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Going Beyond Protest and Revolt: Literary Merits of Outcaste: A Memoir

Dr. Vandana Pathak

Associate Professor, & HOD, Department of English,
L.A.D. & Smt.R.P. College for Women, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India

Abstract:

Dalit autobiographies have been written by marginalized people belonging to the grass roots of the Indian society. They are at the lowest rung of the Indian social hierarchy. Narendra Jadhav's Outcaste: A Memoir is one of the most well known and, widely translated Dalit autobiography. It is a testament of Ambedkarite movement in Maharashtra and a socio-cultural-historical document of Dalit protest, revolt, acceptance, rejection and Dalit consciousness. Many research papers have been written highlighting the poverty, hunger, exploitation, discrimination, violation of human rights, atrocities and physical violence endured by the protagonist and his family members and how the protagonist protested and revolted against it seeking human status and equality in the society. Yet this Dalit autobiography has never been analyzed as a literary text. This paper is a humble effort to enlist, analyze and showcase the literary and aesthetic merits of the oeuvre.

Keywords: Dalit, Dalit Autobiography, Similes, Metaphors, Deixis, Reality Effect, Bardic Effect,

Outcaste: A Memoir is written by Dr. Narendra Jadhav. It occupies a prominent place in Dalit literature and has been translated into many languages worldwide. It is an authentic document of protest, revolt, Dalit consciousness, Ambedkarite Movement and philosophy. It has proved its merits on the touchstone of tenets of Dalit literature-revolt, *Vedana* and *Vidroha*, acceptance and rejection. Yet it possesses a number of literary merits. This paper is an effort to trace the literary merits of this oeuvre.

The very title of Narendra Jadhav's *Outcaste: A Memoir* brings out its uniqueness. It is an English translation of *Amcha Baap aan Amhi*. The "personalized saga" deals with the first person perspective of Jadhav's parents - Damu Mahar and Sonubai. Jadhav required a prolonged period of 19-20 years to publish this autobiography. This text has an interesting genesis and that explains the delay caused in its publication. After his retirement, Jadhav's father, Dada (Damu Mahar), had a lot of time on his hands,

With his penchant for fixing things, this virtually illiterate, rugged man turned his attention to 'repairing' all the gadgets in the house, including those in perfect working order. Out of a desire to keep him from being a nuisance, as his sixth and youngest child, I persuaded him to write his 'Memoir'. At the beginning, he was reluctant but writing soon caught his fancy and he continued the exercise for many years, until illness forced him to stop (O.A.M., page, xi).

Narendra Jadhav traced his father's love for writing to the fact that when a group of people who have been silenced for centuries begin to talk, the natural tendency is to narrate their own life stories. Damu had covered his life story till 1950. Yet many important things had happened in his life after 1950's. He passed away in 1989 and it was after his death, Narendra Jadhav first read his father's diaries and was moved. He took up the task of editing and reconstructing Damu's crudely written diaries and added to them from oral recollections of others, "including those from my illiterate mother and accomplished elder brothers, sisters and sisters-in-law" (xi). It was published in 1989 as *Amacha Baap aan Amhi*. *Outcaste : A Memoir* is an expanded version of the French *Intouchable* by Fayard (2002). It is an extended version of the original Marathi text. The Marathi text has also been suitably amended and reconstructed in its subsequent editions. *Outcaste : A Memoir*, as Jadhav has put it, "is the story of Damu, my father, and Sonu, my mother, as told to me, and in their lives and times, you will find my story as well" (xii). The Marathi autobiography is dedicated to the vision of his blind grandmother Rahibai, to the genius of his father who never went to school and to his Mother, Sonu, who killed her hunger, to keep her children alive. The English text, in addition to all above family members, is also dedicated to "All those anonymous men and women everywhere in the world who stood up for Human Rights" (p. no. not given).

The Marathi title *Amacha Baap aan Amhi* is very lucid and clear. It is the story of Jadhav family with Dada - Damu Mahar as the protagonist, at its centre. The English translation follows a different format. It is written in the format of a Memoir and hence the title *Outcaste: A Memoir*. Diary style, with dates, has been followed and it is written from the perspectives of Damu Mahar, his wife Sonubai, and his son Narendra Jadhav. It is written in the first person singular. The first part of the title 'Outcaste' reveals the plight of Mahars in an unjust, unequal, exploitative, oppressive and marginalized society. The autobiography is divided into four parts entitled 'Up Against Bondage', 'Towards Freedom', 'The struggle' and 'Making of the Second Generation'. The Epilogue has been written by the youngest member of the fourth generation of Jadhav family, Apoorva, seventeen year old daughter of Narendra Jadhav. The technique or narrative strategy followed

in the Marathi and English edition are different. The material presented is more or less the same. The original *Amacha Baap* is rich in the local dialect and this language aspect imparts it a unique aesthetic appeal.

In *Outcaste: A Memoir*, Damu Mahar is most of the times narrator-observer, and active participant rolled into one. The first person narrative and diary format enhances the literary value of the English edition and bestows upon it an authentic touch. The beauty of the Marathi dialect in the original has been compensated by this literary device. The text has been translated into English by Narendra Jadhav himself. *Outcaste: A Memoir* contains 263 pages inclusive of the Epilogue. It is followed by Notes on 'Untouchability, Caste System and Dr. Ambedkar'. References to various points mentioned in the autobiography are given in Notes II and this is followed by a long, exhaustive glossary containing approximately 96 words. Written in the style of a Memoir, it contains many incidents in the life of Damu and Sonubai. Hence it is episodic and dialogic in nature. Approximately, a span of twenty years has been covered in the autobiography.

The lexicon used in *Aamacha Baap* immediately brings forth the simplicity, spontaneity, clarity, and rural flavour of Dada's language. Dada had certain fixed notions about language. Jadhav elucidates the same point in his English translation and writes, 'Most children address their fathers formally, but Dada insisted that we call him 'baap', a colloquial yet earthy term which literally means 'the one who sired you.' Whenever someone, shocked by this undisguised reference, tried to correct us, Dada had the choicest words, 'Arre, call a spade a spade... language, when spoken should come alive with meaning. It should have flavour ... like the pungency of spicy chutney of bombil fish. You and your refined Saheb - like mannerisms can go down the drain ... Your polite, bland language is as insipid as boiled potatoes' (215-16).

Dada had spent his childhood in Ozar in Nasik and had shifted to Mumbai in the later part of his life. The Marathi autobiography has been written in the dialect used at Nasik. The words (language component) of *Aamacha Baap* includes Marathi words used in the colloquial language, words used in the rural sector, words used in standard Marathi language, words used in English language, corrupted English words, corrupted Marathi words, words in Hindi language and words from other languages. There are many instances of code-mixing and switching. The use of English words increases in the description of Dada's railway job and shows his natural grasping and application of these words. Use of butler English is also reflected in his *Memoir*. Two incidents can be cited as examples. His interaction with the European Officer helps substantiate his command over butler English, ability to comprehend the language, and its application and his confidence along with freedom from inhibition. In a fit of rage, Dada would scold his sons and abuse them by screaming 'damblady biscuit'. Jadhav explains, 'I had no idea what kind of biscuit this was. I assumed he meant, 'I'm not going to buy you tasty biscuits any more.'

Only years later did I find out that he meant, 'Damn, bloody bastard!' As I grew older, I finally asked him about the 'damblady biscuit' and he said that he had picked up the English abuse while working with a European Saheb. He knew that it was a kind of curse but he was very proud of the fact that he had learned English 'direct from a Gora Saheb', and not from some desi upstart. Swear words were a part of that education, and he thought the swear words went well with his personality. Bland words were not for him (216).

Jadhav has retained in a very effective manner various lexical items from the vernacular into his English translation. Many proper nouns have been shortened as a gesture of love and affection. Proper nouns such as 'Janu', 'Sudha', 'Dina', 'Chhotu' (175), 'Vasu' (253), 'Namyia' (6), 'Damyia' (7), 'Kacharu', 'Bhigu' (58), 'Rakhuma' (59), 'Pandu', 'Martya-Maru' (80) etc. bear testimony to such usage. Many words depicting relationships have been borrowed from Marathi. Many words like 'Sasubai' (15), 'Aae' (16), 'Aba' (28), 'Aaji', 'Hari Mama' (40)', 'Lakshmi Kaku' (30), 'Baba' (51), 'Pavala Aatya' (64), 'Damu Kaka' (81), etc. are used in the text. Many Marathi words indicating official designations such as 'Fauzdar' (8), 'Patil' (9), 'Mamledar' (3), and 'Talathi' (250), occur in the narrative.

Marathi sentence openers like 'Aga' and 'Arre' are strewn throughout the book. They impart a peculiar colloquial flavour to the narration. Words of salutation like 'Johar' (46), 'Ram Ram' (41), 'Jai Bhim' (137) figure here. Honorific titles such as 'Saheb' (4), 'Maay-baap' and 'Sarkar' (7) and 'Seth' (136) have also been employed to impart a touch of reality. Names of months of Hindu calendar like 'Vaishakh' (60), 'Paush' (246), 'Chaitra' (254), along with names of many Hindu gods like 'Hanuman' (37), 'Saraswati' (230), 'Mahalakshmi' (98), 'Mariai', 'Khandoba' (35), 'Kalaram' (128), 'Malhari Martand' (105), 'Ganpati' (117), 'Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh' (251), 'Krisha' (252), 'Vithoba' (179), and festivals like 'Makar Sankranti' (248), 'Ram Navmi' (128), 'Lord Ganpati's festival' (116), 'Dussehra' (188), etc. are mentioned. Names of many eatables like 'Chanya' (55), 'Usal', 'boondi rice' (72), 'Samosa' (89), 'Sheera', 'modak' or 'ladoo' (17), 'Vada-pav', 'Bhel Puri', 'nankatai' (249), 'Kanduri' (221), 'Ladoos', 'jalebis', 'farsan', 'Moong usal' (222), 'bhakri' (6), etc. are used. Many words associated with marriage like 'antarpat', 'mangalashakt', 'savadhan' (26), 'Sapta-padi' (222) and words connected with worship like 'rangoli', 'paan', 'supari' (72), 'bhajans' (100), 'Kamandalu', 'puja', 'mantras', (105), 'kumkum' (141), 'Prasad' (221), 'Shami tree' (188) are employed. Typical words such as 'Sivrai' (39), and 'anna' (136) as units of currency; words used in different languages for holy men such as 'Mullahs' (183), 'fakir', 'Pir', and 'Sadhu' occur in the text. Words connotative of culture such as 'abhanga', 'jatra', 'kirtan', 'kirtankar', 'tamasha', 'lezim', 'shahirs', 'duf' and 'jalsas' too are used. Some other usages include 'goondas', 'Thugs', 'ustaad', 'hafta', 'Chillum' and 'bidi', 'chavadi', 'potraj', 'padar', and 'baksheesh'. etc. have been employed. Many socio religious - cultural aspects have been mentioned by allusions to various things like 'Sanchi temple at Sarnath', 'Panchsheel', 'Chaityabhoomi', 'Kala Ram temple', 'Diksha Bhoomi', 'Chavdar Tank', 'Satyagraha' publications like Bahishkrit Bharat, Janata and Prabuddha Bhara, etc. Names of cereals and pulses, items of clothing, etc. are also given in Marathi. Thus, *Outcaste: A Memoir* is an example of code mixing and switching. Both the original Marathi autobiography and its English translation heavily resort to borrowing. All these words help in evoking Indian culture and ethos.

There is a remarkable change in the language of the narrator while describing emotional scenes. Perhaps most poignant and enlightening is the scene in which Rahibai's friends provoke her to get Damu remarried again. Sonu was not able to conceive even after eight years of marriage. I am citing here an example of a dialogue between an old woman, representative of all other women, along with Damu's mother and Damu. In English, it is as follows:

Two of the older women approached my man. They told him how much they cared for his mother. They explained the importance of having an heir in order to die in peace. 'You are still so young. Get another wife. You will produce a child in no time.'

'Think of how happy you will make your mother.' My man was taking it all quietly. I could see how his ears reddened in anger. His face wore a severe expression. He saw me sitting in a corner, crying, and suddenly sprang up.

He stood like a mountain, towering over everyone. 'Aae', he said sharply, 'I do not want to see, these women in this house again. Do you understand?' He glared at her.

'I am not going to marry again, and that is that. We do not have a large estate that you need to desperately worry about having heirs. It doesn't matter if we do not have children.'

He said to Sasubai, 'If you are so eager to shower love and affection on grandchildren, gather all the urchins in our locality and love them as your own.'

'If all you want is an heir, we will adopt one. We will have nothing to do with these women.' He turned to the women, 'Do not provoke my mother again. I respect your age and did not mean to be rude. But this is my final warning.'

Then he warned Sasubai, 'Even if someone dies in their house we will not go to offer condolences, and tell them that if someone dies here, they need not come to us. Nobody is going to tell me what I shall do.'

He began pacing the floor like a caged tiger that I knew he could be. Suddenly, he stopped in front of me and said, 'And I don't want to see you crying again over this. I will never marry another woman' (155-156).

The paragraphs in the text are short in length. The text is mainly dialogic in nature. The use of lexicon is simple and short declarative sentences are used most of the time. Variety has been introduced by the use of subordinate clauses and phrasing. The words, phrases and idioms used in the text are common. Phrases and idioms employed in the autobiography are - "to gape open-mouthed" (4), "pace up and down", (5), "to be concerned about" (6), "to face the wrath of", (8), "to lurch forward", "to come forward" (9), "to walk shoulder to shoulder", (11), "back and forth" (17), "pass away", "to plunge into" (37), "give you an inch and you grab a mile" (47), "to fight like cats and dogs" (48), "to spread like wildfire" (53), "to keep an eye on" (54), "beyond measure" (72), "to wait with bated breath", (75), "to ferret out" (76), "to heave a sigh of relief" (80), "to dawn upon", "pound of flesh" (88), "at the crack of dawn" (232), and "to blow up one's trumpet" (260), etc. make the point clear and make the language crisp. Thus, the choice of vocabulary is thus very simple. The construction of sentences too is simple. Yet the theme of negritude, marginalization, and casteism gives rise to numerous questions in the mind of the protagonist. This is witnessed in the large number of questions (approximately 538) used in the text. There is a combination of long and short questions. Some questions are very short. These include questions like "How could they?" (36), "Don't you see?" and "Why not?" (48-49), "Why?" (66), "Tempt the spirits?" (68), "Are you all right?" (86), "Who are you?" (111), "What work?" (113), "Why?" (102), "Why accept it?" (154), "But why?" (161), "What is wrong?" (169), etc. Long interrogative questions include "Will I ever be able to free myself from the bondage of my caste?" (211), "I wonder how many swans waste their lives thinking of themselves as ugly ducklings, trapped and punished by the inequities of our caste system?" (227), "If Hindus do not treat us as equals, what is the point in subscribing to the Hindu religion?" (130), etc. There is a wide variety of 'Wh' questions, rhetorical questions, and inquisitive questions, etc. posed by the narrator. Very rarely is there a combination of two or more questions. A thematic classification of interrogative sentences is possible. Such an analysis shows that questions based on all kaleidoscopic human emotions and all things connected with human life figure in the text. Some such topics are birth, marriage, education, caste, religion, employment, death, rites and rituals, etc. Hunger and poverty, ostracism and marginalization are also revealed through this technique. Rejection, protest and anger, a quest for self identity and assertion of human rights also come to fore by the employment of this narrative device and it highlights all related aspects like isolation, alienation and existentialist predicament of the narrator and his family. Damu's vehement question "Why should I hide? Am I any less human than they are?" (6), sets the tone. As compared to interrogative sentences, the use of exclamatory sentences is very less.

In addition to these interrogative sentences, Jadhav has made use of many sentences that commence with conjunctions. The coordinating conjunction 'and' and 'but' are employed with subordinating conjunction 'because'. These are used as sentence openers. There are approximately 99 sentences that begin with 'but'. Twenty sentences have 'and' and only three sentences possess 'because' as a sentence opener. 'And' is employed to provide cohesion and is operative at the semantic level.

In order to enhance the aesthetic beauty of his *Outcaste: A Memoir*, Jadhav has resorted to the use of tropes. Most of these tropes have been drawn from his vicinity. Anger surged within the protagonist "like a hissing snake" (20), and the people in the community "fought like cats and dogs to grab the food" (48). The crowds at the railway station "seemed like ants engaged in a flurry of activity, limbs moving incessantly" (87), Damu and other children "played with tiger cubs as if they were little kittens" (99), in poverty, "the arrival of Rama was as unwelcome as a thirteenth month in a drought year" (147), the priests, "swooped upon me like eager hawks" (212), etc. bear testimony to this fact. Jadhav decided to reclaim his dignity from within "and for that, I must cut off the albatross of the caste system from my soul, once and for all..." (214). Damu Mahar's moonfaced bride was "dazzling like the moonlight" (82). To beautiful, delicate Sonu, her husband, "was like a great big wall, a rough hewn mountain, like the one behind our hut, tall, dark and rugged" (26). Yet on knowing him better, she realized that "he was like the tender whole coconuts' tough hard shell on the outside, but sweet tender inside" (104). In emotional distress, he seemed "just like a tiger, raring to go but confined to a cage" (104). Similes comparing him to a mountain recur again on 104 and 155. The tiger simile is repeated again on 156. Sonu later compares her first new born with his father and declares joyously, "look my little chimp now look exactly like his father, dark as a mountain wall" (173).

Some other similes too draw upon the narrator's world of experience widely to encapsulate his feelings. When the train passed through a tunnel Damu "was scared stiff and was as terrified as if it were a demon" and describes the wheels of the train as "moving like the legs of a centipede" (63). He met Robin and thought that "She was very fair, with golden hair and blue eyes, just like a doll" (92). Babasaheb's "devoted secretary, Rattu, was always with him like a shadow, taking care of him" (193). Describing the impact of casteism, Jadhav writes, "The devotees, who were co-travellers in sunshine and rain, would clearly separate like oil and water once they reached the temple precincts" (213). This simile in an apt manner describes the plight of the Dalits in the society. Due to this kind of distinction, "The boulder became their makeshift Vithoba- crude, buffeted by the elements, like they were, quite unlike the richly clad, bejeweled idol of the touchable God within" (213).

Jadhav's use of figurative language is par excellence in metaphors. The ill-treatment meted out to Damu while performing his Yeskar duties left a "storm raging in my mind" (20). In Mumbai, he saw, "trains that snaked along" (85). After the Diksha ceremony Babasaheb, "... really looked reborn, and rebirth is never easy. A child coming out of a womb cries with his first breath, and there is always the sorrow of leaving the mother behind. It is also a moment of happiness, with the tears a mixture of joy and sorrow" (191). Dada's (Damu Mahar) use of a metaphor, while explaining the importance of research to his illiterate wife, is simply excellent. When Sonubai nagged Narendra to sit back and relax, says Jadhav, "My father shouted an obscenity at her, later explaining that getting an academic degree is like getting a driving licence. You get a licence and you keep on driving ... you don't just sit on it!" (205) Narendra Jadhav's comment on his father's metaphorical

usage is lucid. He writes, "I have never stopped wondering where Dada got his wisdom. Even today, I can't find a better metaphor for the doctoral degree" (205).

The experience of working for a railway company enriched Dada's language. He borrowed his tropes from it. Sonu had her limitations yet her devotion to the family was unquestionable. Jadhav has described her as 'the foundation of all our lives'. He further mentions, "Although it is the train's headlight that attracts attention, it's the unseen engine that does the work, and Dada would often tease her, 'Our engine is good and dependable no doubt ... but it makes a lot of noise!'"

Truly, if Dada was like the headlight of a train, attracting attention and giving direction, Bai was the unseen, ever-working engine (218).

The choice of the metaphor is perfect and describes in a simple, lucid manner the complementary relationship of the couple. Other metaphors have been used in the text to bring out the animal existence, suffocation, and suppression of the Dalits in the society. Sonu's pent up emotions and frustrations have been ably described by a short, concise metaphor like "All that I had kept dammed up came pouring out" (175). At another place, she confesses, "I kept my thoughts bottled up in mind" (185). She further felt that her heart would burst at the seams with the burden of what was happening. Damu got irritated with his wife's "yapping about mundane things" and wishes her to "grow out of your mule mentality" (177).

In addition to tropes, Jadhav has employed a beautiful allegory to bring out and focus on the transformation in the Dalit Society. He has mentioned the story of the ugly duckling. This allegory is very pertinent from the point of view of Dalits:

The story of the ugly duckling and its scornful brethren holds special significance. I wonder how many swans waste their lives thinking of themselves as ugly ducklings, trapped and punished by the inequities of our caste system? And how many more ugly ducklings pretend to be swans and get away with it? The beautiful swan inherently present in all mankind, needs to be encouraged and guided, to emerge in all its glory.

Countless Dalits were inspired to search for the swan within, after Babasaheb Ambedkar touched their lives. Dada's vision ensured that my siblings and I became part of this wonderful quest (227).

The Metaphorical story of Hans Christian Anderson's ugly duckling has been employed well in the autobiography. Jadhav has revealed the existentialist predicament of the Dalits with an allusion to the fifteenth century Saint poet Kabir:

I stood knocking at the doorsteps of heaven as I died ...

'Who are you ...?' I was asked.

'My entire existence on earth could not tell me who I was ...

And that is what I have come to ask you ...'

Who am I? (207)

These allegorical sentences depict the existentialist predicament of man. Jadhav underlines its meaning for readers: The bottom line always stood out; I was a mere Mahar, a Dalit, a Harijan, and a Scheduled Caste, belonging to the lowest stratum of society. It was as if I was tainted with a singular blemish - a tragic flaw - inherited through birth (207)

Jadhav has enhanced the literary merit of his text with occasional use of other figures of speech. There are examples of onomatopoeia like "clip-clop of hooves" (7) and "gurgling water" (48), and "gurgling brooks" (70), etc. Use of alliteration is also noticed in "clinging creepers" and "towering trees" (70). Personification has been employed in "Death was stalking us" and "Death had already marked us out" (37). Oxymoron has been used in the narrative very effectively in the comment "I thought it was ironic that the arrival of the apostle of non-violence should have caused so much of violence" (147). Marathi idioms and phrases have been translated literally into English (Calque). Such idioms are "Give you an inch and you grab a mile" (47), "How can the soil be different from the mine?" (257) and "thirteenth month in a drought year" (147), etc. Another remarkable feature of Jadhav's narrative technique is the use of imagery. He has employed auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, kinesthetic, and visual imagery in the text. As examples, "Sunbursts of bright marigold flowers", "auspicious, lush-green mango leaves" (58), "shockingly cold under the blazing sun" (90), "piping hot meat curry" (56), "jingling stick" (17), "thick black ghongadi" (18), "the sweet-sour taste" (39) and "crumbling skeleton of a hut" (50), etc. can be cited. Most of the adjectives are used in the 'attributive' position before nouns in a noun phrase. Very rarely are they used in the 'predicative' position referring back to the noun. Jadhav has made use of strong and weak verbs, phrasal verbs, perfect-forms, finite and non-finite, transitive and intransitive forms, etc. in the autobiography.

Indicative mood is used for discussing events, states, and facts. The short, aphoristic sentences add to the beauty of the text. Sentences like "Fate had turned its fury on us" (15), "Growing up is never easy" (16), and "Fate is what we make of ourselves" (45), captivate readers. Jadhav has also written many beautiful sentences that capture attention. Sentences like "it takes both rain and sunshine to make a rainbow" (16); "I was not afraid of the tunnel, but I was afraid of what lay on the other side of the tunnel" (80), "his caste is never cast off" (208), and "I got a glimpse into myself as the next runner in the relay race, bearing the torch for freedom and achievement, and running ... "(214), etc. touch the core of the heart and create a deep impression.

Outcaste: A Memoir also depicts various prestige symbols of the *Savarna* and lower class people. Sampat Gaikwad is of the opinion that all speech communities in Dalit autobiographies

are based on Varna and caste. Hence the prestige symbols of these speech communities depend

upon the caste hierarchy in society (Gaikwad, 99). Amongst the Mahars, Yeskar duty was considered an honour. Wearing a Ghongdi or a black woolen blanket and carrying the staff was symbolic of Yeskar duties. Asking for *Baluta* was associated with it. The Mahar's image of loyalty was very prestigious. Being poor, their stock of grains, roosters, hens, goats, and chickens were prestige symbols. Being the host of a jatra (58), attending fairs and sacrificing an animal (221) was considered honourable. The pots and pans in the house (256), light (230), and radio (219) were associated with prestige. Wearing a new white shirt (33), new clothes, tie, trousers and shoes were prestigious. White shirts and sarees were necessary for conversion ceremony. Using slippers (41), shoes (101 & 230), photo (101), wedding sari (59), good looks (77), and sitting on a chair (94) are other prestige symbols mentioned in the text. These prestige symbols offer valuable insight into the life style of the community and standard of life maintained by them.

The use of caste indicative deixis is quite noteworthy in the text. Damu Mahar says, "We are not called by our names but simply the untouchables, the outcastes, and the lowly people who do not matter at all" (45). The terms used to address Mahars were contemptuous. The policeman addressed Damu as "Eh Damu Mahar" (3). Damu addressed him as "Saheb" and he abused Damu as "You bastard" (4). The people belonging to the same class called each other as "Arre". Damu reverently addressed the Fauzdar as "Maay-baap" and he, in turn,

abused him as “You mother-fucking son of a bitch”, and called him, “Eh you, Damya Mahar” (7). Damu addressed him as “Sarkar” on the same occasion. Namya addressed Damu as “Damu dada” (8). At home, Damu’s eldest cousin is called Raghaji. The honorific ‘ji’ is added to his first name. Sonu addressed him as “Big brother” (10). Damu as a child was called up as “Eh boy” or as “Arre, little one” (47). Damu addressed Sonubai as “Aga” and one lady called her “Eh you bloody Maharin” (47) in the village. Greetings such as “Johar, Maay-baap” (46), and “Ram Ram” (41) shed light on social power equations and relationships. The text abounds in many examples of heteroglossia.

Outcaste: A Memoir is an authentic socio-cultural, political-historical document. The addition of dates gives an element of authenticity and historicism to the text and imparts to it an appearance of a Memoir. Jadhav has added to the value of the text by his additions to it from authentic documents and in the process, has elevated its status as an Ambedkarite document. The opening scene of the autobiography is very touching and acts as a flash forward. The reader at once knows what kind of protagonist Damu Mahar is and what kind of protest is to be anticipated in the self narrative. Damu’s Dalit consciousness and staunch Ambedkarism underlines this very dramatic opening scene. In addition to flash forward, flash back technique has been resorted to at many places in the text. Sonu and Damu’s entire childhood is revealed effectively through the use of flashback technique. The first meeting of Damu and Sonubai, their marriage, their visit to Khandoba, the poisoning of the bull, etc. have been described in flashback technique almost in cinematographic style.

Jadhav’s recreation of history is another noteworthy feature of this autobiography. He has re-visited the National Independence Movement, and Ambedkarite movement in the text. National Independence Movement has been depicted with historical accuracy in the boycott and bonfire of foreign goods, defiance of salt laws, and Civil Disobedience campaign, Round Table Conference, etc. Ambedkarite Movement has been recreated through the use of myths like Mahad Satyagraha, burning of Manusmruti, Dr. Ambedkar’s rally, Kala Ram Temple Satyagraha, Poona Pact, Yeola Conference, and Mumbai Conference, Babasaheb’s conversion to Buddhism, and his sad untimely demise. He has quoted many relevant parts from the speeches of Dr. Ambedkar. In this autobiography, the Ambedkarite protagonist Dada emerges as a symbol possessing indomitable will, physical and moral courage, and strength. His attitude towards life makes it the most ‘positive Dalit *Swakathan*’ to have seen the light of the day.

Narendra Jadhav has made extensive use of Bardic effect in the text. Dada was dead against *Baluta* and found the song sung by upper castes while giving *Baluta* humiliating. They said,

Aamacha anna ghe

Aamchi eeda ghe

Aamchi peeda ghe

(Take all our evils away as you take this food. Go, take the food away ... better in your stomach than in the garbage, if you will take our perils with it (17).

Bardic effect has been employed through the medium of a song sung to ward off evil spirits. The song sheds light on superstitions in the society, especially amongst the fairer sex.

Here comes the warning as you look at my Soney

Listen ye, a warning once and for all ...

For the one who comes and the one who goes ...

Whether it be the flowing streams,

Or the gurgling brooks

The clinging creepers

Or the towering trees ...

Anyone, anything up and down,

Over, under, wherever

Leave my Soney be hale and hearty

Watch out

For your evil thoughts will come back to haunt you (70).

One notices appreciatively the beautiful use of alliteration and onomatopoeia in the above quoted verse. Many songs were sung loudly on the occasion of marriage. Jadhav mentions,

Some of them showered abuses and curses on the bridegroom as he was to marry their beloved girl and take her away. Some sang praises of the bride and how talented and skilful she was, and how he was lucky to be marrying such a girl. Other songs warned the mother-in-law that if she dared to ill-treat the bride, all kinds of curses would befall her. Finally, some songs addressed the father-in-law, pleading with him to treat the bride just as he would his own daughter (74).

Jadhav has quoted a song containing four stanzas in the autobiography. Rahibai sang a ditty describing the life of women. It has been given as:

We, the women who rule the house

But ours is not to question why ...

Ours is but to do and die and

Husband never to defy (176).

In addition to all these, a song from Changuna’s story also finds a place in the autobiography. In order to impart a touch of authenticity and verisimilitude to the narrative, reality effect has been used in the description of characters, places, weather, and incidents. Reality effect refers to those parts of the narrative identified by Roland Barthes (1992) in which verisimilitude is maintained through the descriptions of details such as interior of rooms, the physical appearance of minor character, and the weather, the background and so on (Cobley, 240-41). An autobiography is based on reality. This reality is ‘re-presented’ in the narrative. The authority of the Fauzdar, his arrogance has been evoked by onomatopoeic “clip-clop of hooves” (06), and cracking of the whip. Reality effect comes to fore in the description of Tau Master who was “well built and fair complexioned”, and resembled “high-born gentry” (21). When Damu visited him on a Sunday morning, “ ... Tau Master was busy cleaning the house. He was polishing some brass lamps, his hands messy with black grime. Yet, he was dressed in a crisp white dhoti and Kurta ...” (21). Genu Master has been described as being “covered in boils, his skin clear only from the neck up” (41). The description of the Pathans aroused fear :

The money lenders were dressed peculiarly. They wore colourful turbans, loose, flowing trousers and long knee-length tunics. Their Kohl-lined eyes were smudged black and gave them a ferocious look (152). Daulat ustaad had an impressive personality with "ebony shining skin, tall and hefty and with sharp features" (226). With minor characters, Jadhav portrays the personality of his father too. He says, Dada looked tough and ugly. He was of medium height, rough, dark and with a chiseled face. Usually stern, his eyes lit up and his expression softened when he talked to children. Dhoti, white shirt, Khaki jacket and black cap were his usual garb, and the stick in his hand was more for intimidation than for support (216).

The description of the mud hut (34) also is realistic. The news of a cull created a flutter of excitement (54). People rushed with any container - pots, pans, buckets, baskets, etc. Some people carried meat in the folds of their dhoti or sari. In a similar manner, the writer has painted a picture of a bloated carcass, birds perched on the trees around it, occasional crows flapping wings and circling the bull, and the missing dogs as it was a poisoned animal. Another very common sight in the village was that of Potraj. Potraj women were dressed in green saris. Their foreheads were smeared with vermilion. On their heads, were brass statuettes of the Goddess. The women danced to the beat of cymbals and drums. A graphic description of Potraj men figures in the text: The Potraj men moved about topless, with worn-out animal skins tied around their waists. Their ankles were adorned with beads of tiny brass bells. With the slightest movement, the bells resonated. These men were huge and able-bodied, and their backs glistened with sweat as they danced. They carried a thick, serpent-like rope of coiled hemp, with a handle at one end made up of a wad of tightly wrapped rags. The whip was long and tapered into a thin cord knotted at the tip. This made the end of the whip slightly heavy and it hit right on target (60).

The description of the old, rickety chawl at Mumbai (81), the description of Damu's small, dingy house in Kurla (83), the women at the water tap in Mumbai (84), the description of the crowd at Nagpur on the occasion of Diksha ceremony (187), and the havoc caused by rain in the little hut (35), all exploit reality effect.

In this autobiography, the Ambedkarite protagonist Dada emerges as a symbol possessing indomitable will, physical and moral courage, and strength. His attitude towards life makes it the most 'positive Dalit Swakathan' to have seen the light of the day. Thus, Jadhav's *Outcaste : A Memoir* is a Dalit autobiography spread over four generations and traces the development of the protagonist, Damu Mahar, from childhood to his death. The story also highlights how the four sons of illiterate parents achieved success in life. It proves its validity on the touchstone of Dalit aesthetics as a document of Dalit consciousness and protest. This non-fiction narrative has a media res beginning and possesses an extension in time. It is temporal. The diachronic narrative has synchronic description. The narration is intra-digetic. The use of language and its dialect, slangs, jargon, etc. enhance its aesthetic appeal. The narrative is intense and racy. Various code switching devices, metaphorical language, dramatic incidents, and picturesque scenes add to its literary and aesthetic value making it a watermark in Dalit literature.

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