

## Thus Spoke the Mouth: Problematizing Dalit Voice in Selected Poems

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**Abstract :** Dalit writing is the interventionalist voice of the dispossessed subaltern in the cultural economy of the society. As such, Dalit writing, including Dalit poetry, considers the contradictions that permeate the socio-cultural structure historically allocated and religiously sanctioned in the Indian subcontinent. As an epicenter of all Dalit experiences of trauma and violence, the poetics the Dalit body is deeply rooted in the peripheral space socially assigned to it by anachronistic caste-based litigation. An appraisal of Dalit creative-critical work by writers like Sharan Kumar Limbale, Arjun Dangle, Namdeo Dhasal, Om Prakash Valmiki, Muktibodh and others underscore the conjunction of the physical, psychical and the psychological in their interpretation of Dalit consciousness. They put forward the idea that Dalit poetry is begotten by the trauma of societal oppression and therefore, Dalit language and its revitalization are two elements obdurately linked to Dalit poetics. The present research paper seeks to read the problematization of the Dalit agency through the conduit of the Dalit voice wherein the anatomical category of the mouth is closely related to the question of Dalit identity. Theoretically aligned to Heidegger's notion of language as the house of being and Bachelard's assertion of a house as an ideal metaphor of poetic imagination and Dylan Trigg's view of the coeval existence of space and body, the paper examines a series of selected poems by Dalit poetic voices to examine how their distinct Dalit point of view underscores Dalit speech and directs our attention to the historical abstraction of it. The paper further examines how speech as a category in Dalit writing places the Dalit somatic entity as a site of contestation with the 'Mouth' as a loaded symbolic category inspiring rebellion and resistance. And as the quintessential purpose of Dalit literature is the unleashing of Dalit voice from the anti-verbal domain of social decrepitude, Dalit poetry needs to be critically read based on the experience of the mouth and the patois.

**Keywords :** Dalit, poetry, speech, mouth, subaltern, minority, exploitation, space

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