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Namdeo Dhasal: An Inevitable Cultural Intervention

Anand Ubale

Abstract

The present paper attempts to argue that the poetry of Namdeo Dhasal is an inevitable cultural intervention that raises certain questions regarding imposition of dominant cultural value system and its political consequences. The paper also highlights Dhasal's exclusiveness in creative articulation and his craving for an alternative epistemology that would establish a new socio-cultural and political value system.

Key words: Dalit literature, egalitarianism, Golpitha, hegemony

Introduction:

Dalit literature, since its emergence, has been challenging, questioning, rejecting and attacking the scripture sanctioned and god ordained belief system that crystallizes a diabolic cultural construct resulting in dehumanization and extreme suppression of the masses of India. Dalit articulation cannot be relegated merely to a protest literature, as it polemically protests against discrimination and oppression based on caste, class and gender; rather it demands a cultural metamorphosis that guarantees egalitarianism in every sphere of life. Emergence of Dalit literature is not a leisurely activity to amuse and entertain the people; it is not a work of some gifted and blessed creative genius that transcends the

readers and provides them a celestial bliss. Dalit literature is a hard hitting critique of hegemonic scriptures. Dalit poetry, one of the sharp weapons in the armory of Dalit literature, has been underscoring the impotency of mainstream poetry to accommodate the issues of the oppressed, and disturbing the deep slumber of the elites. Specifically speaking, the poems of Namdeo Dhasal were a kind of invasion on the Marathi literary world that scattered the delicate emotions and fragile dreams of middle class poets. In fact, Dhasal's poetry was not the compilation of the and phrases words rhythmic embellished with the middle class images, similes and metaphors and to which middle class sensibility was accustomed to, but an extremely

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audience, a horribly condemned life of a major chunk of society which was conveniently ignored by the political rulers and the boasters of culture. Arrival of Golpitha, was actually a shattering blow on the hypocritical culture and progress of Indian which trembled the Marathi literary world. Dilip Chitre writes about the aftermath of Golpitha as, ".... Golpitha, his first collection of poems- burst like a bombshell in the placid precincts of Marathi poetry" (A Current of Blood, 110). Namdeo Dhasal not only broke the parameters of poetic articulation and diction but, as an individual he lived an extraordinary life breaking all the socio-cultural norms and ethical religious value system which upholds the dominant caste/class worldview and cherished and respected for centuries.

Marathi poetry, for the first time in its history, witnessed the use of slangs, abuses, derogatory symbols, nude imagery, symbols of sexuality etc. in the poetry of Dhasal. There are many poems by him which raise epistemological issues for the true humanity to prevail. Man –You

Should Explode, is a poem in Golpitha which, probably the most extraordinary poem about the new world where just humanity, fraternity, liberty and equality exist. He imagine the end of current world stuffed with hypocrisy, deception, exploitation, robbery, dirty politics, religious supremacy, terrible inequality and caste/class discrimination where real humanity is lost. This poem is in real sense a masterpiece in world literature. Dhasal ends this great poem with these words:One should regard the sky as one's grandpa, the earth as one's grandma/ And coddled by them everybody should bask in mutual love/ Man, one should share each morsel of food with everyone else,/ one should compose a hymn/ To humanity itself, man, man should sing only the song of man. (A Current of Blood, 11)

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