

Introduction

In the context of Dalits, African Americans, and Jews, atrocities such as segregation, mass killing, lower than human status and treatment have been frequently recorded in history. Although they live in different geographical and cultural spaces, it has been argued that discrimination towards them is of a similar kind. Various attempts have been made to create a theoretical correlation between the similarities found in the treatment of the above-mentioned communities. Dorothy Figueira's *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins* (2002), Gyanendra Pandey's *A History of Prejudice: Race, Caste, and Difference in India* (2013), and Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste: The Origin of Our Discontent* (2020) are few examples that look into these similarities concerning these communities which are separated throughout space and time. Literature which is produced by them can also be seen to have some similarities in the treatment of their subject matters. Writers have talked about the conditions of their communities, sometimes in powerful ways. Consequently, it is possible to locate a strong articulation of equality, equal recognition, and freedom to live with dignity and self-respect in their texts, both theoretical and literary.

When one looks at the problem of these social communities at the root of their problem one finds an organized religio-juridical system. Historical studies have shown that legal systems and structures have been created throughout history to suppress, exploit, and punish these societies/communities. In the case of the African-Americans, the Declaration of Independence treated them as property and Jim Crow laws were put in place to keep them in their position. Even after the civil rights movement their situation, while altering, has not changed substantially. The analysis of the data concerning African-Americans shows that years of exploitation by the prejudicial legal systems is one of the major reasons behind the majority incarceration, police brutality, and higher rate of crimes in and towards African-American communities. Similarly, Dalits in India faced discrimination for many centuries and laws and rules, social as well as legal, prevented them from developing or challenging the status quo. It was after independence that SCs and STs were granted equal rights but, studies show that social realities do not reflect equality or freedom. In the case of Jews, they were socially isolated and alienated from other religious and cultured societies. There has been a direct link between the

rise of European modernity and the aggressive antisemitism in Europe. Steven Beller notes that European Jewry was not provided equal rights or status as citizens in many European countries like Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Germany (Beller). It has also been noted that after the rise of the Nazi party, laws were created to exterminate history, culture, and memory of Jewish existence from Germany as well as the world.

The question of law's relation with justice, liberty, and equality has been at the center of western as well as eastern philosophy, sociology, and political science. Major theorists and philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and many others have dwelt upon these concepts to understand the question of the governance of the people. But the problem has always remained that of "Tyranny of the Majority" as Mill has put it (Mill, *On Liberty* 76). The voices of minorities have always been marginalized, suppressed, and sometimes annihilated from history, as writings from the margins show. The rise of ideas like pluralism, multiculturalism, social justice, the welfare state, and democracy has made some changes for the chance of what we can call a liberal and egalitarian society. Although these are not perfect, these are positive steps towards a harmonious and better future for the world.

The ideals of freedom and equality were never universal. These ideas can be traced to thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Alexis de Tocqueville, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, and others. As the European/western world witnessed the British, American, and French Revolutions, these ideals started getting attention as well as currency throughout the writings of western thinkers and philosophers. But these ideas were exclusive as they excluded women, Jews, slaves, and other minority groups. Enlightenment thought, however, did make these ideals central to its discussion, but these ideas were made in the framework of Judeo-Christian tradition, which was limited in its reach. But, the language of the Enlightenment and its open interpretation of inclusion and profundity of its implications has created a path for the future generations for inclusion, in other words, critique by the governed.

Enlightenment thought put in place ideas that led to the formulation of Marx's ideas of alienation and Max Weber's notion of "the disenchantment of the world". Adorno and Horkheimer in their seminal work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) have shown how the rise of reason and its conflictual relationship with tradition came to be seen as the identifying characteristic of Enlightenment thought (2002). In this book, they talked about the results of this reactionary nature of Enlightenment, which they believed led to the Holocaust and Auschwitz. This they have described as the notion of "The disenchantment of the world" (1-2). They have explained the use of structures, ideologies, technology, and statistics by Nazis in their mission to organize and exterminate Jews and Jewish culture from the world. This structural pattern could also be found in the working of the USA's 'southern states' and the use of this ideology to persist with slavery and to keep slaves suppressed and 'in their place'. The systemic link between antisemitism and racism can be found in Beller's *A Very Short Introduction to Anti-Semitism* (2015) and Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste: The Origin of Our Discontent*. Ambedkar had early recognized that the caste system is the root of the oppression of what were then called Depressed Classes. While studying at Columbia University he wrote a paper on caste titled "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development" in 1916. In 1946, when Ambedkar heard about African-Americans petitioning United states, he wrote to Du Bois, offering his solidarity towards the movement. He wrote that he had been a "student of the Negro problem" from across the oceans and recognized their common fates. "There is so much similarity between the position of the Untouchables in India and of the position of the Negroes in America, that the study of the latter is not only natural but necessary" (qtd in Wilkerson 26). The studies on discrimination that he worked on in America, London and Germany and his encounters with western philosophy and social science gave him courage and tools to fight the caste system. He developed the idea that without rights and laws to protect the oppressed on one hand, and social reform on the other, freedom and equality cannot be achieved.

Before Marx, all these ideas of human freedom and equality were largely discussed in an abstract form, based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. The break-off of Marx from Hegelian abstract philosophy to a more practical philosophy/philosophy of praxis gave these ideals a radical turn as well as new interpretations. With the rise of modernity, the questions and problems it brought up were the questions of alienation, historical materialism, and class exploitation. The next thinker who radically rethought the questions of freedom and equality

was Friedrich Nietzsche, who argued that pluralism/plurality should be basis of democracy and when plurality starts to deteriorate it leads to despotism and authoritarianism. His work became the foundation and background for modern theorists such as Foucault and Derrida.

Scholars like Drucilla Cornell, Christoph Menke, Mariana Valverde have established and interpreted a very congenial relationship between law and justice. (Cornell et al. 2016; Menke 2006; Valverde 1999) The problem of law and its relation with justice (and liberty and equality) has been discussed by Enlightenment thinkers discussed above. But, the recent deconstructive point of view presented particularly by Derrida has opened many possibilities for different interpretations of law and justice for the minorities around the world. Several scholars have suggested that although Derrida has provided a very substantial philosophical framework for the minorities who are demanding justice this cannot be done without the historical framework provided by Michel Foucault (Cornell et al. 2016; Valverde 1999). My argument, therefore, is that the movement towards equality and freedom by disempowered communities has benefited from the reconceptualization of the relationship between law and justice provided by these two theorists.

After Nietzsche, and sustained by the arguments by Derrida and Foucault, philosophical thought has focused on the contradictions of enlightenment. While the profundity of Enlightenment thought on freedom and equality has been recognized, the contradictions which led to the marginalization and oppression of various groups and communities has been underlined. For example, though these ideas were conceived of in the West, many European countries prior to World War II discriminated against Jews and denied them citizenship in any major country. Even if they were granted citizenship, they have never given equal rights as citizens. In a similar way JS Mill and Mary Wollstonecraft note that women were never considered as equal to men and always seen as morally inferior and mentally incapable of any responsibility (Mill 2018; Wollstonecraft 2014). In the case of African-Americans, they were never considered as individual/capable human beings until the civil rights movement in 1964-65. They were considered as property, and because of this, these ideas of freedom and equality were not extended to them.

Regarding the question of Scheduled Castes of India, under the British rule they were legally regarded as full citizens with equal rights and provided special protection by the British government, but were never, in practice, granted equal rights or equal representation. Poona Pact of 1932 is an example of this discrimination. When Ambedkar, a member of Depressed Class, demanded for a separate electorate such as that granted to Muslims it was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi who went on a fast unto death. Ambedkar drew on the discourse of freedom and equality that was put in place by Enlightenment thought, but understood its exclusive qualities in the context of colonialism. He realized that colonization carries the seeds of enlightenment's thought but that enlightened ideas of equality and liberty only extend to small faction of citizens: natives, slaves, religious minorities are excluded from it because they are not citizens. The colonizers always invaded with their exclusive spatial and cultural ideology which presented inclusive hope but was based on exclusion.

This study focuses on how the literary writers engage with the concept of freedom and equality in their literary works, concentrating on Dalit writers in India, African American writers in America, and Jewish writers who addressed the Holocaust. This research focuses on the ideology which structures questions of caste, race, and religion. It examines the way Enlightenment concepts of freedom and equality was refracted in the works of Dr. Ambedkar, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Hannah Arendt. I have concentrated on these thinkers because, historically, their thoughts and ideas have been profoundly influential in theorizing oppression that arises out of these categories. Many writers have read their work and have been inspired to write literary texts. This research study looks at the way these writers draw on the concepts of freedom and equality in their literary works and how these works are shaped by such theoretical frames put in place by such seminal thinkers.

To understand freedom and equality we have to understand discrimination first. Discrimination prevents people from enjoying their rights. We consider discrimination as the opposite of freedom and equality. Where there is less discrimination there are more chances of freedom and equality. As per Merriam-Webster's Dictionary "Discrimination [is]: (a) the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people. (b) the act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually. (c) prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment" ("discrimination."). I believe that the

root cause for any kind of discrimination is shaped by certain types of ideology that belittles the Other. From the point of view of the theory of *tabula rasa*, the mind is a blank slate; our knowledge of outer world is created by experience, impressions, and teachings. One is born without any kind of knowledge of discrimination and distinction. Everything is taught to us and to understand this we have to focus on the nurturing and education of the child.

Martha C. Nussbaum in her *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs Humanities* (2010) says “Literature and Play” perform a very crucial and important part in the development of child. A child slowly learns that he/she is not alone in the world and to survive in this world he/she needs other’s help as well as has to help. The child also learns to distinguish between humans and things. But, when it comes to discrimination, the child does not learn to discriminate between people on its own. Discrimination is not natural. As child we are told that “this is good, that is bad”, “You cannot play with those children”, “you have to behave in certain ways”, “we cannot mix with particular group or group of people” etc. When we grow up these discriminations start to grow, we become conscious and consolidate distinctions based on “us” and “them”. These discriminations are based on Gender, Caste, Race, Class, Nation, Religion etc. Regarding the origin of discrimination, Sukhdev Thorat and others note that:

The ‘Identity Theory’ postulates that social categories and their norms determine how individuals in the social category behave towards others, as individual decisions are socially framed. In its application to race and poverty, the Identity theory implies that the behavior of whites towards blacks is determined by group norms, which perpetuate a distinction of “us” and “them.” The whites think of blacks as “them” rather than including them in the category of “us all.” This division of norms on the basis of “us” and “them,” or what authors call “oppositional identity,” results in discrimination.” (Thorat et al, 66)

Discrimination violates the basic human rights of freedom and equality. From time-to-time individuals and small groups stand against these discriminations. This enables resistance to discrimination.

Gerald MacCallum defines freedom as when “a subject, or agent, is free from certain constraints, or preventing conditions, to do or become certain things” (cited in Carter). He defines freedom as a triadic relation, between an agent, certain preventing conditions, and certain doings or becoming of the agent. This definition is his reply to Isaiah Berlin’s “Two

Concepts of Liberty”. In his essay Berlin gave us two concepts of Negative and Positive Liberty. Negative liberty is related with *freedom from* and Positive Liberty is related to *Freedom to*, freedom from external obstacles and freedom to do whatever one likes, unless it is not illegal or harmful to others (2002). Although MacCallum’s criticism, Berlin’s concept of liberty is still considered as a milestone in the political and social concept of freedom. Hannah Arendt in her essay “Freedom and Politics: A Lecture” (1944) considers freedom as the *raison d’être* of politics, and says that every work of politics is related to freedom in direct or indirect manner. A number of thinkers have written on the concept of freedom from philosophical, political, and social perspectives, e.g. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Robert Nozick, John Rawls, Theodor Adorno, and Friedrich Hayek just to name few.

Following freedom, equality is one of the major concepts of social sciences and a lynch pin of Enlightenment thought. Equality has various aspects through which it can be understood. Equality is not sameness. Two equal things are not necessarily the same. Equality has to do with the values and qualities not with the identical features. Secondly, equality of what? If we can say that all men are equal, then the question arises, in what manner they are equal? They all have the similar rights and responsibility towards the State. They are bound to follow the common rules which are created by the state for the common good. Third, equality between whom? In liberal thought, this is generally taken to mean equality between citizens, without any discrimination of their gender, race, class, ethnicity, origin, caste etc.

Caste is considered as one of the important identity markers in Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar (1891-1956) is one of the pioneers who studied the Caste system of India. Dr. Ambedkar was born in an Untouchable family, he was aware of discrimination and had experienced untouchability too. He was one of the most learned men of his time with a scholarly reputation and encyclopedic knowledge in the fields of Economics, Politics, Sociology and Religion. His major contribution was in the field of politics and social reform. He had spent his life studying Indian Caste System and predicted it will be harmful for the Indian Democracy. His Major Work *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), is considered as his masterpiece. He believed in the motto of French Revolution of liberty, equality, and fraternity as the basis of society. He had worked throughout his life to understand and theorize the upper caste ideology and Indian caste system.

In India, after 1970s, the Dalit Panthers movements and Dalit movement took place starting from Maharashtra and then spreading all over India. They drew substantially from Ambedkar's thought. Dalit writers took a decisive position in fighting against the upper caste atrocities and exploitations. Dalit Literature is now written in regional languages all over India. In Marathi, writers and activists like Arjun Dangle, Sharankumar Limbale, Baburao Bagul, R.G.Jadhav, Anna Bahu Sathe, Shankar Kumar Kharat, Kumud Pawde, Daya Pawar worked and are working for Dalit rights. Bama, T. Dharmaraj, Raj Gauthaman, K.A.Gunasekaran, Pratibha Jeyachandran, Stalin Rajngam, K.K. Baburaj, K.K.S Das, C.K. Janu, K.K.Kochu, M.Kunhaman, Sanal Mohan, Lovely Stephan, V.V.Swamy and T.M.Yesudasan are working for the Dalit cause in Tamil and Malayalam. In Kannada and Telugu writers like B.Krishnappa, Channanna Walikar, Devnoora Mahadeva, Siddalingaiah, B.M. Puttaiah, N.K. Hanumanthaiah, K.G.Satyamurthy, G.Kalyan Rao, P.Mutthaiah, Manda Krishna Madiga, M.M. Vinodini, Sambaiah Gundimeda are significant Dalit writers. In Gujarati, Harish Mangalam, Neerav Patel, Dalpat Chauhan, Dhawal Mehta are considered as notable Dalit writers. Movements like violence of Karamchedu incident, Boosa Controversy, Anti-Mandal/Anti-Reservation movement, Dalit Panthers movement also gave rise to the discussion about Dalit Community and its culture and literature at the national level. Dalit Literature became the weapon of resistance, protest, and struggle. In the last five decades Dalit Literature emerged as the mirror of the dark sides of the Indian Societies.¹

In India, as Dr. Ambedkar worked for Dalits, in America, W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) worked for Black People. They were contemporaries and shared solidarity for each other's causes. They both were aware how each other's communities are suffering and were compatriots in their struggle to fight for the rights of their respective communities in any manner. W.E.B. Du Bois was born in New England in America in a Colored family and he was aware of Racial Discrimination from his Childhood. He was graduated from Fisk University where he was preparing for Harvard. He was the first African American to receive his PhD in 1895. He was

¹*Poisoned Bread*, an anthology published in 1992 and edited by Arjun Dangle inspired many Dalit writers to write for their rights for which they are entitled for. *No Alphabet In Sight* (2011) and *Steel Nibs Are Sprouting* (2013) are two Anthologies Edited by K.Styanarayana and Susie Tharu documenting the work done and in progress in Dalit Literature in India. Gail Omvedt, Kancha Ilaiah, Gopal Guru, Ghanshyam Shah, Sukhdev Thorat are important names interpreting cultural and critical theories of the world in the context of Dalits in India.

the founder of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1909) and ANA (American Negro Association). Apart from his other works, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) was groundbreaking as well as considered as his masterpiece. He always remained a scholar who was working for the betterment for his people, who are disposed and in suffering. In 1961 he declared himself a Communist. Throughout his life he had worked against racism.

In simple words race can be defined as the categorization of humans on the basis of phenotypes. there are some categories which divided humans as white, black, yellow, red, representing Caucasian, African, Asian and Native American respectively. Naomi Zack argues that there was a belief that other races are inferior than the white race. But a lot of research has proved that there is no evidence that one race is inferior to another, and it is only a social construct (88). In America particularly, the African Americans are the victims of this racial discrimination. They were excluded from society, politics, educational institutions and any other discipline which made them equal and provided them strength to fight against racial discrimination. Many politicians as well as Black public intellectuals like Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King jr, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote and worked against racism. They fought for the betterment, civil rights and social equality of the black people in America.

Many Black writers, poets and artists had written on the subject of Racism. Writers like James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, Flannery O'Connor, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Kristin Hunter, Amiri Baraka urges for Equality of African Americans through their poems, short stories, novels and essays. Some writers dealt with these subjects in light manner while others radically and sometimes violently. Richard Wright through his autobiographical writing shared his experience of the life living as Jim Crow, but his essays like "Our Strange Birth", connects the African-Americans to their roost in Africa and depicts their strength, culture and traditions. Langston Hughes' poems blended with music depict simple and realistic portraits of Black Society, and their miseries. His poems like "The Negro Speaks of River", "I, Too" and "Let America be America Again" reveal rich cultural life of Africa, the Discrimination and the true meaning of America where everyone is free. Alan Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois believed that arts and literature will fill up the gap between these two races. They were somewhat right in their prediction, because black

artists had made a separate and important position in the world, their works are read throughout the world and they are accepted with respect.

As African Americans suffered in America because of race, Jews suffered in Europe on the basis of race as well as religion. In Europe, Jews were discriminated on the basis of religious belief as well as social and economic conditions that erupted due to racism of that time. They were never politically or socially recognized in the nation state. They never represented any class and any class never accepted them. They were being segregated in every possible manner. After the first world war the hatred towards Jews became gross in Europe, Jews were non-national entity and their wealth in the imperialistic era after first world war was the main reason for hatred towards them. Arendt notes that “Anti-Semitism was flared first in Prussia immediately after the defeat of Napoleon in 1807, when the ‘Reformers’ changed the political structure so that the nobility lost its privileges and the middle classes won their freedom to develop” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism* 29). Then it developed in other countries of Europe like France, Germany, Romania, Poland etc. Becoming the main victims of the modern terror of the war and world, Jews were at the center of the Nazi Ideology and this ideology was responsible for the Jewish Genocide or Holocaust, where Jews suffered just because they were Jews.

Arendt was born in a German-Jewish Family, and fled Germany in 1933 because of the threat of Hitler to the Jews. In 1941 she immigrated to United States and lived there until her death in 1975. She was well known in the intellectual circles of New York and taught at various universities in America. Her major contribution is to Philosophy and Political thought, her major works *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and *The Human Condition* (1958) are considered as the work of original thinking and important contributions to the philosophical and political thought of the world. She has written on various topics like Revolution, Violence, freedom, Citizenship, politics and antisemitism. She was granted American citizenship in 1951. Some of her finished works were published posthumously. Her works were recognized by many scholars after her death. Her writings on Jews are unique and original.

Jewish writing particularly which addresses the Holocaust is very sensitive, those who suffered and those who survived the Holocaust have written about their experience in essays, autobiographies, short stories, memoirs, diaries and novels. Art Spiegelman's graphical novel *Maus*, William Styron's *Sophie's Choice* (1979), Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1956), Anne Frank's *the Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946) to mention only a few of thousands of narratives and description of genocide of Jews. They give an account of gas chambers, ovens, barracks, random shooting, no food and hard work.

Methodology

This study focuses on the concept of freedom and equality in the context of the second half of the twentieth century, particularly how literary writers engage with these concepts in their writings. To understand it properly diverse theoretical sources have been used in this study. This thesis has relied on the following theoretical frameworks to conceptualize freedom and equality and analyse the selected literary work:

- (1) For understanding the concept of freedom and equality, I have studied Enlightenment thought. I have also concentrated on the foundational concepts of rights, law, and justice. Works of scholars of history, political science, philosophers and critical thinkers have been reviewed in Chapter 1. I have particularly engaged with Jacques Derrida's engagement with law as a framework with which to read the concepts of freedom and equality.
- (2) My study of caste has been essentially structured by my study of Dr. Ambedkar. My interest has been to show how Dr. Ambedkar's study of the caste system was informed by Enlightenment concepts of equality, fraternity and liberty. Subsequently, I track the way these concepts are articulated in Dalit fiction.
- (3) For understanding the category of race, I have focused on the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois particularly his authoritative work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. I have engaged in particular with his concept of double-consciousness. I have situated this concept both as drawing from and critiquing Enlightenment thought in the context of slavery and its after effects. I then use this concept as a methodological scaffold to underpin my reading of two seminal texts that frame the black question in the United States.
- (4) This study will be text-based research and will use printed, audio-video and digital work for the research, it will make use of, but will not be limited to, Books and articles

published by the authentic and well reputed publishers and sources, use documentaries, interviews, speeches, news reports, online materials, and other resources for this study.

Chapters:

The first chapter discusses the theoretical and historical background of the concepts of freedom and equality. This chapter is a review of literature on the concepts of freedom and equality. Here, I examine Enlightenment thought and history through a reading of the French, English, and American Revolutions. I refer to the writings of John Locke, Edmund Burke, Isiah Berlin, Theodor Adorno, Peter Gay, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida for setting up a conceptual and theoretical understanding of freedom and equality. This chapter argues that though the ideas of freedom and equality developed from Enlightenment in Europe but nevertheless, these concepts were in their nature exclusive, not inclusive. The chapter also discusses the relationship between law and justice. It focuses on the insights provided by Derrida on the concepts of law, violence and justice. It studies the important insights on the concept of critique provided by Michel Foucault. Apart from that the concept of Caste discrimination, Racism and Anti-Semitism will be discussed. I discuss the manner in which these ideas have paved the way for the development of tools and paths for discriminated groups to understand their historical situation. In particular, I discuss the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois on race, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on Caste and Hannah Arendt on antisemitism in their relation to Enlightenment thought.

The second chapter looks at the complexities of the caste system in India with a particular focus on the experiences of Dalit communities across the country. Dalits who were formerly recognized as the Untouchables of India are legally known as the Schedule Caste (SC). Throughout the history of modern India, these communities have been discriminated against due to the rigid caste system which has out-casted them while also exploiting them in multiple ways. The attempts have been made by Scholars like Mahatma Jotiba Phule, Dr. B.R Ambedkar, Periyar, Iyothee Thass, and others to reform the society and annihilate the caste system which has created unequal society and indifferent feelings towards SCs, STs, and OBCs for hundreds of years. This chapter studies the writing of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his understanding and solution of the problem of caste. This chapter also focuses on the various movements after the 1970s which have successfully contributed to the creation of the modern Dalit consciousness that enables the challenging of the functions and effects of power. This

chapter looks at the fictional works of Dalit writers to delineate their contribution towards constructing and preserving the Dalit consciousness for an emancipatory politics. Joseph Macwan's *The Stepchild* (1986) and G. Kalyana Rao's *Untouchable Spring* (2000) have been selected for critical and theoretical evaluation for this chapter. These two books, as all Dalit fictions, raise questions of oppression, atrocity, and the never-ending struggle for justice, freedom, and equality. Although fiction, both novels are rooted deeply into the history and create a connection with the reality of experience, particularly for the Dalits who are reading them. They rearticulate questions which have been raised by Phule, Ambedkar, and other social reformists regarding the need for the annihilation of caste. These two books also talk about the everyday struggle in a way that will make reader pause and make him think about the situation. The tone of these two books is assertive in that the Dalits, who always seem passive and in the margins of mainstream fiction should they at all appear there, are on active stage, decision-makers, fighters, problem solvers, and inventors of a new system of representation with which to put their story forward to the world.

The third chapter discusses the problem of race and systemic discrimination of African Americans in the United States of America. From their first arrival in 1619 till today, African Americans in the USA are being racially discriminated against in every field/discipline. This chapter discusses, through the writing of W.E.B. Du Bois, events of the second half of the twentieth century in American politics and culture where mass protests such as the Civil Rights movement were witnessed. In 1903 Du Bois proclaimed that the problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of color-line, this was proven true in 1963 when the African Americans marched for their civil liberties and it is still true in the present time if we observe the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. This chapter also looks at the well-acclaimed Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a framework for understanding the impact of systemic racism on the current cultural, economic, and political status of African Americans. In the end, this chapter analyses the serious value of fictional work such as Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* (1952) and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) to provide an understanding of the African American Writer's engagement with race, liberty, and equality. These two texts ask some basic questions to the American people. The first question which Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* asks is 'What is my role in all this play when I am invisible? Why is nobody ready to see me as the way I am? Why is this double consciousness, as a Negro and as an American, tearing me apart?' *Beloved* asks questions about ownership, freedom and the impact of slavery on the mind of the

slave. The novel asks how we can morally justify the ownership of one person by another. It also shows that what slavery can do to the mind of the slaves and infinite trauma which these enslaved people have suffered collectively.

The fourth chapter discusses antisemitism at its highest peak—the Holocaust—in which six million Jews were systematically killed in Europe. The chapter looks at the rise of antisemitism in Europe and other Western countries after the First World War as well as the pre- and post-holocaust reactions and their outcomes. It also looks at the problem of modernity and its dialectics in relation to the Jews in Europe. It focuses on aspects such as prejudice towards and discrimination against the Jewish community and its role in the predicament of the Jewish community around Europe as well as its implications in strengthening the antisemitic behaviors of non-Jews. Drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and other writers of The Frankfurt School on antisemitism, prejudice, and enlightenment, in this chapter, I argue that antisemitism has been regarded as both an irrational and rational problem of European people. Although the Jewish Question has existed for centuries but the specific forms of racial discrimination developed in and through Enlightenment led to the extreme prejudice and ultimately, to the Holocaust. The writings of the survivors of concentration camps and their relatives depicting their memory, pain, hope, and persecution have given a new voice to the Jewish pain. These writings and memories have played a role in cultivating the new perspective towards nationalism and pluralism. The two novels analysed in this chapter are *Night* (1956) by Elie Wiesel and *Maus* (1980) by Art Spiegelman. These two novels talk about memory, hope, and justice which has been denied to the Jews for the sole reason that they were the Jews. These two novels deal with the idea of memory as resistance and remembrance as a beacon that will stop us from following the same path which has led to this tragedy. In the words of Arendt, “Storytelling, or the weaving of a narrative out of the actions and pronouncements of individuals, is partly constitutive of their meaning, because it enables the retrospective articulation of their significance and import, both for the actors themselves and for the spectators...The fact that this narrative is temporally deferred, that it is at some distance from the events it describes, is one of the reasons why it can provide further insight into the motives and aims of the actors” (qtd in d’Entrevies. Fall 2022).

The fifth chapter concludes the thesis and pulls together the arguments made in the previous chapters in a comparative perspective. It loops back to question of justice and its relationship with equality, freedom, and particularly law. It discusses the findings of the chapters of the thesis as well as the findings of the overall thesis. This chapter also presents the limitations of the present study and proposes directions of future research of the areas and topics studied in the current research study.