

FREEDOM OF SPEECH: DWELL THROUGH MARGINALIZED CASTE, NATION, CLASS AND GENDER

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Abstract

Genre in literature is the result of changes in the social and political spectrum and this is called as **Testimonial Narratives**. Through this, I would like to present this paper to appraise and reread the testimonio of some of our Indian writers. Also, I would like to endure our Indian Constitution Article 19(1) (a) **“right to freedom of speech and expression**, Freedom of speech and expression means the right to express one’s own convictions and opinions freely by words of mouth, writing, printing, pictures or any other mode. In modern time it is widely accepted that the right to freedom of speech is the essence of free society and it must be safeguarded at all times. Aspiring on this, I would like to bring light upon writings of: **Dr. Ambedkar’s *The Annihilation of caste***; it is an audacious denunciation of Hinduism and its caste system.

Ms. Arundhati Roy’s *Kashmir: The case for freedom*, Is an ongoing quest for justice and self-determination and impassioned attempt to redress this imbalance and to fill the gap in our moral imagination which covers Kashmir’s past and present and the occupation’s causes and consequences.

Dr. U.R Anantha murthy’s *Ghatashraddha: The Ritual* describes the ostracism of a young woman who transgresses the rigid sexual code of the orthodox Brahmin society.

And ***Samskara***: A rite for a dead man, as a religious novel about a decaying Brahmin colony in the south Indian village of Karnataka, it serves as an allegory rich in realistic detail, a contemporary reworking of ancient Hindu themes and myths and ultimately about **Ms. A Revati’s *The truth about me: Hijra life story***, autobiography of a hijira (Eunuch) who fought ridicule, persecution and violence both within her home and outside to find a life of dignity.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION :

Speech is God’s gift to mankind. Through speech a human being convey’s his thoughts, sentiments and feeling to others. Freedom of speech and expression is thus a natural right, which a human being requires on birth. It is therefore a basic right. “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek and receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontier’s” proclaims the universal declaration of Human Rights (1948). The people of India declared in the preamble of the constitution, which they gave unto themselves their resolve to

secure to all the citizens liberty of thought and expression. This resolve is reflected in Article 19(1) (a) which is one of the Articles found in part III of the constitution, which enumerates the fundamental rights.

Article 19(1) (a) of Indian constitution says that all citizens have the right to freedom of speech and expression. Freedom of speech and expression means the right to express one's own convictions and opinions freely by words of mouth, writing, printing, pictures or any other mode. It thus includes the expression of one's idea through any communicable medium or visible representation. Such as gestures, signs, and the likes. This expression connotes also publication and thus the freedom of press is included in this category. Free propagation of ideas is the necessary objective and this may be done on the platform or through the press. This propagation of ideas is secured by freedom of circulation. Liberty of circulation is essential to that freedom as the liberty of publication. Indeed without circulation the publication would be of a little value. The freedom of speech and expression includes liberty to propagate not one's views only. It also includes right to propagate or publish the views of other people, otherwise this freedom would not include the freedom of press.

I only had a glimpse of this reflected Article 19(1) (a) from our Indian constitution. So according to this may hap freedom of speech and expression I perceived that all writer's have their own rights to express their views, in their writings. And eventually they can linger their views and bay around like marginalized caste, nation class and gender, which are ongoing bombastic scenarios of our country. Wherefore I on fang read out a few writings of our eminent Indian writers.

Firstly:

Dr. Ambedkar's the annihilation of caste.

Annihilation of caste is an undelivered speech written in 1936 by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who fought against the country's concept of untouchability. The speech was prepared as the presidential address for the annual conference of a Hindu reformist group Jat-Pat Todak Mandal, on the ill effects of caste in Hindu society.

After his invitation to speak at the conference was withdrawn clue to the address "unbearable" content, Ambedkar self published 1500 copies of the speech in may 1936.

On 12 Dec 1935, in a letter, the secretary of the Jat-Pat Todak (society for the abolition of caste system) an anti-caste organization based in Lahore, asked Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to deliver a speech on the caste system in India at their annual conference in 1936. Dr. Ambedkar wrote the speech as an essay under the title "Annihilation of caste" and sent in advance to the organizers in Lahore for printing and distribution. But the organizer found that some of the content were against Hinduism and its shastras.

The organisaiton's insistence on deleting these passages of the speech and Ambedkar's declared that he would not change a comma resulted in the withdrawal of the invitation. He subsequently published the speech as a book on 15th May 1936 at his own expense.

The title says 'selected works of Ambedkar, but the content holds nearly all the works of him.

Annihilation of caste, yet neglected, it is a prolific work by Dr. Ambedkar. It encapsulates the ideas of a rebel of how caste and religion oppresses people-socially, morally and economically.

Without doubt this book is perhaps one of the most well researched and scholarly works on the caste system of India and Hinduism. Dr. Ambedkar with his irrefutable observations and arguments puts forward a strong case against casteism in the Indian Society. Especially in the context of its implications for the depressed classes.

Dr. Ambedkar thought the abolition of untouchability and the eradication of caste would make India an emotionally strong and unified country. His thought and passion are relevant even today.

It is a book that should be read by all especially defenders of Hinduism, for it provides many rational arguments about and against the dogma practiced in the Hinduism. Anyone who wants to have a complex and nuanced understanding of India and Hinduism needs to read this book.

Secondly

Mr. Arundati Roy's Kashmir: The case for freedom is a collection of essays by Tariq Ali, Hilal bhat, Angana P. Chatterji, Habbah Khatun, Pankaj Mishra and Arundati Roy.

The first essay by Pankaj Mishra describes that Kashmiris want true democracy and questions the disregard of the hardships faced by the Kashmiri's and evasiveness of the Indian intellectuals on this issue. Tariq Ali in his essay "story of Kashmir explains how the valley which was once considered a paradise changed into a disputed region. Roy elucidates what freedom means to Kashmiri, while questioning India's liberal democracy; she criticizes journalists for not raising their voice against the human right abuses against the Kashmiri people by Indian security forces. According to Roy Kashmir was never a integral part of India.

Overall, this book is best when it focuses on documenting and discussing the atrocities and violations committed by the Indian occupation over the past 25 years and how this feeds into the liberation struggle for Kashmir.

There is a little in the book discussing how to bring about the only solution, instead the book suggests a plebiscite held in Kashmir.

Tariq Ali and Arundati Roy appear to favour appealing to the west to increase western pressure on the India Government to fulfill its commitment and hold the plebiscite.

After the publication and controversial attack over a statement by Arundhati Roy on Kashmir, for which she spoke on press meet held by 'The Hindu' and 'The Times of India'.

I would like to share her sayings in the press meet respectively. As it came against the back drop of the government contemplating action against her under changes of sedition and seeking legal opinion in this regard.

For which, Ms. Roy has made two speeches in New Delhi and Srinagar in the past few days in which she sought independence for Kashmir from India.

In "The Hindu" she only spoke what "millions of people" in Kashmir have been saying every day for years.

Pity the nation that needs to jail those who ask for justice while communal killers, mass murderers corporate scamsters, looters, rapists, and those who prey on the poorest of the poor, roam free." she said that she had read in Newspapers that she may be arrested on charges of sedition for her remarks supporting Azadi for kashmiri for that she says, "I said what millions of people here say every day. I said what I as well as other commentators have written and said for years."Anybody who cares to read the transcripts of my speeches will see that they were fundamentally a call for justice, she said. Roy, who was present at the massive rally, said that the people of Kashmir have made themselves abundantly clear that if no one is listening, then it is because they don't want to hear. Because this is a referendum. People don't need anyone to represent them they are representing themselves. As somebody who has followed peoples' movements and who has been in rallies and at the heart or the edge of things, I don't think you dispute what you see here she told.

Roy also said that “since the 1930’s here have been debates and disputes about who has the right to represent the Kashmiri people, whether it was Hari Singh or sheikh Abdullah or Someone else. And the debate continues till today whether it is the Hurriyat or some other party. Then she added, “But I think today the people have represented themselves.” Roy concluded with words, India needs azadi from Kashmir as much as Kashmir needs azadi from India.

Thirdly

Dr. U-R Ananthamurthy’s Ghata Shradda: The ritual and Samskara: A rite for a dead man.

U.R. Ananthmurthy who opposed the brahminical tyranny with its replete ascendancy into the ills of the degenerative caste system.

A young Brahmin Vedic school student, who is from an aristocratic family, befriends his school master’s daughter who is a pregnant widow. The boy tries but fails in concealing his friend’s pregnancy. The widow has an abortion forced on her, has the eponymous ritual performed on her and is excommunicated. The student returns home as his school shuts down. Samskara: written by U.R. Ananthmurthy.

The story is set in a street in a small village called durvasapura in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. A majority of the people who live in the street belong to the community of madhwas. (A Brahmin community) the people who stay here have a traditional mindset and strictly follow the rules defined by their religion. Two of the main characters in the story are Praneshacharya and Naranappa. Praneshacharya is a devout Brahmin who has completed his Vedic education at Varanasi and has returned to duravasapura and is considered as the leader of the Brahmin community of his village.

This main goal is to attain liberation (moksha) and he is willing to go to any length to achieve it. To remain focused on his goal and as an act of self-sacrifice, he marries an invalid woman and hence remain celibate.

The other main character Naranappa, a Brahmin by birth but one who has rejected the set rules of Brahmanism by eating meat and by keeping the company of a prostitute named chandri. This causes the Brahmins in the village to rise up against him. They approach Praneshacharya to throw him out of the village. But meanwhile, once Naranappa visits shimoga and he returns to duravasapura with high fever and dies. The Brahmins are left in a piquant situation because, according to Brahmin principles, a person who dies should be cremated as early as possible. None of the Brahmins wants to cremate the body they feel that by cremating Naranappa’s body they will become polluted as he was against the Brahmin principles during his life.

U.R. Ananthamurthy, a Brahmin by birth gets into a spirit of inquiry as he goes about writing different literary works, questioning the authority of the Brahmins. The patriarchal society the role and status of women in society, the caste system and the like. That which is seen as a reflection of his times and beyond in his work ‘Ghatashraddha’.

Similarly in the same genre with similar stylistic features he writes yet another work titled samskara, where both the works bears a similar theme that of the caste system and superstitions. The ending of both the stories have close parallels in the death of the main characters-while one being a symbolic death in Ghatashradda, further one can see close parallel in terms of the titles give to the two works Samskara and Ghatashradda which refer to the rites of passage. In this piece of works, another stretches a bit beyond what he has experienced being a part of the brahminical society. Hence, it is a representation of his experience and a stretch of imagination-up a thin line between the two.

Fourthly:

The truth about me: A Hijra life story by A. Revathi, She is a fairly well-known activist in Bangalore. She works with Sangama, a Bangalore based NGO for sexual minorities facing oppression. The truth about me is her second book and her autobiography. It is translated from the Tamil. It clearly shows how the Hijra community of India. It is a travelogue of travails but the intention of the author is not to “seek sympathy form society or government” but rather to make this hetronormative society aware of the fact that the hijras are also human. Hirjas also have feelings, they too want to be loved and accepted, and they too want to live.

Conclusion:

India has far weaker freedom of speech protections than the United States. In fact, almost no country protects freedom of speech to the extent of United States law. While freedom of speech is a right enumerated in Indian law, there is a large set of exceptions. Indian Penal Code section 153 specifically states:

"Whoever promotes or attempts to promote, on grounds of religion, race, place or birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, or commits any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, and which disturbs or is likely to disturb the public tranquility shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both."

By and large Indian Press is free to write anything. It has not hesitated to criticize or express even the highest personality. It has exposed a number of fraud and scandals connected with important persons. One can come across such dedicated persons who are in the profession of journalism and write with courage and have a national interest in their job. But at the same time some papers are controlled and managed by certain people who are interested in counting their money bags. But these papers are biased and never present before us the true news and opinion. As-far-as the laws of the land are concerned; the press in India has full freedom in comparison to any other country. Even the policy of advertisement and newsprint quota allocation has not succeeded in twisting the arms of the press.

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