

Conclusion

The establishment of collective truth helps to form “public memory” which is used as the foundation of the nation building. Preservation of the truth is a collective responsibility of the citizens, especially of oppression, genocide, human rights violence, which provides catharsis to the victims and works against the possibility of the future denials (Chandrachud. “Speaking Truth to Power: Citizens and the Law”). The US Holocaust Museum is one of the best examples of the preservation of the truth and public memory. A few years ago, Holocaust deniers asserted their right to make their claims in the name of freedom of speech and expression. The historicity of the Holocaust was asserted by artifacts such as the museum and consequently, the denial claims were eventually proven baseless. The libel case of David Irving vs Deborah Lipstadt is a perfect example of it. In 2000, Irving had sued Lipstadt who had accused him of denying the truth of the Holocaust. Irving lost the case, and, in 2006, was sentenced to three years imprisonment by an Austrian court (“Irving vs. Lipstadt”). In India, one will find no such museum of untouchability, while in America The Legacy Museum in Alabama is working to preserve the memory of transatlantic slavery. Yet there is still hope in public memory, indeed, it is the collective public responsibility to remember these systems like slavery, untouchability and antisemitism and its impact on society.

This identification of truth as truth is important in the present time. Dr. Ambedkar has chosen these words of Buddha for the Preface of the *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) “Know truth as truth and untruth as untruth.” The recognition of a truth that lies outside the ambit of the truth of the state (or any oppressive governing system) is important. Dr. Ambedkar has provided an example with his critique of the caste system, thereby speaking truth to power. In doing so, he opened up a path for Dalits and marginalized communities. In America, Du Bois has worked out a critique of racism and white supremacy throughout his lifetime, exposing the government, the means of coercion by dominant classes and communities through inventing new means and ways with concepts such as “the veil”, “double consciousness”, “second sight” and “the gift”. The hollowness of the Declaration of American Independence and its promises of freedom and equality to all its citizens were exposed and critiqued by the Du Bois. Hannah Arendt set up important critiques of nationalism, totalitarianism and fascism. She exposed the inability of the people of the world, especially the West and Europe, Jewish as well as non-Jewish, in solving

the Jewish question. Her writings on the Jewish and other subjects, deals with the questions of truth, of protest, of revolution and of freedom.

This study has tried to focus on the problem of caste, race and antisemitism through an examination of fictional works that articulate an engagement with freedom and equality. The problem and concept of the caste, race and the Holocaust was framed through the study of the theoretical propositions on freedom and equality provided by Dr. Ambedkar, Du Bois and Arendt. These thinkers hold an authority over these problems and have offered some of the keenest insights on, radical criticisms of and solutions to the above-mentioned questions. It should be underlined here that, they belong to the marginalised and oppressed communities themselves and their insights are derive, in part, from the experience of belonging to the groups they have theorized.

They have devoted their lifetimes to study these problems and their studies were ground-breaking as well as path-leading even when they and their respective communities were facing the worst situations. They were not welcome in their own country, hated, mocked, exiled, they were made outcaste in their own homeland. This is literally true in the case of Arendt and Du Bois. This study is a tribute to their efforts, as well as a personal gesture of the author who shares their world-view. Through this study the author also hopes to contribute to their vision of society where there is Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

The dissertation begins with the Introduction where I lay out my preoccupations with questions of freedom and equality in the context of caste, race and antisemitism. I discuss the methodological framework that I use and the chapterization of the thesis. Chapter 1 of this study has discussed here some of the fundamental concepts with regard to the question of equality and freedom. In an important way, this chapter reviews the literature on the conceptual frameworks of which theorize freedom and equality; side by side it works out a methodology for the chapters on caste, race and antisemitism. I track these two concepts through Enlightenment thought and work out, in the context of my thesis, the relationship between the concepts of law, justice, violence, critique, myth, and literature. I look at philosophical and theoretical insights offered by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin, Theodor

Adorno and others. Their critical insights create connections with the literature, myth, law, justice and critique. This chapter concludes that literature through its creation of subjectivity through narrative not only affects life but also law. This chapter also finds that there is a very complex and dialectical relationship between law and justice, law and violence, freedom and equality. I have argued in this chapter that although the Enlightenment thought has given rise to many oppressive systems, it has also provided the tools to counter that. I have also argued that the theoretical and philosophical insights on law, violence and justice provided by Derrida is very important and can be used by the marginalised for future political and social engagement. I have shown, here, how theorists and political thinkers who theorize questions of equality and liberty, ultimately deal with these questions through the question of justice. Justice has remained a very central concept in the history of philosophy of man. The question of justice has been discussed since Plato. The modern political democracy is based on the idea of justice. The idea of justice as defined by Benjamin is “the striving to make the world into the highest good.” (Benjamin 2021 65) This highest good should not be misunderstood with the idea of good which is accepted by the majority, or produced by the oppressor or violently forced by the mythic violence. This highest good should be understood as achievement of God through action. Justice leads to the creation of a new world, a new world order and a new law. Justice cannot be demanded it can always be achieved. As Benjamin noted in his very short and fragmentary note on the category of justice that:

Justice does not appear to refer to the good will of the subject but instead constitutes a state [*Zustand*] of the world. Justice designates the ethical category of the existent, virtue the ethical category of the demanded. Virtue can be demanded; justice in the final analysis can only be, as a state of the world or as a state of God (2021 65).

In this chapter I have discussed Derrida’s concept of deconstructive justice. For Derrida, law can be deconstructed, due to its foundation in textuality, its history, and simultaneously its unfoundedness. This deconstructibility of law can also signal to its reconstructibility. Here the reconstructibility and deconstructibility refers to the legality, legitimacy of law which makes deconstruction possible, and the undeconstructibility of justice also makes deconstruction possible. I have also argued that the relationship between power and protest laid down by Michel Foucault also provides the fundamental and historical relationship between these two concepts which shall be useful for the social movements in the pursuit of freedom and equality.

Chapter 2 of this study focuses on the complex and peculiar way in which the caste system has developed and operated throughout the centuries in India. This chapter also focuses on how anti-caste protests were always there against the exploitative power of the caste system and also that Dr. Ambedkar was one of the most articulate among those who have critique the caste system. This chapter comes to the findings that the fictional work created by the marginalised communities especially the Dalits, holds the ideas of struggle for the freedom and equality as a central theme. In this chapter I have argued that Macwan's *The Stepchild* infuses the mood of struggle after two anti-reservation riots in Gujarat of 1981 and 1985. These two riots especially targeted the Dalits. The influence of The Dalit Panther Party and Dalit movement developing in Maharashtra and other parts of the nation also inform the theme of the novel, of protest and struggle. I show, too, the way education plays a major role in the novel. The second novel studied in this thesis by G. Kalyana Rao titled *Untouchable Spring* holds a very special place in the Dalit literature of India. Written in Telugu, it has captured unwritten history of Dalit community (Malas and Madigas) in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Each page depicts struggle, pain, hardships and fights with the oppressors and against an oppressive system. But at the same time, it also shows importance of love, relationships, self-respect and striving for the rights. This novel is surely one of the most radical novels of the Dalit literature, which speaks truth to power. I have also argued that Dr. Ambedkar's theorizations of caste, his ideas and policies is constitutive of the way caste is shaped in the novels that I have studied. Fiction created by the Dalit writers, I have shown, present everyday reality of the millions of Dalits and the caste discrimination faced by them. It presents the hollowness of the Swaraj and the state's inability and lack of desire to deal with the question of the caste. This chapter also finds that although Dalit fiction talks about the struggles and miseries, they are aesthetically experimental and skilled. Dalit fiction uses realism powerfully in art, and through that realism motivates struggle, protest and dissent in their readers especially Dalits to fight for their rights—freedom and equality guaranteed by the Constitution to them, as citizens and nation builders.

Chapter 3 deals with the study of racism in America and the fiction created by the African American writers. This chapter discusses the problem of racism and its disastrous effects on the other races particularly African American race in the United States. In this chapter I have argued that *Beloved* by Toni Morrison is a very discomforting and thought-provoking novel. The horrors of slavery depicted by her is not easy to handle. The characters suffer from the

dehumanizing effects of slavery and it has been rightly captured and dealt with by the author. The central question Morrison deals in this novel is “What does it mean to be free?”: this thematic is observed throughout the novel and through the characters’ actions. Morrison has tried to capture the sorrow of the slaves in the nineteenth century and their thirst for freedom and she is really masterful in her representation. I have also argued that Ralph Ellison’s *The Invisible Man* on the other hand explores the dilemma of the African Americans of the past and present. The narrator tries to deal with the world where he is invisible. Nobody sees him, recognises him or even wants to understand him. Ellison has rightly captured the profound sadness of the African Americans felt due to the betrayal by the US Government and American Justice system. But at the same time, it celebrates the African American life, culture, history and identity. I have shown how the works of Du Bois and his legacy which he has left through his writings and creation of NAACP and other institutes has helped in motivating the writers and activists in the modalities of struggling for civil rights through a rearticulation of freedom and equality. The assertion and conceptual tools provided by him to identify the self not from the perspective of the other is very relevant till today. This chapter comes to the findings that the impact of slavery is still felt in every aspect of American life, culture, history, politics and economy. The severe psychological trauma which system of slavery has had on the psyches of both blacks and whites has left a permanent wound on both their emotions and intellects. To some extent these effects are dehumanizing. The problem of double consciousness and invisibility of African Americans is still relevant and present as it was present in the time of Du Bois, at the time of Ellison and at present at the time of the BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement. This chapter also comes to find that the fiction created by the African American writers has created a sense of self identity and a notion that they will not be framed by white ideology, and that white man’s values will not be used to judge their lives. It has created a sense of solidarity among the African American communities which has given strength to their struggles for life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

Chapter 4 deals with the problem of antisemitism, its origin and impact on the Jewish life, culture and existence in order to provide a context for an analysis of the calamitous event of the Holocaust and the literature which deals the subject. In this Chapter I have argued that Elie Wiesel’s *Night* and Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel *Maus* deal with the theme of survival, existentialism and memory. They both capture the heinous crimes committed on the innocent children, adults and elders. These two works by the survivors rightly capture the importance of

memory. These novels try to elaborate the view that when the freedoms of some are compromised, the freedoms of all are affected. These works deal with the question of humanity and remembering those who were lost. This Chapter finds that the disastrous event of the Holocaust is non-representable in a sense that it operates beyond the limits of rationality and human comprehension. The literature created after the Holocaust by the survivors contributes to and creates public memory which will always remind us about what has happened to the Jews and why. It also acknowledges those lives lost and its dehumanizing effects on the survivors, especially Jews. I have also argued that Arendt's theorization of fascism and totalitarianism as well as the theoretical concepts of politics, space and freedom explored by her enable a nuanced reading of these memory texts while building a solid foundation for the creation of a society where liberty and equality among citizens can appear and flourish.

Key Findings:

Literature is as important to law, as it is to life. Literature, as a repository of ideology, is the basis as well as origin of our world in figurative and literal sense. That is why throughout the history we have seen that the ruling class/dominant class and state powers have controlled texts, books and narratives. The other never appears in many literatures, the existence of the other in literature was non-existent and can make one believe that this is the truth of the world, that the other has contributed little or nothing. This brings us to the importance of the text, and narrative when it came under the reach of the other. Enlightenment thought and ideas provided tools to the other to protest. But most importantly, the radical change brought by Enlightenment was that of bringing language, narrative and text within the grasp of the periphery. This brought the possibility of contradictory narratives, characterisations of self by the other, the possibility of different perspectives, history and even possibility of the presence of the other. This led to creation of new myths, destruction of some, creation of new worlds, creation of new laws and also possibilities of justice.

This study comes to the following conclusions. The role of the literature, especially fictions, created by the marginalised and oppressed communities has made following contributions to the world.

- (1) New conceptual tools that came into being with Enlightenment enabled the emergence of new voices from marginalized groups and allowed them to make a claim for freedom and equality.
- (2) Contemporary critique of Enlightenment thought embodied by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin and others show both its possibilities and limits. These critiques tie the concepts of law, justice, violence and critique to the quest for freedom and equality.
- (3) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on caste, WEB Du Bois on race and Hannah Arendt on the Holocaust draw on both the possibilities and limits of Enlightenment thought to articulate the world view of the marginalized and to enable the fashioning of a just world where freedom and equality are available to all.
- (4) On the theoretical level, fiction created by the marginalised and oppressed communities has brought plurality of narratives, experiences and understanding of the world providing contradictory or alternate narratives than traditional one. It has presented and created possibility of reinterpretation of laws and led to formation of more affirmative laws.
- (5) On the social level these fictional works have created and provided a sense of belonging and solidarity to the marginalised and victims. The derogatory representations are now supplanted by the adequately appropriate and more respectful definition and self-image by the (marginalised) other. It has also created possibility of plural opinions, truths and plural relationships.
- (6) On the level of protest these fictional works have brought new understandings of protests, identities, and possibility of promoting solidarity through shared experiences of communities.
- (7) The development as well as reception of the fictional works created by the marginalised communities has been beneficial to the society and humanity in general.

These narratives infuse positivity towards differences, recognition of others, and understanding of oppressive situations. These fictional works through their narratives do not promote hatred but fraternity, they do not demand violence but demand justice, they demand freedom and equality for all.

Limitations of the Study:

The study has found similarities between the system of oppressions, the caste system, antisemitism and racism, but cannot certainly prove that they share a common origin or processes of exploitation, due to varying socio-politico-cultural characteristics and historical evidences available. The study has not looked at intersections between caste, race and gender. Finally, the analysis of literary texts has largely been thematic. Future studies would also need to incorporate a study of narrative structure and linguistic style to texture the analysis of the novels.

Scope for future research:

The problem of discrimination and exploitation has not ended and will not end for very long time. This study recommends that the future research in the field of similar oppressive systems should be made for understanding the similarities between various forms of discriminations and also providing solutions to end discrimination. This study also leaves scope for the interdisciplinary research of concept of law, justice, violence as well as impacts of various social movements and political protests on literature especially fiction.

This study also endorses following recommendations.

- (1) In society plurality should be promoted and maintained for securing everyone's rights, freedom and equality and this can be engendered through serious research on fictions created by the marginalised and oppressed communities
- (2) Fiction created by the marginalised and oppressed communities need to be studied conceptually and contextually instead of merely thematically.
- (3) An interdisciplinary rather than a purely aesthetic approach should be employed for the analysis of fiction created by the marginalised and oppressed communities

D Y Chandrachud, Justice of the Supreme Court of India, notes that there are two ways through which citizens can keep this plurality of voices alive. One way is by supporting the institution of a free press and the other is development of the schools and universities which not only nurture the idea of dissent but also educate its students/future citizens in the importance of speaking truth to power. This can be done by including, recognizing and providing the plurality

to ample space to develop and flourish. This recognition and acceptance of plurality is the way in which our political democracy can sustain itself. (DY Chandrachud speaking truth to power)

Following Partha Chatterjee in “Nation in Heterogenous Times”, I do suggest that the concept of the nation in empty, homogenous time is a utopian concept, and politics in the real world always exists in heterogeneity. Homogeneity of the nation at the ideological level can promote solidarity and unity, but in real life we always need plurality of politics and plurality of the struggles, protests and dissent. This plurality of politics can be observed in the past and it will remain in the future. A similar argument is also made by Aniket Jaaware in his “Destitute Literature”, where he argues that Dalits should not limit to passionate identity politics, which only leads to group-interest which quickly breaks into a homogenizing self-interest. He believed that “to attempt politics that will go beyond our self-interest cannot be based on the notion of identity either.” (2012 19) He suggests that politics should be based on the idea of responsibility towards the other such that it can create new alliances and solidarities beyond race, caste, nationalities or any other categorization of the Other. These alliances will provide strength to the idea of freedom, equality and plurality in society for betterment of all.