, evolving through ongoing negotiations with history, culture, and political change.

A major finding of this study is the crucial role of Memory in constructing both individual and collective identities. Memory functions not simply as recollection but as an interpretive practice through which people understand their relationship to the past and envision their place within the nation. Equally significant is the role of mobility. Travel, migration, exile, and transnational encounters enable critical reflection on homeland, democracy, and belonging, producing more complex and hybrid forms of identity. Rather than weakening attachment to the nation, mobility often deepens awareness of cultural and political affiliations.

The analysis further reveals that Thapa challenges fixed notions of nationhood by portraying Nepal as a contested and evolving community shaped by diverse voices, conflicting histories, and democratic aspirations. The text highlights hybridity, fragmentation, and gendered experiences as central dimensions of identity reconstruction, emphasizing



that belonging emerges through negotiation rather than inheritance.

To sum up, *Forget Kathmandu* contributes significantly to discussions of nationalism, Memory, mobility, and postcolonial identity in South Asian literature. This study demonstrates the value of applying theories of cultural identity, nationalism, and mobility to Nepali English literature. Future research may extend this inquiry through comparative studies of South Asian narratives of migration, democracy, and nationhood, while further examining the intersections of Memory, gender, and political transformation in contemporary Nepali writing.

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