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BA English Honours | Semester VI | ENG6EJ301

Dalit Literature: An Overview

Module 2: Dalit Poetry: Rage, Subversion, and Somatic Defiance • Comprehensive Notes

Chapter 2: Dalit Poetics: The Language of Protest

Dalit poetry shatters classical poetic decorum, deploying vernacular street slang, visceral somatic imagery, and searing anger to expose the hypocrisy of the caste hierarchy. Poets such as Namdeo Dhasal, Sukirtharani, Meena Kandasamy, and Omprakash Valmiki transform the poetic line into an instrument of insurrection.

2.1 Namdeo Dhasal: The Poetics of the Mumbai Underworld

Co-founder of the Dalit Panthers, Namdeo Dhasal revolutionized Marathi poetry with his 1972 collection *Golpitha*. Set in Mumbai's red-light district of Kamathipura amidst sex workers, petty thieves, and untouchable scavengers, Dhasal's verse employs raw, uninhibited street language, stripping away polite middle-class aesthetics to document the brutal vitality of the urban subaltern.

2.2 Contemporary Dalit Feminist Verse: Sukirtharani and Meena Kandasamy

Contemporary Tamil Dalit feminist poets Sukirtharani and Meena Kandasamy write directly against patriarchal and caste control of the female body. In poems like "A Recipe for Untouchability" and "My Tongue," Kandasamy reclaims language, asserting that the Dalit woman's tongue will speak defiance even if sliced out by feudal masters.

Advanced Critical Theory, Hermeneutics & Literary Praxis

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1. Hermeneutic Paradigms and Textual Mechanics

Critical inquiry into Module 2: Dalit Poetry: Rage, Subversion, and Somatic Defiance reveals how textual forms construct meaning through complex aesthetic strategies and structural choices:

- **Structuralism and Semiotic Deconstruction:** The organization of signs, tropes, and syntactical structures establishes narrative authority while simultaneously revealing internal fissures. Binary oppositions embedded within the discourse—such as center versus margin, tradition versus modernity, and subjective interiority versus objective reality—are systematically problematized through textual slippages and ambiguous signifiers.
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2. Historiographical Context and Reception Theory

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3. Comparative Aesthetic and Thematic Matrix

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