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Author/s: DADHI RAM PANTHI

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Email: editor@modernresearch.in
mrsejournal@gmail.com

Managing Editor: **Yumnam Oken Singh**



Biopolitics in *Palpasa Cafe* by Narayan Wagle

DADHI RAM PANTHI

Lecturer in English

Tribhuvan University (Pashupati Multiple Campus)

Kathmandu, Nepal

Email: dadhipanthi@gmail.com

Abstract: The research paper attempts to explore trauma and biopolitics reflected in Maoist insurgency in Nepalese political scenario. The novel describes how biopolitics was exercised in the name of politics. Power exercise upon the innocent people was wrong, whether it was done from the government or from the side of the rebels. First, millions of the Nepalese were affected in the violence both physically and psychologically. For instance, Siddhartha, in this novel, is killed after he was involved in the rebel. Second, Palpasa, the beloved of the protagonist was killed, and Christina, the protagonist's friend from Netherlands was disappointed. Third, the protagonist himself has been abducted. The major characters presented in the novel are not the people of sovereign ban; rather, they represent sacred life. The fictional characters and their symbolic representation show they have been the victims of the sovereign body. The affected mass is mostly the mass of sacred life.

Key words: biopolitics, Maoist insurgency, sovereign body, sacred body, trauma, condemnation, victimhood.

Introduction

The novel, originally written in Nepali by Narayan Wagle in 2005, winning Madan Puraskar, a literary award in Nepal, and translated into English by Bikash Sangraula in 2008, tells the readers about love and harmony and how such feelings are shattered by the cause of violence in the context of Nepalese civil war (1996-2006). It not only narrates the love between the artist (Drishya) and first generation American Nepali Palpasa who has just returned to Nepal after 9/11. The novelist's attempt of referencing the event of 9/11 might find similarities between Nepalese Civil war and Al-Qaeda's attack in USA. He means to say that both the Nepalese Civil war and 9/11 are the instances of terrorism in the sense that millions of innocent people lost their lives or have been affected physically or mentally giving traumas to their relatives or to the world community. Although the Nepalese civil war was political, it became biopolitical as both the rebels and the security force of Nepalese Government focused on killing the innocent people irrationally rather than finding appropriate solutions. The novel mostly narrates the dreams of Drishya and his travel experience in the landscape devastated by violence. The artist's beautiful dream of marrying Palpasa also fails as she dies in a bomb explosion when a bus is trapped in an ambush. The artist luckily survives. He becomes traumatized by losing Palpasa and also his old friend Siddhartha who was killed after being a Maoist. The Dutch woman Christina returns to Netherlands. She says that she neither gets true love from the artist nor she has been able to make love with the artist although she is a true reader or fan of the artist. She has been frustrated in seeing the dilemma in Drishya or the artist. In her opinion, he has been weak because of frequent memory of Palpasa. The artist's dream of building a café named 'Palpasa Cafe' in the village symbolizes that Palpasa is dead only physically but she is still alive in the memory of the artist and she will remain in his memory forever. This dream has also been shattered due to the abduction of the protagonist. The abduction of the protagonist creates fear and uncertainty in the minds of the readers. Such fictional representation of traumatic experience adds to heightening effects in the novel.

Analysis

The novel is elaborated using trauma theory as the tool of analysis as the novel deals with the ideas of trauma, biopolitics, homo sacer,

sacred body and sovereign body. Theory of trauma is the study of human pains and sufferings not only in the physical layers of humans but also in their mind or psyche. Cathy Caruth (1996) argues, “Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (181). The novel begins with the symptoms of trauma caused by the violence in Maoist insurgency as it is expressed in a letter to the protagonist written by a reader:

Only moments ago, I was looking at one of your paintings the one in which a long yellow leaf is falling. The leaf falls and falls but never touches the ground. I feel like that leaf. You have made me that yellow leaf, which falls continuously, never finding a place to rest. I want to stop falling. I want to stand up and fight my inner battles on solid ground. That’s all I want to say. (Wagle 30)

The novelist’s bitter tone of referencing Durbar massacre suggests that it was a planned act of hidden forces who wanted to create further crisis in Nepal. The novel depicts:

The massacre at the palace did not happen just by chance. If you look at it in the national context, you can see many signs that it was planned. I think it was intended to create a crisis in the country... A king who opposed the development of the army, a king who wanted a political solution to the issues raised by the people’s Movement, a king who wanted consensus among the parties inside the country had been murdered. (87)

In that sense, trauma refers not just the trauma reflected in individual levels but it also concerns about group consciousness. For instance, Durbar massacre can be taken as a model of group consciousness and it tells the trauma to the Nepalese community who are affected a lot after the death of the King’s family. Jeffrey C. Alexander (2004) writes, “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have

been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (1). The novelist paints the picture of innocent Nepalese and their predicament of how they had been compelled to join in PLA, People’s Liberation Army of the Maoists by force, luring them of making their future bright:

The sunlight was shifting slowly from the mustard field to the hillock. The girl probably had many questions in her mind and much uncertainty in her heart. If she left with the comrades, she’d always be worried about her father and her little brother. She knew she’d meet many girls like herself in the jungle but still her face was painted with fear. She was not the one who’d decide her fate. It was up to her father. I kept looking at her. She kept picking oranges. Her basket was half full. (98)

Ron Eyerman (2004) defines trauma as, “a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric of a relatively coherent group” (3). The trauma of rootlessness, dislocation and displacement in Maoist insurgency is expressed through the poetic expression in the novel by the artist to Palpasa in the followin lines:

Many have left their birthplaces.
Some have deserted the places that love them.
Everywhere I see
Those who betrayed love.
My village is now like a widow.
May spring come
May the rhododendrons colour my village.
I will take you to the village
Where I was born. (116)

The major trauma of the Maoist insurgency, in this sense, is that the violence destroyed the pristine beauty of the Nepalese villages and it was done by kidnapping the youths and even the children and also by displacing people from their villages of origin and chasing them towards the urban, the lands of uncertainty. The effect is also felt in the

scenario of unskilled or semi-skilled Nepalese workers working in Gulf countries. In the violence, common people were motivated in such a way that speaking English was the sign of being capitalist for the common Nepalese as the writer happens to make conversation with an uncle of a village, “‘Do you speak English?’ I asked ‘I can easily tell who’s a Maoist and who’s not,’ he said. ‘First, I speak in English. If someone tells me not to use the language of the capitalist, I know he is a Maoist and I stop speaking English” (123). The school children were motivated in such a way that they would come home not with homework assignment but with the skill of using guns. The artist paints the picture of a school girl in this way, “She was going to school, preparing for the school leaving certificate. Then one day, out of the blue, she came home wearing their uniform. She showed me a gun and I taught her how to use it” (128). The writer assumes that his village would be as beautiful as paradise but it was not so due to lack of communication. Many people left the village due to the lack of modern means of communications. He asserts:

The hills could be different in the future. People would start coming back. We were living in the age of global communication. Communicating was becoming easier and cheaper every day. Thanks to microchips, satellites, optical fibres, and the net, I could live in this village and still be a part of the global village. Trekkers who wanted to experience the hills alone would always come, but these days everyone wanted access to the Net. I knew the thought of combining the hills and the internet was strange but I was fascinated by the idea of bringing them together. It intrigued me to think that my village, though remote, could be part of the global village. Was it possible? A satellite dish above the gourd vine could usher in a new age. (129)

The novel very clearly depicts the scenario of Maoist cantonments as well. They had been used just as the concentration Camp of Adolf Hitler. The security would be tight and everyone would be in strong discipline. The commanders and other PLA members would have to be alert day and night; otherwise they would have to face confrontation

with the government security personnel. There was no entry for common civilians in such sensitive areas. If anyone broke the rule and tried to enter they would have to be victims. Either they would have to be Maoist following their codes of conduct or they would have to surrender or they would have to return home honestly despite the challenges of government security personnel. These cantonments would be used just as biopolitical laboratories. The novelist writes:

Past the hills, I came upon a band of armed Maoist guerrillas. A girl was leading them. She ordered a male cadre to conduct a through search of me. He found nothing objectionable on my body or in my rucksack. The leader put a white flower in the barrel of her gun. Her comrades did the same. One boy could not find a flower, so he used a piece of paper instead. ‘You’re entering our area of command,’ the girl said to me. ‘You don’t need to worry now.’ (133)

The term ‘biopolitics’ taken from ‘Homo sacer’ by Giorgio Agamban is quite relevant in analyzing the novel because the novel depicts the picture just like Agamban who not only gives the idea of biopolitics but also shows how the modern world experiences it in day to day life. Power is exercised in such a way that common people are totally insecure that their condition is similar to living dead. ‘Biopolitics’ refers to the condition that common people do not have control upon their own bodies. Maoist insurgency was such in Nepalese context that the body of the common civilian became the laboratory for experimentation. In other words, the body of common citizens would be searched both by the rebels and the army or police. The sovereign body controlled over the sacred body. Sovereign body, that refers to the body equipped with weapons led by the rebels or by the army and soldiers led by the side of the government. Sacred body, on the other hand, refers to the body equipped with nothing and are totally controlled by the sovereign body. Agamban (1998) writes:

If life, in modern biopolitics, is immediately politics, here this unity, which itself has the form of an irrevocable decision, withdraws from every external

decision and appears as an indissoluble cohesion in which it is impossible to isolate something like a bare life. In the state of exception become the rule, the life of *homo sacer*, which was the correlate of sovereign power, turns into an existence over which power no longer seems to have any hold. (88)

The novel is taken as one of the biopolitical paradigms as it explores the difference between sacred body and sovereign body. In the Maoist insurgency, common civilians have been used both by the rebels and the government security personnel in such a way that they are powerless or inanimate objects. Both sides violated the natural or fundamental rights of the civilians. Maoists killed the common civilians in the name of killing or challenging the government security personnel, and on the other hand, the government security personnel killed the common civilians in the name of killing the rebels or Maoists or terrorists. Both sides became happy in killing but in fact they forgot that they were killing none other than the Nepalese. It would seem as if the sovereign body assumed killing as an entertaining game. Giorgio Agamben (1998) further argues:

The separation between humanitarianism and politics that we are experiencing today is the extreme phase of the separation of the rights of man from the rights of the citizen, in the final analysis, however, humanitarian organizations – which today are more and more supported by international commissions – can only grasp human life in the figure of bare or sacred life, and therefore, despite themselves, maintain a secret solidarity with the very powers they ought to fight. It takes only a glance at the recent publicity campaigns to gather funds for refugees from Rwanda to realize that here human life is exclusively considered... as sacred life – which is to say, as life that can be killed but not sacrificed – and that only as such is it made into the object of aid and protection. The “imploring eyes” of the Rwandan child, whose photograph is shown to obtain money but who “is now becoming more and more difficult to find, alive,”

may well be the most telling contemporary cipher of the bare life that humanitarian organizations, in perfect symmetry with state power, need. A humanitarianism separated from politics cannot fail to reproduce the isolation of sacred life at the basis of sovereignty, and the camp – which is to say, the pure space of exception – is the biopolitical paradigm that it cannot master. (78)

The problem created in the modern world is that politics tries to violate the rights of common citizen while running the race of the chair of power, politics and humanitarian organizations alone are failed to preserve the rights of the citizens. The world leading organizations tend to favour politics rather than listening to the voices of the common civilians. Even the humanitarian organizations, for instance; the UNO have been failed to preserve the human values because of the political pressure or support of the sovereign body. The novel reflects the similar situation created in Nepalese political scenario. About the different rights and their functions, Sieyès (1985) writes:

Natural and civil rights are those rights *for* whose preservation society is formed, and political rights are those rights *by* which society is formed. For the sake of clarity, it would be best to call the first ones passive rights and the second ones active rights.... All inhabitants of a country must enjoy the rights of passive citizens ... all are not active citizens. Women, at least in the present state, children, foreigners, and also those who would not at all contribute to the public establishment must have no active influence on public matters. (189-206).

The Maoist cantonments were used as the laboratory of biopolitics. Their speeches would be contentless. The speeches would be used not for the rights of the citizens; rather they became philosophical disregarding grassroot reality of the civilians. About the contents in the speech of the Maoists in different cantonments, the writer mentions:

A local Maoist leader stood at the rostrum to make a speech. Before beginning, he pumped his right fist in the air. The Austrians looked on impassively. They had

garlands of flowers around their necks and one of them was taking photos of the Maoists with a digital camera. I noticed he was careful not to photograph their faces so as not to arouse their suspicions. The Maoist leader began to explain the origins of the world order according to dialectical materialism. It took him over an hour to get through this, as though he were stringing prayer flags across a river. Only then did he touch on Nepal's history. He took another fifteen minutes just to arrive at the era of Prithvi Narayan Shah. While explaining the abuse of the parliamentary system, he suddenly remembered Che COMPOSA, all of South Asia would become a red fortress. Before ending his 'two words', he asked everyone present to chant revolutionary slogans. (137)

The novel very clearly depicts how the villagers would be forcefully motivated to send their innocent children to join the PLA during Maoist insurgency. Forceful acts of extortion, killing and kidnapping became common practices in Maoist insurgency as the novel depicts:

Soon I reached another village. At a house near the entrance, I saw a woman hiding her face in her shawl. All I could see was her nose. She was wiping away tears. This is what happens when people had no one to comfort them, I thought. Seeing me, she called out as though we knew each other. Then she broke down...Finally, a boy came over and explained that the shoe was a message from the guerrillas, ordering the family to send someone to join their ranks. The woman had seen it outside her house that morning. After that, she had not drunk a drop of water or eaten morsel a food all day. She'd just sat there weeping. 'You remind me of my elder son,' the woman said to me. Then she started babbling to herself. 'If I don't send my younger son to the jungle, I'll have to go myself. Or I'll have to give them a hundred thousand rupees.' She looked devastated. 'Even If I sell all my oxen, I'll get only ten thousand. And who'll buy my oxen in this village?'...At this, the woman thundered,

‘Did my husband go to work in India just to feed these greedy pigs?’ (139)

This is what Jenny Edkins describes as ‘Radical Relationality’. According to her the relation even within the Nepalese became strange. Blood relation became fragile and radical relation appeared in every houses. Distinct identity became indistinct. In writing about trauma, Jenny Edkins raises the issue of ‘Radical Relationality’, ‘distinctions’ and ‘indistinctions’ supporting Giorgio Agamben. She believes that blood relation fails in violence and radical relation takes place. Radical relation is always in supreme position because in it, a human being forgets his ideology and treats the victims as if they are the members of the same home. It only happens when distinction becomes indistinction. Refusing the idea of distinction, Jenny Edkins (2006) writes:

Agamben points out that the form of political authority under which we live, which he calls sovereign power, produces exceptional zones, or what he calls ‘zones of indistinction’, like the concentration camp, where distinctions disappear. In an apparent contradiction, sovereign power has relied since its beginnings on making a distinction between bare or naked life (the life of the home) and politically qualified life (the life of the public sphere). Only politically qualified life has any say in politics. At the same time as relying on these distinctions, sovereign power has maintained itself through the production of zones of indistinction on its borders, where these same distinctions between bare life and politically qualified life are suspended. Eventually, Agamben argues, zones of indistinction have extended to become all-encompassing, and politics is replaced everywhere by biopolitics. Life is no longer politically qualified. Sovereign power administers bare life, life that has no political voice. (111)

The conflict became so intense not only for the humans but even the domestic animals and wild animals were largely affected in the violence

of Maoist insurgency. The novel captures a scene of a cat killed in violence. The novelist writes:

I noticed several spent bullets on the floor of my room. I looked down and saw a hole in the leg of my trousers. A bullet had just missed my right knee. I picked up the shell, put it in my pocket and opened the door. Tentatively, I called for the lodge owner. There was no response. I went towards her room and saw a cat lying dead in a pool of blood. I stood in front of her door. I heard incomprehensible mumbling inside. Outside, a helicopter appeared in the sky. Another landed across the river. I went out onto the veranda. A group of police, fresh arrivals, were swarming around the police post. Some were carrying away dead bodies dressed in uniforms like theirs. Others were searching through the wreckage of houses. (145)

Explaining the function of trauma or traumatic encounter Jenny Edkins (2006) writes:

So what trauma or a traumatic encounter does, then, is reveal the way in which the social order is radically incomplete and fragile. It demonstrates in the most shocking way that what we call social reality is nothing more than a fantasy....First there is a betrayal of trust that threatens that relationality: relationality expressed as national or family belongings turns out to be unreliable, for example. Second the radical relationality that is normally forgotten is revealed or made apparent. (109)

It shows social reality or social order becomes radically incomplete and fragile in terrorism and everything seems as though it is nothing but just a fantasy. Even family relation becomes unreliable and human ideology weakens as radical relationality takes place. In such condition, a human sees nothing except the death or traumas of others. Since Maoist insurgency, the social order of the Nepalese has been weakened and people are still living in transition. The novel depicts how the whole nation was affected in Maoist insurgency:

I went out of the lodge. The road was now crowded with security personnel. The bank had been blown wide open. The jail had been broken into and the prisoners released. None of the government offices had escaped attacks. Every house with a signboard had been hit. The road was littered with bullets, shells and bombs. As I walked through the market, some people opened their doors and cautiously peeked out. Everyone looked weary. They looked at each other as if surprised so many people were still alive. (146)

Avishai Margalit (2004) distinguishes between morality and ethics in analysing trauma. She views, “Being moral is a required good; being ethical is...an optional good” (105). She means to say that ethics is optional and it is not essential thing in human life. Unfortunately, its presence can be felt in almost every field. Morality is essential to live in the world of human being as human. But it is not seen. She further says, “Morality is...disqualifying ethical relations” (86). The writer paints the picture of violence as if morality disappeared from the world and all became biopolitical. Ethics becomes superior disqualifying universal moral values.

‘Everything’s finished,’ a woman said, sighing. A helicopter took off. Another arrived and landed beyond the suspension bridge. There were no birds in the sky. People gathered in small groups, telling each other how they’d survived the night. Heading back to the lodge, I noticed, that several trees had been hit. Their bark had been ripped off and many of their branches stripped bare. I passed a garden in shambles. A little further on, several policemen in dirty uniforms were resting against a wall which was half destroyed. From behind it, a number of dead policemen were being carried out and laid besides the living... A photojournalist took pictures of the bullet hole in my trousers. I took the shell out of my pocket and showed it to him. He took more pictures. ‘How many people died?’ he asked. ‘Ask the C.D.O.,’ I said.

‘What do you have to say about the attack?’

‘It was a nightmare.’

‘Could you elaborate?’

‘The police will be able to tell you more.’

‘Why aren’t you injured, despite being hit by this bullet?’

‘I didn’t even realise it’s gone through my pants.’

‘Were you sleeping?’ (148)

The novel shows how sons from Nepalese villages would be misused during the time of conflict as the artist asserts, “His eldest son’s dead. The younger ones have joined the Maoists and there’s no telling where they are...The two old folk never leave their house anymore...This village is so empty now” (152). The old couples in remote villages used to suffer remembering their sons or daughter who went to join either the army or rebels:

‘There’s another couple...They have poor eyesight and can’t go anywhere. They’re waiting for their sons to come back. One’s in the army and the other’s joined the rebels. The one in the army sent them a message saying that if they wanted to see him, they should come to Kathmandu because it’s too dangerous for him to come back here. But the old folks can’t go to Kathmandu.’ He sighed. ‘Their grief’s going to kill them one day.’ (155)

The killing continued from both sides. No sooner had the rebels attacked than the government security personnel would be ready for retaliation and the situation would be quite critical. The radio would broadcast just the news of the dead ones or the wounded. People would be busy listening to the news of attack, forgetting their duties and responsibilities. The novelist writes:

The stares of the strangers needled me. The lady who owned the shop had aged a lot since I’d last seen her. She set a kettle of tea to boil. The strangers were talking to each other. ‘Her husband died a senseless death,’ I heard one say, referring to the owner. I heard the tinkle of a teaspoon against the rim of a cup as the teashop owner stood in a corner with a shawl over her head,

mixing sugar into the tea. ‘They took him to the cliff over there and shot him. The radio said that he was a terrorist. (164)

It would be quite difficult and even impossible for the common people to distinguish between armies and the rebels as people would express, “They dress in disguise and speak other people’s languages perfectly, even copying their accents. If you let someone sleep in your house, thinking he’s from the army, the next day your house’s destroyed. The same thing happens when you give shelter to someone you think comes from the jungle” (165). The violence became so devastating that people could not easily identify the dead body of their relatives in the Maoist insurgency:

Behind me was an old woman. She was also on her way to claim a body, the body of her daughter, which had been crammed into a basket and placed by a river bank across the hill. The old woman was now forced to identify her own flesh and blood, though the blood had long stopped flowing from the body. She’d identify her daughter by her face, the same sweet face she’d held to her breast all those years ago. She’d never have to worry now about getting this daughter married. She’d never see her wearing bangles, a pote or sindur. The old woman had managed to send her daughter to school so she could learn to read and write. But she hadn’t been able to teach her the difference between right and wrong. (174)

The writer’s analysis proves that Maoist insurgency was an example of terrorism and a practice of dictatorship. He believes that human rights and freedom cannot be ensured through the barrel of a gun. He might be indicating the model of revolution of Mahatma Gandhi who won the independence of India through non-violence. Such revolution may get support from the people. If the Maoist started such a policy they would be far more successful in their mission. The novel mentions:

They have made the villagers their prisoners! No one can go anywhere without their permission. It’s simply a dictatorship. It shows how they’d run the country if they

ever came to power. And that could only be achieved at the barrel of a gun, not with the support of the people. (203)

The novelist has been able to capture a picture of a bomb explosion using ambush on a moving bus on the public road by the rebels. The protagonist luckily survives but he becomes traumatized seeing the dead body of his beloved Palpasa along with other passengers. The protagonist had made a beautiful dream to marry her in future but everything vanished. This is only a fictional representation of the violence but it is the reflection of so many events that actually happened in Maoist insurgency. Drishya or the protagonist narrates:

I hurried towards the bus, thinking it might go without me. As I did so, I heard an incredibly loud bang and found myself thrown to the ground. I tried to turn my head. All around, I heard people shrieking. I didn't know what was happening. Dazed, I ran my hands over myself to see if I'd been hurt. I saw the road was lit up. Everything seemed to be on fire. I heard people groaning. A few people were running wildly, tripping over me. When I got up, the bus was on fire....I could hear the horrible shrieking of the passengers trapped inside the bus. I thought I could hear Palpasa's voice...Then I noticed a row of torches moving up the hill. Our bus had been caught up in an ambush, laid by the people carrying those torches. The jeep, however, was safe. It was a police jeep. Several police officers got out and started firing in the direction of the lights moving up the hill, ordering us to stay where we were. Two passengers from the bus lay beside me unconscious....I'd survived only because I'd got off the bus. And Palpasa had been killed. (205-6)

In Maoist insurgency, millions became victims, some through the sides of government and others from the side of the rebels. They were traumatized by losing their relatives and friends and many of them suffered physically as well as psychologically. The term 'Homo Sacer'

is a term of Giorgio Agamben that refers to the extreme victim of extreme violence. In other words, the status of the victim is just like the status of a living dead. In the Maoist insurgency innocent people became victims and their traumas are still incurable. Those whom the rebels killed and those whom the armies and police killed ended their lives forever but the condition of their relatives lies traumatic. The voice of the living dead is the voice of victimhood or it works as the testimony of the violence, but politics tries to suppress such victims and their traumas. The novel depicts similar types of situation. The characters are fictional but they are speaking that which is similar to the voice of the victims. The survivors became as weak as the living dead or they were voiceless. They are still surviving but they are weak, both physically and mentally or psychologically.

In this connection, Giorgio Agamben (1998) writes:

What defines the status of *homo sacer* is therefore not the originary ambivalence of the sacredness that is assumed to belong to him, but rather both the particular character of the double exclusion into which he is taken and the violence to which he finds himself exposed. This violence – the unsanctionable killing that, in his case, anyone may commit – is classifiable neither as sacrifice nor as homicide, neither as the execution of a condemnation to death nor as sacrilege. Subtracting itself from the sanctioned forms of both human and divine law, this violence opens a sphere of human action that is neither the sphere of *sacrum facere* nor that of profane action. This sphere is precisely what we are trying to understand here. (53)

The death of people in Maoist insurgency is neither for martyrdom nor execution as a result of profane action. It is their meaningless death being trapped into sovereign sphere. Agamben (1998) further writes:

The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life – that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed – is the life that

has been captured in this sphere... the production of bare life is the originary activity of sovereignty. The sacredness of life, which is invoked today as an absolutely fundamental right in opposition to sovereign power, in fact originally expresses precisely both lives' subjection to a power over death and life's irreparable exposure in the relation of abandonment. (53)

In that sense, Maoist insurgency seems to be nothing except the inhuman practice of sovereign spheres upon sacred life. In other words, it was power exercise by both sides upon the powerless ones. The present political scenario reflects as if the victims of the Maoist insurgency were nobody. Even the supreme Maoist leaders, for instance, have forgotten the traumas of the victims or survivors with pain. It seems as if the political leaders used the common people as the tools to support their political ideology. In the name of healing the trauma of the common citizens, for instance the poverty alleviation and the end of unemployment or in the name of modernizing Nepal, millions involved in rebellion but as a result they returned being crippled except those who were killed in the violence. Trauma of the sufferers, in this way became the tool of cultural politics. Selling the traumas of the victims, the leaders reached in supreme position or power. In this way trauma became a political discourse. So trauma does not remain as trauma for the time being; rather it becomes a discourse and the voice of the sufferers remains unspoken forever. Panthi (2012) argues when 'trauma' functions as a 'discourse', subjectivity or victimhood of the victims cannot be expressed. About the effect of 'Blood' and 'War' Emmanuel Levinas (2001) in an interview says:

Europe has many things to be reproached for, its history has been of blood and war, but it is also the place where this blood and war have been regretted and constitute a bad conscience, a bad conscience of Europe which is also the return of Europe... (164).

The indication of Levinas in this piece of interview is that the effect of war and blood cannot be forgotten even by future generations. The trauma of violence cannot be changed from the psyche of the people. It

may take the form of revenge in many cases. And another negative effect is that a bad conscience will be developed among the citizens of the global community. This reference is quite relevant in analyzing the novel because the novel not only draws the fictional picture of the violence in Maoist insurgency, it also gives the message to the world that war of blood of any kind is never good. Drishya vividly remembers how he was abducted in no time and how his dreams were plundered due to fear and uncertainty. His abduction shows he might be killed at any time in the sovereign sphere. The protagonist tells how he was abducted in the violence of Maoist insurgency:

After crossing a square where a bomb had exploded a few days earlier, the men took me to a van. I got in weekly. I remembered a cart puller who'd been killed in that explosion. He'd been loading his cart, his little daughter beside him. She'd survived by sheer luck. I'd spent that entire day in my gallery thinking about that man and his little girl, the child's shinning eyes haunting me. The van had moved less than a hundred meters down the road when two of the men pushed my head down towards my knees 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 would have a window. All I wanted was to be able to tell day from night. (257)

This reference vividly tells the readers about the idea of biopolitics. The protagonist could do nothing in front of the power of sovereign sphere except following their orders. He became speechless and bare. The desire for freedom is clearly felt in his own utterances. Desiring window is the symbol of desiring democracy abandoning dictatorship. Here, 'night' symbolizes dictators and their acts, and 'day' symbolizes the quest for freedom. The protagonist is the representative of sacred life or bare life whereas those who are abducting him are the representatives of sovereign sphere or sovereign ban whether they are rebels or government security personnel.

Conclusion

The novel is powerful in the sense that the writer has been able to present a vivid picture of the violence rather than the mere representation of the events. The condemnation of the violence and quest for peace and prosperity gives the heightening effect through fiction. Although it is a piece of fiction it gives the detail picture of violence. The power of the novel lies not in the narration of the death of Siddartha or Palpasa; instead, its importance can be felt in presenting the traumas of the victims and the abduction of Drishya, the protagonist of the novel. The subjectivity or the victimhood is very clearly elaborated while narrating numerous events of the war. While reading the novel, it feels as if the novel is not telling the story of fictional world but it feels as if the war is happening now. When the readers are in the depth of reading the novel, they forget the world of reality and make them busy in fictional world. Each and every moment, the readers are driven by the sense of pity, fear, uncertainty and the sense of trauma. Firstly, they express pity upon the death of innocent people, abduction of the protagonist and other destruction. Secondly, they suffer with the sense of fear because a lot of unexpected explosions occur in no time throughout the novel. Thirdly, the readers are traumatized by observing and listening to the voices of traumas of the survivors or living dead or 'Muselman' according to Giorgio Agamben. The status of the survivors is just like the condition of the lunatic. The survivors are traumatized in such a way that neither they can die the death of martyrs nor they can survive easily forgetting the past images. According to biopolitics, human body in the modern world is just like a body in which all power is used for surveillance. People do not have control upon themselves. Whatever they do they are watched and they may be killed in no time by the sovereign body.

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