

Language, Representation, and Protected Ignorance

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Language and representations are intertwined and have immense potential to offer varied understandings of our worldview. The Brahmanic hegemony has produced meta-narratives of the nationalist imaginations, having its roots in the intellectual politics of homogeneity of tradition in colonial as well as pre-colonial India. The ways in which the discursive process in the colonial conditions emerged has a very distinct mark of the Brahmanical dominance that is located in the political context of the idea of nation and nationalism. The political and moral in this case are opposed as two subjective categories. It is deeply rooted in the conscious imaginations that produced very selective ideals that negate the moral as well as subvert to question of the moral self. Colonial India propelled four dominant modes of understanding as forms of discourses, mainly -- 1) Imperial discourse 2) Brahmanical discourse 3) Marxist/socialist discourse 4) Non-Brahmanical discourse. The imperial discourse as it is understood was predominated by the racial theory of superiority, and also produced a very distinctive power to interpret. Even today, our worldviews are dominated by the power of the West and its authoritarian power to ignore the subject of its own interrogation. Perhaps because of its inherent nature, what it has produced is white supremacy and consequently 'white ignorance' as has been observed and termed by Charles Mills ('White Ignorance' in Shanan Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (Eds), *Epistemologies of Ignorance*, State University of New York Press, pp. 11-38). Though the imperial discourse was embedded in the power of authority in the political sphere, the Brahmanical discourse, with the baggage of religious, social and cultural traditions managed to oppose the imperial interpretations, in order to maintain the Brahmanical worldview, and its dominant narratives were aimed at producing native hegemony. Indeed, the objective was not to kill ignorance at large, but to produce a narrative that would reconceptualize their own power of dominance and consequently, to inscribe the self as a marker of evaluation. In India, to oppose the imperial models of interpretations, however, the notion of a traditional past gets structured in the textual reconstruction of the history. Romila Thapar's work indeed reveals those factors. (For detailed discussion see Romila Thapar, *Interpreting Early India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992.) In this case, even as the acceptability of traditional ideas and rituals gets significant space, the processes of relationship to the ritual practices are structured as a legitimate form of cultural expression.

The Marxian/socialist interpretation of history gets rooted in the idea of base and superstructure where property/economy become pivotal to understand the dynamic nature of change in the historical process.

While Brahmanic modes of understanding were dominant, there is an emergence of non-Brahmanic interpretations of the past, which appeared as a point of departure from the other three modes of discourses. Dr. Ambedkar who produced a critique of the other three discourses in India, was the most prolific thinker, and as part of the non-Brahmanic thinking process, adhered to the theory of 'pratitya-samvutpada' i.e. the theory of codependent/interdependent origination of the Buddha. He also used caste as a self-intervening category to produce a critique of dominance, and challenged the metanarratives of the Brahmanical tradition.

The colonial project of study of past and further historiography along with its impact has been analyzed by Partha Mitter. (see Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, Oxford University Press, 1977). Imperial modernity was a project that entered the Indian condition as a superior power; nevertheless, the subservient nature of social conditions remained a divisive tool to maintain the social power and hierarchy. Against the backdrop of colonial modernity, it may be observed that gallery space became the new space of art activity where access to those places always had considerable restrictions. The restriction against public access was intensely loaded with the vertical and horizontal division of the society, but such situations have never been challenged by the modernist agenda of the high-caste Indian society. Education no doubt began to break the shackles of the past relics of the functioning of society, but the biggest beneficiaries of such endeavors have been the caste-Hindu society, who foregrounded the ideas of divinity and sacredness of tradition as markers of purity and Indianness. This managed to strengthen the textual tradition of past as a tool to reinvent the discursive process that was exclusive and confined to the cultural hegemony. Despite mobility--as offered by the colonial modernity--in the traditional occupations like the artist/artisans, with the active involvement of the colonial masters, pictorial conventions began to get hybridized to cater the new interest of the colonial administrations, by accepting the cultural superiority of the Western tradition. Political power empowers colonial modernity to force changes in the society, but, at the level of cultural relics of the past, normative social norms could not be questioned. This was due to the role of education as a decisive tool of initiating rationality, where the religious ritualistic tradition could never become an object of criticality. The consciousness of a self in the realm of others was the consciousness of caste that has inherited privileged positions. Conscious and the so-called subconscious had no other side, as the two would function as one entity. Caste acquires as a fundamental tool of consciousness that gets structured in the hierarchical systemic functioning. Thus, here comes the objective formulations of knowledge production process that gets the basis of

tradition and ideas of the sacredness of tradition, the institution of varṇa and caste become an integral part of the sacredness of tradition that cannot be questioned.

Violence is an embedded category of caste-consciousness that becomes normative for caste-Hindus. As a matter of fact, the notion of spirituality becomes an intervening tool of opposition to the western critic as exemplified in the defense of the dogmas of tradition. In the defence of the survival of tradition, Radhakrishnan, despite society being problematic, takes refuge in the chronology of tradition and talks about the continuity of tradition as a great achievement. Radhakrishnan maintains that “The Vedic tradition became surrounded with sanctity, and so helped to transmit culture and ensure that the continuity of civilization” (*A Hindu View of Life*, p. 18, 1954). Those like Radhakrishnan would like to understand the continuity and multiplicity as a part of an absorption process in the continuity of the Hindu civilizational state. It is equally important to understand the defense of caste as an institution in his understanding of the society.

Radhakrishnan would like to understand continuity in the tradition of their religious practices as a process of continuity and assimilation. For him, “Caste was the answer of Hinduism to the forces pressing on it from outside. It was the instrument by which Hinduism civilized the different tribes it took in. Any group of people appearing exclusively in any sense is a caste.” (*A Hindu View of Life*, p. 77, 1954)

The other appropriate example in this context would be A. K. Coomaraswamy, whose writings have been the most dominant in the field of art history and are still being taught in a sacred manner of lenses of typified oriental icon. Coomaraswamy, while narrating the historical nature of Indian art, successfully advocated the idea of spirituality (Coomaraswamy A. K., *Transformation of Nature in Indian Art*, 1939), and even went on to defend the traditional practices of ‘sati’ as the union of Shiva and Shakti (Coomaraswamy A. K., ‘Sati: Defence of Eastern Women’, in *British Sociological Review*, Vol. VI, 19134). Thus, cultural and social practices are deemed as sacred and are beyond interrogation. Such single-minded assumptions were guided by the renowned interest in the reconstruction of tradition through a textual past. Religious texts were treated as sacred texts, guiding the deeper philosophical meanings of cultural symbols. Although an outcome of the colonial discourse challenging the very essence of the tradition, ritualistic social and religious practices remained a territory of the “sacred,” since they were deemed to have divine sanction. Thus, spirituality was a convenient tool of a cultural political project, and was invented as a trajectory of difference to strengthen the Brahmanic hold as a larger stream of thought. It served also as an idea to safeguard its own power through discourse, thus shaping the

minds of the public and intellectual spheres as that of adherence to tradition as fundamental “essence”, rather than interrogating the self and the essence of the on-going cultural practices. Critical thinking could not be inculcated, as the foundational aspects of understanding were deeply connected to the sacredness of textual tradition, belief system, ideas of divinity as well as the adherence to the idea of shabdapramanya, i.e. accepting word as evidence, or, deeming as truth whatever has been written in the religious texts. The textual language and its signifiers are the ones that propelled the desire to see the cultural object as ‘spiritual sacred’ and as devoid of any social objectives, conflicts, tension, and politics.

Readings of the textual tradition moved from the religious injunctions to the academic institutions, however, the ideas of sacredness and belief could not be unattached from the readings; therefore, presenting critiques of tradition remained a distant dream. Caste hegemony is a fundamental key to understanding the nature of such pedagogic formulations, as uncritical thinking became part of the Brahmanic theoretical formulations -- where ignorance never gets disseminated to create a consciousness of righteous thinking.

The political battle of ‘revivalism’ reshaped the political opposition where societal practices and considerations were a non-entity. The intervening tool being formalistic, the modernist idea of pictorial language became the sole concern of the claimed modernists that include many artists. Exoticism became the perceptual lens to eulogize Brahmanic themes drawn from the epics and Puranas. Homogeneity of tradition set the thinking process in such a way that the project of homogeneity completely bypassed the multiplicity of tradition existing in the country.

Project homogeneity’s political intentions can best be exemplified through the conception of the word ‘nirvana’. The word niravā ṇa has its origin in a Buddhist concept, i.e. the Pali nibbāna, meaning cessation of hate, anger, desire. It enters the Brahmanic philosophy through texts such as Bhagavadgita. The word nibbāna becomes nirvana, meaning death, the salvation of the soul. Nevertheless, the Brahmanic understanding of the meanings is the most dominant and has become part of public perception. It is a very apt example to understand as to how the project of homogeneity has an objective to propel signifiers that are part of the Brahmanic conceptions through which entire tradition is to be understood.

While one has to locate the cultural difference to displace the discursive process of homogeneity of tradition, attempts to reconstruct the past and the present, and their cultural residues from non-colonial as well as non-Brahmanic perspectives, could not become an

intervening tool of investigation and understanding, as it would directly harm the political project of 'homogeneity of tradition'. When such discourses were challenged by the oppressed and the depressed, voices of articulation of the oppressed shifted the focus on the ways in which political intentions are signified in the textual tradition of the Brahmanical past as well as to make language away from the conventional evaluation of the degree of understanding. Language already being hegemonic in every sphere of life, it was a task to make language -- both written as well as pictorial -- that would conceptualize the worldview of understandings which would be rational and aimed at killing ignorance; but on the contrary, it became a tool of 'protected ignorance'.

Mahatma Phuley and Dr B. R. Ambedkar were instrumental in effecting a paradigm shift from the mere acknowledgment of dogmatism of tradition to the effectiveness of the ritual practices as legitimized in the religious texts to hold their power in the minds of people at large. Mahatma Phuley pointed out the intricate relationship between knowledge and power, wherein he narrated many examples of the priestly class's exploitation of the Shudras and the untouchables. His writings, including the poetry, plays and other issues, are explicit in depicting structures of exploitation in nineteenth century Maharashtra. For Ambedkar, the political project of fighting untouchability was not merely to question the exclusive nature of caste practices/tradition, but also to bring out its self-centered proclamations and political designs that have sanction from the religious texts, as well as the ways in which cultural behaviours get reflected through series of caste behaviours. Ambedkar also terms 'caste is a perversion of varṇa' (Symbols of Hinduism, in *Writing and Speeches*, Vol. 3, p. 142, Govt. of Maharashtra), and critiques caste as hierarchy, and further observes the distinction between rules and principles that "Rules are practical; they are habitual ways of doing things according to prescription. But principles are intellectual; they are useful methods of judging things. Rules seek to tell an agent just what course of action to pursue. Principles do not prescribe a specific course of action" (Annihilation of Caste, *Writing and Speeches*, Vol. 1, p-75). The idea of caste as power is analyzed through the ideas of religion as set of rules and principles of command, and Ambedkar further writes, "What is called Religion by the Hindus is nothing but a multitude of commands and prohibitions" (Annihilation of Caste, p-75, vol 1, W & S, Govt. of Maharashtra). When Ambedkar's engagements with the modernity project question the rationale of behavioral practices of the high castes or caste-Hindus, Ambedkar systematically dissected the corpus of Brahmanical textual tradition, consequently the ideas of 'Gupta period' as 'golden age' completely gets rejected. It shows how Ambedkar rejected 'Brahmanical cultural nationalism' as a basis of understandings as well as a methodological tool to maintain intellectual dominance. For Ambedkar, fraternity became a mediating force in interrogating caste and its dominance. Brahmanical cultural nationalism failed to create

any fraternity and address the social injustices that were inflicted on the untouchable communities in India. For him, the project of nationalism never addressed social issues like untouchability, caste, hegemony, ideas of shared governance, and inclusive participation in nation-building.

Thus, the task for Ambedkar was to offer a discursive process of displacing the Brahmanic hegemony of understandings, and to provide an alternative framework based on rational means of understandings. One may argue that rationality is relative, and there is no doubt that it is; but its relativity depends on its objectives. If the objective of rationality is to kill ignorance then it becomes righteous rationality, and if the objective of rationality is not to kill ignorance then it becomes unrighteous rationality -- which becomes 'protected ignorance'. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the nature of formulations that would displace the discursive framework, which is neither Sanskritised nor would it re-legitimize divinity and make conditionality as a pre-destined existence of the present. At the same time, Ambedkar understood Marxism and its limitations in understanding the deeper meanings when it comes to cultural practices, since cultural behavior and the functioning of the mind are shaped by ideas that have religious sanction as well as an issue of mind-consciousness. Ambedkar observes that the socialists in India follow what Europeans have prescribed as an economic interpretation of history: "They propound that man is an economic creature, that his activities and aspirations are bound by economic facts, that property is the only source of power. They, therefore, preach that political and social reforms are but gigantic illusions and that economic reform by equalization of property must have precedence over every other kind of reform." ('Annihilation of Caste', p. 44, *Writings and Speeches, vol. 1*). He further adds, "That economic power is the only kind of power no student of human society can accept. That the social status of an individual by itself often becomes a source of power and authority is made clear by the sway which the Mahatmas have held over the common man. Why do millionaires in India obey penniless Sadhus and Fakirs? Why do millions of paupers in India sell their trifling trinkets which constitute their only wealth and go to Benares and Mecca? That religion is the source of power is illustrated by the history of India where the priest holds a sway over the common man often greater than the magistrate and where everything, even such things as strikes and elections, so easily take a religious turn and can so easily be given a religious twist" (Annihilation of Caste, *Writing & Speeches, Vol. 1*, p. 44). The text of 1936 shows Dr. Ambedkar's critique of Marxian methodology whereas in 1955, he compared Buddhism and Marxism, which became a seminal essay in the field of philosophy, and provided very insightful readings of both the theoretical traditions (Buddha or Karl Marx, *Writing & Speeches, Vol. 3*, pp- 441-462).

The power of religion is indeed so enormous that governing principles have set the rules in such a way that there is a complete blockage, as words or signifiers -- though they have their autonomy -- are arranged and contextualized in such a way that they are meant to be believed as real which has divine sanction, and its existence has a cause to make ignorance as hypersensitive reality of worldview, where conscious application of caste-rules give rise to pleasure principles of comfort -- in which it is projected as social-moral. Consequently, the divinity concept has a meaningful social implication: to advocate the Brahmanical perception of the present as well as the past. One of the best examples to understand this phenomenon would be to associate the sweeper community in the north India, who have been designated as Valmiki, after the writer of Rāmāyana, despite the fact that there is no evidence to prove that sage Valmiki was from the shudra varṇa; he himself claims to be the son of a pracheta (who was Brahmana) and a Bhardwaj Brahmin. It shows that the author was not from Shudra varṇa, but the twentieth century systematically made the author to be untouchable. Another sweeper community is also given the appellation of Sudarshan Samaj. In reality, no Sage Sudarshan either from the Mahābhārata or any other text mentions that he belonged to the Shudra varṇa. Similarly, the artisan community of Prajapati is designated as belonging to the divine architect but in reality, the varna-jāti division never allows such artisans' social group to have the same power of social behavior as that of a divine being or for that matter, the same status as that of a Brahmin or Kshatriya. Such irony, even after, in the post-colonial period, hardly gets discussed in the intellectual domain. All the Shilpa texts i.e. treatises on art and architecture, have profoundly categorized differences in the various meda on the basis of varna formulations, includes advocating of image worship as per the varṇas. (Shete Vijayanti, 'Expressive Theory of Caturvarna and the Shilpa texts: References to Caste and Gender' in *Art of Ancient India: Contextualizing Social Relations*, Eds. Shivaji Panikkar and Abha Sheth. M S University of Baroda, 2004.) Their theoretical conception was based on the four-fold division of the varṇa society that has gone into the making of the aesthetic perception.

Therefore, modernity has multiple strands and manifestations in the colonial period. At the political level, it was a struggle to advocate political democracy as a modern means to espouse the terrain of nation and nationality as a cosmetic adoption in caste-society without bringing any social change. Modernity, in such a context, needs to be reinvestigated as a systemic tool for maintaining the power relationship that operates within the caste hierarchy. While tradition, as put forth by the Brahmanical reconstruction of a cultural past, negates the ideas of modernity of criticality, at the same time, the Sanskritisation under the backdrop of the modernity generated the debate of cultural modernity that was confined to the idea of the greatness of tradition and was very urban-centric. Urban and non-urban have become the

subject of disseminations in pictorial language. The idea of village society, as advocated by M. K. Gandhi, remained a very romantic realism without addressing the caste perceptions. Village India as a social category gets highly exotic representation, more like an orientalized perception of the urban India. No artist could really think from a non-Gandhian perspective. It is in this context that the Gandhi and Ambedkar debates are extremely revealing as to how the two being located in the colonial modernity, the former adheres to the varnashramadharma whereas the latter was for the destruction of the caste-varṇa model. Dr Ambedkar makes a distinction between Ranade and Gandhi, -- he says, "In the age of Ranade the leaders struggled to modernize India. In the age of Gandhi the leaders are making her a living specimen of antiquity." At the same time, Ambedkar rejected the idea of 'inner voice' (Federation versus Freedom, *Writings & Speeches, Vol. 1*, p-352). The caste narratives of the post-Ambedkarite period are testimony to the fact that the country is a living specimen of antiquity.

Interestingly, intellectual and creative realms are directly and indirectly connected with the caste-Hindu perceptions. The pertinent question, then, would be to evaluate perceptual realities and perceptual understandings. Perceptual understanding empowers one to go into the analytical field of inquiries where value judgments become essential means to interrogate objectives as well as mental formulations. Even the claimed progressives including claimed socialists and liberals, both in the field of creative writings as well as art practices, remained within the fold of caste-perception of superiority and the Gandhian idea of 'inner voice'. The generic intellectual sphere of high-caste understandings dominated their (artists and intellectuals/caste-Hindus) worldview where a category of self-centric representation of new nation as the representation of normative/unchanged perceptions never gets questioned. Every realm was dominated by the static caste perception to an extent that they could never differentiate between the modernist project of Gandhi-Nehru and that of Phuley-Ambedkar. Ambedkar very vehemently opposed the Gandhian perception of morality that was based on following caste-duties as supreme ways of living. The caste-Hindu modernist absorbed uncritically the cultural nationalism of Gandhi. It percolated the minds of many because it was deeply rooted in the Brahmanical reconstructions and had no problems in accepting Gandhi as the sole representative of freedom struggle. Radhakrishnan finds Gandhi as a persona that represents the tradition of truthfulness and dutifulness; he says, "From śis of the Upaniṣads down to Tagore and Gandhi, the Hindu has acknowledged that truth wears vestures of many colors and speak in strange tongues" (*A Hindu View of Life*, p. 36, 1954). G. Aloysius explains that 'the political process in colonial India was dichotomous in an ideal-typical sense: the traditionally dominant communities of Brahmins and allied upper-castes brought together in terms of newly created economic and political interests, raised the slogan of nationalism when the British attempted to withdraw

their exclusive patronage (G. Aloysious, *Nationalism without a Nation in India*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p-216). G. Aloysious further observed that 'what came to be looked upon as the nationalist class was nothing but the disparate and traditionally dominant caste and communities gathered together in their interest to preserve their traditional dominance on the one hand and the lower caste masses, and to enlarge their area of dominance in the new political society on the other' (G. Aloysious, *Nationalism Without a Nation in India*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p-221).

Therefore, the discursive process was narrativised in the projection of Gandhi as the father of the nation. It is interesting to observe that the desire of the modernist as well as the post-colonialist has always been that of eulogizing Gandhi without any inference. There is no difference, no oppositional logic and, it is fixed to defend. Fixity and rigidity operate as a psyche, it's a finite consciousness to nurture aspects of ignorance to its finest level where any destabilization or questioning is not allowed. Projection of the figure of Gandhi is a fabulous example of bhataji-shethaji nexus (Brahman-priestly caste and the trading class). Even today, quite a number of artists have painted Gandhi in a celebratory mode. One of the contemporary painters, Sudhanshu painted Gandhi walking on a pointed saw, whereas in another painting he used the gardening water-pot as a marker of his community affiliations. According to him, when Gandhi was shot dead, the first person who held Gandhi from the ground was the gardener working in the premises of Gandhi's residence in New Delhi. It is interesting to observe that Sudhanshu could relate himself with the image of Gandhi very easily, however, the same does not exist when it comes to Mahatma Phuley who, too, was from the Gardener caste and was radical in his thinking and functioning. No post-colonialist, no modernists have shown any point of difference to the image of Gandhi. Those like Akeel Bilgrami and many others have showered considerable love on Gandhian ethics. Bilgrami refused to read any contradictions as well as problems in analyzing Gandhian ethics. (Akeel Bilgrami 'Value, Enchantment and the Mentality of Democracy, Some Distant Perspectives from Gandhi' in Bilagrami Akeel (Ed.), *Democratic Culture*, pp 23-63, 2011). Gandhi's love for the Shastras (sacred scriptures) is a testimony to the fact that his understanding was deeply rooted in the religious dogmas of the sacredness of the caste institution.

Ramkinker Baij, a sculptor from Bengal from the Shudra community, showed courage to be different and did not allow his conscious to accept the normative understanding of Gandhi. He created a huge sculpture of a walking Gandhi in the Shantiniketan premises between 1953-55. He produced a number of key models as a precursor to this sculpture. The huge image of Gandhi by Ramkinkar remained the sole example from a modernist who refused to accept Gandhi's persona as that of an extraordinary person. A huge image of Gandhi has been constructed on a big pedestal. A human skull is placed under the feet of Gandhi.

According to him, “Gandhi became Mahatma by crushing people”. Ramkinkar revealed his statement when Ritwik Ghatak made a documentary showing Ramkinkar before the colossal image of Gandhi and explaining the importance of human skull. He was the only artist who decoded the Gandhian achievements by placing the skull under the feet of tall, towering Gandhi image in Shantiniketan. It was a very systemic intervention by a sculptor whose ideas were rooted in the pragmatic understanding, and not in romanticizing the icons of so-called freedom struggle.

The post-independent modernist project of formalism became a convenient tool of vibrancy in the plasticity of the painting but subject matter such as suffering- mainly the social suffering gets represented through Christ, and by the depiction of a common man whose identity is totally concealed as a part of the conscious preferred symbolic gesture to maintain disconnect from the social realities. Abstraction was another form of expression that received considerable attention as a part of the derivation from the European art movements.

Post-colonialist has projected Gandhi as an icon against the colonial rule or colonial supremacy. There appears to be an obsession to consider or legitimize each and every figure that is part of anti-colonial struggle. Postulation is directed to scheme the narrative of caste-Hindu hegemony with the idea to blame the colonial world. Leela Gandhi observes, ‘if Gandhi speaks in an anachronistic religiopolitical vocabulary, Fanon’s idiom is shot through with Sartre’s existential humanism,’ and she concludes that Gandhi’s encounter with British imperialism generates a theology of non-violence (Leela Gandhi, *Post-Colonial Theory*, p-18, OUP). It is extremely insensitive to make claims regarding the emergence of a theology of non-violence as such signifiers have emerged outside the field of Gandhi’s own writings. Readings are structured well within the ‘re-called’ or ‘process of remembering’. While recalling the memories of colonial struggle, Leela Gandhi does not go into a body of writings that were produced by Gandhi himself, nor do they look into the subjective fields of operations during colonial rule in India. It is a state of conscious adherence to the normative understanding espoused by the physicality of caste perception, where there is an ego of caste and the consciousness of dominance to subscribe to the rhetorical uncritical inference that would protect consistently the agency of hegemony. A theology of non-violence when located within the Gandhian notion of Sanatani Hinduism, dislodges the claims of theology; as for the fact that Gandhi (Young India, October 1921) claims he is a Sanatani Hindu because he believes in the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and all the other Hindu scriptures, and therefore Gandhi believed in idea of avatār (reincarnations of gods) and re-birth. Gandhi equates non-violence to the truth but the very belief system in which Gandhi is deeply rooted

does not venture an understanding of truth; nevertheless, truth is understood from the notion of divinity and sacredness of belief systems. The caste narratives completely dislodge the Gandhian theology of non-violence.

While writing in Harijan newspaper on August 2, 1942, Gandhi wrote that he would not ask Congress leaders to make untouchable legislators, a minister; protection mechanism for the marginalized should not be extended to such a level that it prove harmful for them and for the country. For Gandhi, having a minister from the untouchable community in the government was deemed as harmful for the nation, indicating how Gandhi's and the Indian National Congress's ideas were governed by caste considerations. As for the fact that they were opposing oppression by the Colonial ruler, they were, on the other hand, protecting the native landlords who were exploiters. The other non-Gandhian Brahmanical voices become 'the others' i.e. outside the fold of Gandhi-Congress. Otherness in the anti-colonial struggle is not contemplated as real, and democratic, instead, a very convenient nomenclature of 'casteness' (today the nomenclature is castewalas) shows how the ego works in the intellectual sphere. There is always considerable studied silence as and when contradictions within the persona of Gandhi get discussed. An attempt has also been made as to how Gandhi can be understood within the praxis of Marx and modernity (see *Marx, Gandhi, and Modernity*, Ed. by Akeel Bilgrami, Tulika Books, 2014). There is no desire to interrogate the moral and the political. There is an acceptance of the repressive caste structure as a position of power, in order to control discourse and the power of discourse. Therefore, the so-called intellectuals who are involved in the knowledge production process, are creating a discourse as 'protected ignorance'.

How the experience of suffocation and oppression becomes a fundamental tool of intervention to address issues of 'protected ignorance' is exemplified in the works of J. Nandakumar. After considerable time, Nandakumar had to rethink his painting practices, and looked to Savi Sawarkar, who emerged as an important figure in Indian contemporary art. Nandakumar's constant engagement with his own society and many literary young people, started thinking about societal figures of importance. His disagreements with ideas of Gandhi become a point of departure. The entire Ambedkarite community in the state of Maharashtra as well as outside never accepted Gandhi. Their displeasure emerged out of their self-realized realization that emerged out of Ambedkarite consciousness of self-intervention where the self is not merely introspective but a self-resolve of conscious self to depart from the burden of antique past. Nandakumar painted 'Gandhi after the Poona-Pact'. Recalling the historical pact between Gandhi and Ambedkar, J. Nandakumar painted Gandhi, not as a

crusader of nationalist narratives, but a destroyer of political rights of the scheduled castes. Gandhi and the Congress opposed the demand as put forth by Dr Ambedkar for the political rights of the depressed communities in the form of separate electorates. The fundamental question would be: is the subject so blind that it would not speak against the politically charged morality of suppressiveness? The history of the Round Table Conference tells us that the Indian National Congress had agreed to the communal award for Muslims and others, but refused the same to the scheduled castes. J. Nandakumar created the pictorial representation of Gandhi as the lean and thin person he was, emerging from the foreground. At the backyard where a flat reclining traumatized image of a Dalit (untouchable) is painted, distress is conveyed by mere postural simplicity which emerged out of a conscious field drawn on varied possibilities of signifiers, close to the experience of graded inequalities. On the other hand, Gandhi has trampled upon the other body of a Dalit, Gandhi's walking stick is converted into a trident and a lance piercing into the body of Dalit signifying a very systemic, traumatic death of the political rights of the oppressed. Gandhi has multiple heads shown in a horizontal tier. Representation of multiple heads are drawn from the mythic figural representations, here a caricatured image of Gandhi is an imposition coming from the traditional reading of the image tradition. The trauma of the Dalit is not an obsession, but a glaring reality of life, to create fields of pictorial signifiers to revisit the historical event in colonial India. The trauma of crushing the Dalit is visited in every sphere, including public and private spaces, therefore, the public and private become one to perpetuate violence. Violence becomes an embodiment of caste narratives. Nandakumar claims that it was his reaction after reading 'Poona-Pact' between Gandhi and Ambedkar. Many in India could not understand what a 'separate electorate' was, historians like Bipin Chandra would love to term it as a colonial policy of divide and rule. (Chandra Bipin, 1989, *India's Freedom Struggle*, p-290-291) However, the Dalits in India viewed the event as a killing of their political rights. Distress created by the historical event changed the scenario in India where a choice of the candidate in a reserved constituency meant for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (i.e. Dalits and Adivasis) was imposed by the dominant groups rather than those representing the interest of the communities. Many followers of Dr. Ambedkar constantly evoke this event, but distress has impacted future political conduct. Remembering is to revisit the trauma of ongoing life, a continual process which leads to dislike of Gandhi and others. The grotesque caricature of Gandhi has emerged out of an inverse political understanding of nationalist narratives. Isolation is an experience deeply synthesized within the marked pattern of everyday behavior based on the verbal language as a sacred tradition but the consciousness of isolation is converted into a potential field of signifiers to project the non-normative field of inquiries that are directed to understand diametrically opposed to inequalities, caste and its grotesque realities. The desire of neglect has been an integral part

of the subverted text of the nationalist narratives. Thus, as the image of Gandhi as a crusader of non-violence gets questioned, it also seriously questions the notion of the theology of non-violence as it has been termed by Leela Gandhi (Gandhi Leela, *Post Colonial Theory*, 1999, p-18). Leela Gandhi, Akeel Bilgrami, and Bipin Chandra etc. never draw their references from non-English sources where Gandhi has been analyzed differently by the 'others'. Critiques of Gandhi are based on historical evidence and its reading, which reveals how contemporary leaders expressed their displeasure over Gandhi and his political outfits (see Bali, A. R. *Ambedkar Banam Gandhi*, Hindi, reprint 2000). The image of Gandhi gave rise to a storm in the Mumbai art-world: J. Nandakumar's exhibition was shut down; neither critics nor custodians of the opposition to censorship or cultural policing in India came forward to discuss his works, or even bothered to take cognizance of his work.

In the recently painted second version, Gandhi's iconography continues but this time he reads Gandhi very differently, making him like a Hindu God Shiva though Gandhi was a devoted Vaishnavite. A snake coming out of his neck and frightening Dalit marks the striking representation of the oppression, fear, and might of the caste-Hindus whose hate-consciousness is deeply embedded in invisibility. It is a very powerful representation of Gandhi in the minds of Ambedkarites who would not like to be part of Gandhism. It also signifies the events in the political sphere in the post-independent India where Gandhi's 'Harijan' ideology becomes a syndrome and an imposing factor to make Dalits stand in front of the Congress and other political outfits with a begging bowl for all time.

Nandakumar's pictorial quest went on to explore religious terrain, he observed the way in which the sage/Baba culture exploit the followers who are predominantly caste-Hindus. Narrative of caste become a fluid category, which is just not confined to the self but can extend to and encompass the entire life of people and how they are made to be ignorant. Though it is a congregation of caste, it became their everyday narrative of spirituality where caste functions as backdrop. As elucidated earlier, 'spirituality' emerged as a powerful discourse in the colonial period. Cultural practices of blind faith often get defended on the basis of spirituality. The likes of Radhakrishnan would consider spirituality as a compulsory persuasion to maintain non-violence of the nation in the making. The Brahmanical mindset has created various Babas, Sadhus, and Gurus. Hardly any post-colonial artist dared to paint them in the manner of J. Nandakumar. His paintings offer a range of iconic formulations to exhibit how the Gurus amassed wealth through their so-called spiritual discourses of keeping blatant ignorance, to build the empire of the economy to justify their spirituality. Today, the stock market has become the easy way for investments where capital can be generated, and the easy flow of liquidity can be channelized to sermonize the den of

ignorance and superstition. One of the contemporary Babas is shown along with the customary icon of stock exchange i.e. bull and a ram. The dynamism of figural bodies has a subtle implication. The element of pleasure fantasy is not superficial. Diagonally divided space is filled with operative concepts of structured realities decoded with the figure of a Baba clad in the customary orange drapery indicative of self-possessed plentitudes and meanings. The nexus between so-called spirituality and economics has patterns of the manifestations of religious orthodoxy. The dramatic space setting like a stagecraft has operative concepts of meanings that is self-generated by the pictorial imaginations but is of deep-seated ideological parlance. The drapery of the Baba though, is highly simplified like a simple triangle, rectangles, and cylinder, create the intended visual tactility. The power to draw such figure lies in the economy of construction of visible instinct and expressiveness to articulate one's medium to the maximum advantage by maintaining its strategic meaning and readability. J. Nandakumar's critique of spirituality as the discursive frame is formulated on the premise of the writings of Mahatma Phuley and Dr. Ambedkar.

As discussed earlier, modernist painters have not addressed the issue of caste in their pictorial representation, as their pedagogic persuasions and political understandings would forbid them to think differently. Savi Sawarkar happened to be the first gallery artist who challenged the very discourse of Brahmanical cosmetic modernity and its aesthetic canons. Savi created his own iconographic signifiers to signify the social identity of the untouchable community. It is not merely social but political as well as aesthetical which is designed to make the viewer realise as to how he aimed to hit spectators with his volatile images that shake perception of the caste-Hindus. His personal intervention in creating iconographic symbols had its genesis in the historical location of the community. By the time Savi started painting, Dalit life narratives had emerged as a powerful means to explore the world of caste narratives which show realities of life. 'Three Untouchables under the black Sun' is a telling work that makes a profound statement of abject poverty and conditionality in which the untouchable community live their life. Black sun is a symbolic representation of darkness in the daylight that forbids untouchables to have any freedom. The sun is a generative symbol of brightness and a ray of hope. Its embedded property of emanation of light and energy quality is a testimony to how the Sun's presence is important and gives energy to everyone. But, in the life of the untouchable, no such luxury exists. Though it operates at imaginary level, the critique of havenots as defined by the caste in the society is a glaring physical and material fact of life of the community. It is interesting to see a parallel in the caste life autobiographical narrative by Laxman Mane, the author of 'Upara'. Mane's narrative shows the startling condition of his community living on the outskirts and garbage of village and city.

It is exactly in the similar manner, Savi's painting show precisely the same narrative of caste-life and the ways in which a particular caste has to survive even in the post-colonial situation.

After Savi listened to a song by Dr. Tulsiram, professor in JNU 'manuā mah thagvā ham janireā aur kais kaisā rās āras iye', he realized how Manu was a villain of the Dalits and others. Around 1990, there was the large-scale atrocity near Agra where Savi also visited. It moved Savi with lot of anger and hate towards the ideas of caste and its legitimacy. He discovered how Manu was a generator of such heinous life and how it is an idea that goes in the everyday caste narrative of caste-Hindus. His series of visual representations of Manu offers how ignorance is being propounded by the Brahmanical ethos, where past and the present are deeply entrenched in psychotic perversions. For him, Ambedkar becomes cardinal figure of inspiration that critiqued Manu in the strongest possible manner. 'Dalit Pissing on Manu' is an indicative of rejection of Manu by the Ambedkarite society. There exists an inherent nature of image that is symbolic but at the same time, it is equally real. There is a desire to create an imagery that will not be transcendental but more physical and real, which will force the viewers to rethink their thick-skinned caste practices and behavior. Symbolic, in this case, is just an idea to denote the caste-Hindu who is absent in the pictorial space but is part and parcel of violence that is imposed, codified and practiced as normative. The perception of the caste-Hindu is that of otherness and exclusion. Their ego is reflected through violence and imposed codes of conduct.

All his earlier works on the figure of the Devadasi had a very different narrative quality of showing cardinal events, emphasizing on the caste-narrative ordeal through tormented and sexual exploitations. Many found his works extremely hard hitting. In later works, the element of caste-violence takes a different turn. Without compromising on the quality of expression, Savi's endeavor of caste-narrative explores the language of minimalism loaded with background of caste-narratives. Devadasi is shown eloped with the body of a Brahman. Here embrace has a dual meaning, one is that of control of the Brahmins of their social orders. On the other hand, the second meaning is connected with the lust of a Brahmin who would not like the Devadasi to go out of its fold. Perversion is a very fundamental aspect of the sexuality when it comes to the heinous practice of Devadasi. Embrace of the Devadasi with the Brahmin body is indicative of the Brahmanic control over her own body, and at the same time, the Devadasi extending her hand out of Brahmin body and holding of the dhammacakra shows the transformation. It is very important to understand the complex nature of sexuality operating through the religious institution and the way it is nurtured as a part of male dominance of pleasure, where a young adolescent girl is initiated as Devadasi, who is first enjoyed by the priest and later, the chief patron, mainly the landlords consisting

of Lingayats and Marathas. One will have to recall the ways in which psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakkar analyses the nature of upbringing in the society (Kakkar Sudhir, *The Inner World*, OUP). For Kakkar, the ideal of the Hindu household is that of the following of the Rama-Sita ideal; however, the tradition and practice of Devadasi completely denounces the example of Rama-Sita ideal in the Indian society. Mythic becomes an ideal that never gets disseminated through the idea of killing ignorance. Moral self becomes a self-reflective category of ignorance embedded in the caste-ridden perception and ideals of caste livings. In fact, the Puranic tradition and larger Hindu traditions do not allow the followers to be enlightened being as there is a fear that there would be the collapse of 'agency', which would not suffice the egoist male to exercise sexual perversions. Life of a Devadasi is very traumatic, Savi brings their trauma through the physicality of the body, it is a desired body and a mutilated body. Devadasis undergo series of abortions; Savi captures graphic representation by using the static body with a surgical cut mark on the stomach.

Intervention through caste is not just confined to one set of the community. But when others too venture into such thematic expression, it offers the viewers another side of the caste practices. Lokesh Khodke produced couple paintings after his engagement with the Ambedkarite NGO. When Lokesh got exposed to writings of Phuley and Ambedkar, he finds his own Brahmanic caste-narrative tradition extremely problematic and equally draconian in nature. His painting on 'Trivikrama' is an apt example of the brutality with which the imagery of Trivikrama is guarded by the Brahmin household. It exhibits as to how the Brahmin caste family closely guard the mythic narration of the Trivikrama and despite understanding its violent nature, how they are tutored to bypass such thought process as part of the sacredness of the Brahmanical traditions. Lokesh diligently explored his personal caste-narrative to present a critic of the Brahmin household.

The other appropriate example would be Shukla Sawant's work on Pandita Ramabai.

Shukla Sawant is one among many female artists in the country who prefer to defy hegemony as well as take meaning into the category of representation as a systemic tool to convey a critique of meaningful dialogue between spectators and her art works. Ramabai, one of the most educated women of her time, dared to defy conventional social practices and more importantly, she presented a critique of Manusmriti after Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Pule. Shukla Sawant is the only artist in the country who created works around Pandita Ramabai as a very unmythic critic of the psyche of unequal behavioral thinking. For the first time a three-dimensional motif of arthi has been used in a series of installations with the use of photographs. All the photographs show the dead feet tied with thread, which is

normally done after death and when the dead body is placed on arthi. It is a painful sight in reality. All photographs are covered with transparent acrylic glass and each is being held by arthi, projecting out of the picture space. This is the most uncommon representation of the signifiers that are exclusively associated with the dead, but for Sawant, despite the death of a person, the ideals are always revisited and revisiting the death of Pandita Ramabai is an act of reaffirming the notions of defying the traditional dictatorial attitude of the male dominance of Brahmanical society. More importantly, the installation on the back wall was covered with long curtains signifying how everything is silenced in the name of chastity.

There are many emerging painters who have consciously chosen to make caste as a framework to evolve their pictorial language such as Jaya Daronde, Pavan Kumar based in Kurukshetra, Rajanish, Navaneet from Delhi, Vinu and Baiju from Kerala.

Photography is another medium where stark realities of life can be captured by the sustained engagement with the subject of caste. Orientalist attitude has been the part of photographic engagement in India. The technical aspect of light and darkness, illuminating effects are all part of the formal language of photography. What is important to note is the exoticism that gets attached with the photographic images. Many in India captured exotic nature of existence in the photographic frame as real as well as romantic, their engagement with the social subject has a lens of mere outside observer. Sudhakar Olwe moved from the exotic photographic images to stark realities of Indian lives of the Dalits by capturing their caste-living narratives. His engagement as photographer is to make statement of inhuman ordeal of the life shaped by the caste considerations and their enforced caste life. Sudhakar Olwe, getting constantly engaged with caste subject as part of his social and professional commitment, made series of photographs on the conservancy workers of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation. Images captured in stark contrasting natural light of conservancy workers involved in the dirt and filth is of the necked reality of their conditionality, and manual scavenger in the metropolitan city of democratic India. Though political democracy and equality are always proudly evoked to claim emergence of the modern nation, but the condition of lower caste when gets represented through a medium of photography, there cannot be multiple sets of reading of the images. Symbolic nature of the representation is completely subsumed in the realistic capturing of picture space and the subject of caste is used to unfold the nature of the hierarchical structure of the society. Similarly, Sudhakar has made numerous photographic images of Kamathipura, the area of prostitution. Dirt, discomfort, dinginess are all part of the Kamathipura where prostitutes reside to earn their living out of selling their body. Sudhakar has captured very vivid practices of their living such as the relationship of a prostitute with her husband as well as her boyfriend and how both

are part of her life including when she died. It's very emotionally charged images. Those image representations diminish the perception of the idea of sexual desire, instead, omnipresence of perverseness enters in through such pictorial representations.

Thus caste when becomes an intervening tool in the pictorial language, it makes radical departure from the conventional aesthetic canon of beauty, instead, stark realities of life bring forth the real nature of the society, it challenges the very formalistic modernity and its aesthetic canons.

The intellectual politics of homogeneity of tradition denied the multiplicity while making tradition as of projecting the nationalist aspirations. The nature of understandings has produced monologues of privileges and the space for articulations gets reduced to the nationalist imaginations, which make representations timid and devoid of 'others' or for that matter the lower castes. The claimed post-colonial subjective realm hardly produced any capacity to address the difference or offer a constructive critique of hegemonic thinking as being practiced by the Indian natives, and completely bypassed the issues of representations, making the knowledge formation process as part of 'protected ignorance'.

There are several bodies of work produced as part of conceptual framework of 'Post-Colonial'. But its objective formulations are never discussed. It becomes a convenient tool to maintain native hegemony, and at the same time makes it difficult to accept such conceptual frame-work as an effective and righteous means of understandings or for that matter, to evolve a different world devoid of oppressive, hegemonic readings. The seminal essay of Spivak is one such example in this regard and therefore, the hegemony of language needs to be investigated.

'Can the subaltern Speak?'

The title itself explains the state of the so-called subaltern. Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak's seminal essay became a key to disseminating and disentangling the complex process of who speaks for whom (Spivak Gayatri Chakravarty, 'Can the subaltern Speak' in (Eds.) Cary Nelson & Lawrence Grossberg, *Marxist Interpretation of Culture*, 1988, reprint). Literary products are one of the essential means to examine the issues of 'speaking'. Speaking may or may not have definite connotation in terms of its singular entity, but when contextualized within the praxis of the political sphere, perhaps the word 'speaking' acquires a very definite connotation. 'Speaking', is an element that is in the constant flux that also produces very

different but varied experiences. Experiential realities are expressed through the expressible language. The more pertinent question here would be who are the subalterns and how do we understand and categorize both subaltern and subaltern experiences? In the Indian context, the term has gained considerable currency in categorizing a body of literature, but taking resort to a sweeping generalization, has made the category a very generic one. Making claims of subaltern has also produced a category that in itself defies hegemony. It is understood within the realms of locating opposition to the hegemony but 'whose hegemony' itself becomes a critical tool of analysis within the larger literary works. These are more serious questions that draw our attention to the conceptual category of the subaltern. It may be noted that Dr. Ambedkar defines caste as not only division of labour but also division of labourers (*Writing & Speeches, vol. 1, p-47*). Thus, the word subaltern itself is the most problematic nomenclature for the category as it fails to capture the concept of division of labourers. So, in other words, the very rubric of subaltern itself completely bypasses the existential realm of direct experience of the division of labourers. Who speaks for whom is defined by the body of literature produced by the Ambedkarite section of the Indian society in the Marathi language. It argues for the power of articulations rather than for the space for articulations. The subjective position cannot always be mere a 'source of opinion' in the state of language, as signifiers that are drawn from the available vocabulary that is widely in circulation and yet at the same time may not be available to others. 'Source of opinion' is based not only on the nature of language, but its assumed subjective position.

Debjani Ganguli observes 'that post-orientalist projects such as Subaltern Studies have opened up ways of reading caste, ways that unsettle hegemonic articulations of it in terms of lack, as containing within it almost everything that marks South Asia's slow pace en route to modernity' (Ganguli Debjani, *Caste and Dalit Lifeworlds Postcolonial Perspectives*, p-114, Orient Longman, 2005). As has been observed above, the subaltern, being a very generic category, does not empower us to understand meaningfully the literature produced by the Dalits in the state of Maharashtra and elsewhere. Blatant reliance on subaltern studies without its critical application has produced dogmatic and hegemonic understandings. The body of literature produced is/are part of defiance of mere 'speaking' or space for articulations. It is a product of a conflict to replace hegemony by equilateral principle as well as to replace the very process of hegemony itself. It is not a project of the self, but a project of the non-self where critical inquiry is to interrogate the present and the past simultaneously. Subaltern, being a fluid category, cannot explain the specificities of untouchability as well as the normative of the hierarchical society.

Debjani Ganguli further writes that Ambedkar and Dalit life worlds are 'mythographies' (see chapter 'Dalit Mythographies' in *Caste and Dalit Lifeworlds Postcolonial Perspectives*, p-129-

154, Orient Longman, 2005). She completely disregards not only the ways literature is produced but also shows abject poverty of mind that emanates from caste-position itself under the nomenclature of the 'post-colonial and post-modern', along with complete lack of understanding the politics of history as well as the ways in which Brahmanical past gets constructed. Debjani Ganguly's text can best be compared with what Arun Shourie has produced in recent times i.e. *Worshipping False God*. It is an apt example of post-modern Purana. She very meticulously reveals the rupture and fissure as conceptual categories without analyzing the self or non-self. There is no attempt on her part to make/use self-introspection as a critical frame to analyze the normative. And the worst is that the likes of Homi Bhabha are in complete agreement with what Debjani Ganguli has produced (see Homi Bhabha's comment at the back cover page of the book). To categorize 'caste' as the everyday life is an intellectual perversion; caste itself is an everyday psychotic perversion.

Dalit literature in the state of Maharashtra challenges the idea of 'the Marathi' language. It is a conflict between the accepted idea of language and the language in circulation. The idea of expression of untouchability, thus, can not be a mere opinion conveyed in the expressible words, as their formulations are based on the idea of the protagonist's, located in the ideas of others. It has to explore the untouched territory of the normative of the other groups. Addressing the self in the literature of autobiographies/poems is not a claim of abject conditionality, but to displace the language of hegemony by bringing in the signifiers of the cultural hegemony and the covered truth, and uncovering the hierarchical functioning. One of the well-known poets Loknath Yashavant's poem called 'Bhimrao Meshram chi kavita' (Poem of Bhimrao Meshram) he writes-

'.... after our conversation, she takes a long kiss on my lips which shout loudly for giving name of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to Marathwada University.

When I ask for water, she offers me in a separate glass and quickly puts to wash, this always raises questions in me.

When I start leaving she wipes out her lips by tongue, I am yet to decode/understand the washing of glass and wiping of lips by her tongue.'

This example explains the idea of untouchability that goes on in the mind of a Brahmin girl despite being in love with an untouchable boy. The life expressed in the poetry is evolved through the caste-life narrative experiences of the self as well as his own community. It is an expression of disguised psychological inheritance of hierarchical values that one is culturally conditioned in. It's a continuity of experiential realm that goes on to show how poets have

encapsulated simple words to define the social action that has been shaped by the cultural values and conditions. Violence, not in its physical sense of the term, but inflicted through the mental realm of the normative which has resonance in the normative of social behavior. Imaginative realm here is not inherently subjective (personal) but has emerged out of objective manifestation of multifold ignorance as reflected through codes of conduct.

To uncover the layers of multifold ignorance, physical intimacy has been employed in order to read sexuality as a social category embedded in the category of physical desire. The perversion of caste mindset is not located in the pervasive force of colonial ideologies, as it has in the pre-colonial past and is still being diligently practiced in many ways by the caste-Hindus. Mental realm of violence is a pervasive force that has not been so far displaced by any categorical replacement as such. Language as an important tool of communicative meaning symbolized in social action that is prevalent among the caste-Hindus.

Tensions and ambiguities are important factors to understand the dynamics of relationships. Ambiguity in the behavior of the girl and tension in the mind of the protagonist are directed to uncover the fallacy of uninterrupted history of inheritance. Such inheritance is revealed in the present action. Time in this context may be a semiotic unit of time but it reflects the problematic(s) of a hegemonic mind-consciousness.

The idea of savage is being debated by many post-colonial critics and acclaimed theoreticians as a colonial hangover as well as an imposed colonial code. However, 'savage' needs to be interrogated in the context of an evaluative process of language itself. Certain terms such as dhede, chudas, etc. denote caste affiliations and are used as caste-markers. It is hegemony that produces such signifiers, thus making signifiers absorbed into its social site where the power of contestations is devalued and overpowered by dominance. The above two terms are outcomes of caste-violence and are embedded in the savagery of society. Thus, signifier as social field has greater potential than the autonomous instability of its meaning formulations, because meanings are generated through mental formulations. Mental formulations, though essentially social constructs, signify the pervasiveness of a stratified social field when the signification process is associated with the intentional dominance of divine sanction. The specificity in such terms never gets diminished in the pre- as well as post-colonial time. No momentariness is attached to social field of signifiers as they are imposed on material formations as well as their existence in the social space.

Cultural identity depends on creating a repository of cultural practices. Ideological formulations are central to cultural identity. In the aforementioned poem, the protagonist is

critical of the dominance as well as enforced domination. Characters are, though fictitious, embedded in structured hierarchy where the protagonist interrogates the gestures of the girl who belongs to the upper-caste milieu, and makes his own position very conspicuous as a follower of Dr Ambedkar.

Language as a means of expressions has underlying its numerous mental formulations formed as 'expressible' means of communications. The post-colonial theoretical formulations in understanding the mental formulations are insufficient to address the issues of hegemony that are being contested through means of 'expressible language' (i.e. inherit power to express or indicate possibility of meaning formulation in accepted linguistic group). Cognition, thus, becomes a process that gets associated with certain particulars (group/community/class) and therefore, it is devoid of a critique of internal hegemony. Creative expressions empower the investigation of cognition within mental realms where the construction of language with minimal words in poetry becomes a powerful means to dislodge the hegemonic thinking. Recalling the process of writing is to define beyond 'self', where expressions are meaningful mental formulations, in order to shatter the self-normative that has been created over a period of time. The normative is a process that remains unquestioned whereas the post-colonial critic argues 'mythograph' as an essential characteristic for the expression of most powerfully produced literature around the life of untouchables, re-legitimizes the hegemonic thinking that does not go beyond normative. Articulating resistance is not just carrying on of a dialogue but also an effective means of contesting hegemony and the normative that has been instrumental in the theoretical formulation of the acclaimed post-colonialist. Thus, the self gets represented in the perception of others where language as generic metaphor with minimal signifiers is fired to dislodge the poetics of the normative as well as hegemony.

In a recently published poem, Kiran Kashinath writes-

Puri basti dahashat me thi Sham hote hi
Pulis basti me fail gai
Ek bujurg dabi awaz me kaha raha tha 'dekhana,
ab ham police protection me mare jayenge'.

- The entire locality was under terror
As dusk fell, the police spread through out the locality

One elder said in a hugged voice-

Look

Now we will be killed in police protection.

The 'minimal' use of words in a simplistic composition defies the idea of post-colonial condition as conducive for coexistence and living the present marred with political danger. Genocide, under the administration, has become the order of the day. Nevertheless, how many caste-Hindus have been killed in riots that are supported by the administration? The poet raises very serious questions and makes visible the ways in which identities are tormented. Such agony and suffering are responsible for producing a systemic mental image that is gained from the series of experiences. The action in this poem is yet to take place but the gravity of situation has been presented by a graphic representation of the traumatic past experiences that gets inflicted by hegemonic perceptions and inferences that have grown over a period of time. The pre and post-colonial conditions are similar, where vulnerable groups are under constant threats. The threat in the poem is forthcoming but the communication of a holocaust of mass killing is an event that is being projected as experiential future having the traits of past. Often struggle for survival and cultural identity are subversive categories that are never addressed in the post-colonial conceptual formulations as they come from those who are the most affected. Thus, trauma of the present is not only mere representation of the violent means of control but also a systemic tool for imposing any negotiation outside any space for a dialogue. Alienation is not a creation of colonial condition but has been in place from pre-colonial times and one of the best examples of alienation is wiping out the Buddhist memory from the minds of the Indian. Moreover, the alienation is also caused by the native hegemonic forces in order to have an absolute control. The above poem hints at alienation by the action of the police and hushed voice of the elder. The voice of expected termination of life under the garb of police protection is a brutal thought. Such a brutality is an act of conscious mind that has evolved over a period of time. Neither the post-modernists nor the post-colonialists have interrogated the brutality of the native hegemony's power game. Though the poem only anticipates action of brutality, it reminds us as to how hegemony works and destroys the masses and how there is going to be absence of their own self forever. It's a representation of the absence that is being wiped out in the present. Dominance, therefore, is an instrument that initiates the hierarchy as essential means of conservation; the Dalit literary production defies that domination and aims at alternatives that have the project of enlightenment based on the values. Value judgments are often critiqued as they are dependent on choices and rationality but essentially they are language formulations based on the nature of the objectives.