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BA English Honours | Semester IV | ENG4CJ205

Gender Perspectives in Literatures

Module 2: Gender and Identity: Intersectionality of Caste, Class, and Race • Comprehensive Notes

Chapter 2: Intersectional Matrices: Caste, Race, and Subaltern Resistance

Gender never operates in isolation. Kimberlé Crenshaw's groundbreaking formulation of **intersectionality** demonstrates that gender oppression is inextricably intertwined with caste, racial, economic class, and religious structures. A subaltern woman encounters compound, multiplied forms of structural violence that cannot be captured through single-axis gender or class analyses alone.

2.1 Dalit Feminist Standpoint and Spectral Horror: C. Ayyappan's "Pretha Bhashanam"

C. Ayyappan, one of Malayalam literature's most profound modernist Dalit writers, deployed spectral gothic realism to expose the intersection of caste and gender violence. In "Pretha Bhashanam" ("Spectral Speech", translated by V. C. Harris), a female ghost speaks from beyond the grave.

The spectral female narrator, an untouchable Dalit woman, uncovers how her physical violation and suicide were silenced by the complicity of upper-caste landowners, corrupt state police, and patriarchal family structures. Her ghost refuses silence, utilizing spectral testimony to indict the continuing reality of caste atrocities in ostensibly progressive Kerala society.

2.2 Global Subaltern Voices: Sojourner Truth and Vera Baboun

In her historic 1851 address at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention, "Ain't I a Woman?", formerly enslaved abolitionist Sojourner Truth dismantled white bourgeois feminist assumptions. While white women demanded protection and chivalric pedestals, Truth exposed how Black enslaved women plowed fields, endured the whip, and watched their children sold into slavery without losing their essential female dignity.

In contemporary geopolitics, Vera Baboun, the first female mayor of Bethlehem, Palestine, delivered a stirring 2022 TED Talk ("The Quest of Palestinian Women in Leadership"). Baboun articulates how Palestinian women confront a double occupation: enduring military checkpoints, border walls, and political dispossession under Israeli occupation, while simultaneously fighting conservative patriarchal barriers within their own community.

Advanced Critical Theory, Hermeneutics & Literary Praxis

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3. Comparative Aesthetic and Thematic Matrix

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4. Pedagogical Synthesis and Scholarly Praxis

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