

***RESISTANCE, LIBERATION, AND EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY OF
POETRY AS AN AESTHETIC MEDIUM OF PROTEST IN THE SELECT
POEMS OF VIJILA CHIRAPPAD AND ALICE WALKER***



***Project submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in
English Language and Literature***

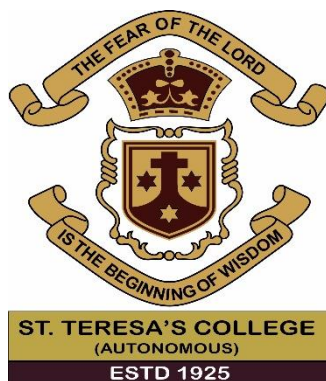
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this project entitled “ Resistance, Liberation and Empowerment: A Study of Poetry as an Aesthetic Medium of Protest in the Select Poems of Vijila Chirappad and Alice Walker” is a record of bona fide work carried out by Ardra Lal under my supervision and guidance.

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An Abstract of the Project Entitled
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Although the majority of marginalised people in the world have experienced a similar system of oppression, their labels are unique according to the various forms of segregation. If caste was primarily responsible for the oppression and social division in India, race was the major factor in the widespread racial division in the United States of America. Women are frequently referred to as the "oppressed among the oppressed. Every generation's literature represents its political and societal consciousness. Two poets, Alice Walker, an African-American, and Vijila Chirappad, an Indian Dalit poet, have used literature to express the plight of oppressed communities and their ongoing fight against various forms of prejudice and oppression. Both poets combined their intense poetic sensibilities with their strong-willed activism to produce a series of exceptional poems that disseminate the odious realities of their existence and their surging necessity for resistance. Both poets have experienced extreme strains of "othering" from the predominately elitist and phallogocentric society. The present paper studies selected poems of Vijila Chirappad and Alice Walker to examine how they use poetry as an aesthetic medium of protest against the manifold levels of partisanship, bigotry, and exploitation.

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Introduction

Even though a majority of marginalized people all around the world have faced an analogous system of persecution, their labels are distinct as per the different modes of segregation. If caste played the dominant role in the class division and oppression in India, race led to the widespread division of people in the United States of America. In all the marginalized sections around the world, women have often been referred to as the “oppressed among the oppressed” since they are victims of double discrimination: gender discrimination in addition to class/race/caste discrimination. The literature of any age is an embodiment of the political and social consciousness of that age. Many accomplished writers, from time immemorial, have made literature a crucial channel for enunciating their political sentiments and resistance to despotism. Vijila Chirappad, an Indian Dalit poet, and Alice Walker, an African American poet, have utilized literature to give voice to the persecuted minorities and their perpetual struggle for liberation from multifarious levels of prejudice and subjugation. Both the poets, who have been subjected to extreme strains of “othering” from the predominantly elitist and phallogocentric society, amalgamated their intense poetic sensibilities with their strong-willed activism to produce a series of exceptional poems that disseminate the invidious realities of their existence and their upsurging exigency for resistance. The present paper studies selected Vijila Chirappad and Alice Walker poems to examine how they use poetry as an aesthetic medium of protest against the manifold levels of partisanship, bigotry, and exploitation.

Double discrimination refers to the experience of discrimination based on two intersecting identities, such as race, caste, or religion, that work together to create unique forms of disadvantage. Women who belong to marginalized communities may experience double discrimination based on their gender as well as their race, caste, or religion.

For example, women who belong to racial or ethnic minority groups may face discrimination based on their gender and their race. They may be subjected to stereotypes and biases that are based on their race or ethnicity, which can limit their opportunities. At the same time, they may also face discrimination based on their gender, including unequal pay, sexual harassment, and limited access to leadership roles.

Similarly, women who belong to lower castes or religious minorities may face discrimination based on their gender and their caste or religion. They may be denied access to education, healthcare, and other basic rights, and may be subjected to violence and harassment. Their experiences of discrimination may be compounded by the fact that they are women, which can exacerbate their vulnerability and limit their ability to challenge the status quo.

Double discrimination based on race, caste, and religion is a serious issue that affects the lives of millions of women around the world. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that recognizes and addresses the intersecting forms of discrimination that women face, and that works to promote gender equality and social justice for all.

Poetry can also be used to challenge dominant narratives and ideologies. By creating alternative narratives and counter-narratives, poets can disrupt existing power structures and challenge oppressive systems. For example, the poetry of feminist writers like Audre Lorde and 3 Adrienne Rich challenged patriarchal norms and advocated for women's rights, while the poetry of postcolonial writers like Derek Walcott and Chinua Achebe challenged Eurocentric notions of history and identity.

In addition to its content, poetry as an aesthetic medium can also be used to subvert dominant forms and conventions. For example, the Beats of the 1950s and the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 70s rejected traditional poetic forms and embraced more

experimental styles of writing. This rejection of convention was itself a form of protest against dominant norms and values.

Overall, poetry is a powerful tool for protest because it can convey complex ideas and emotions in a concise and evocative way. By highlighting social and political issues, challenging dominant narratives, and subverting conventional forms, poets can use their words to effect change and inspire resistance.

Dalit poetry has had a significant impact on reformed society by bringing to light the oppression and discrimination faced by Dalits, who are historically considered to be outside the caste system in India. Dalit poetry is a form of literary expression that gives voice to the experiences of Dalits and their struggles against social, economic, and political discrimination.

One of the major impacts of Dalit poetry is that it has challenged the dominant narrative of the Indian society, which has been shaped by upper-caste voices. Dalit poetry has exposed the hidden realities of the lives of Dalits, which have been long ignored by mainstream society. By bringing these experiences to the forefront, Dalit poetry has challenged the existing power structures and given voice to the marginalized.

Another important impact of Dalit poetry has been its role in creating a sense of solidarity and community among Dalits. By sharing their experiences through poetry, Dalit poets have created a sense of shared struggle and identity among Dalits. This has helped to foster a sense of pride and dignity among Dalits, which is essential for their empowerment and social reform.

Furthermore, Dalit poetry has also played a role in influencing public opinion and policy on issues related to caste discrimination. It has helped to raise awareness about the

problems faced by Dalits and has challenged the status quo. This has led to some positive changes, such as the introduction of affirmative action policies to promote social and economic equality.

In conclusion, Dalit poetry has had a significant impact on reformed society by challenging dominant narratives, fostering a sense of community among Dalits, and influencing public opinion and policy. It has played an important role in the fight against caste discrimination and the promotion of social justice and equality.

Dalit poetry is an important genre of literature that has emerged in recent decades in India, particularly among the Dalit community, which has historically faced discrimination and oppression. In Kerala, several Dalit poets have emerged who have contributed to the reformation of society through their powerful and thought-provoking poetry. One of the famous Dalit poets who made her contributions to Dalit poetry is Vijila Chirappad. Her writings discuss the caste and gender issues that Dalits experience. Dalit writings, in the opinion of Vijila, are more than just lamentations; they ought to recognize their value and maintain their pride.

The emergence of black poetry can be traced back to the early days of African American history in the United States. During slavery, many African Americans used song and verse to express their emotions and tell their stories, often using coded language to communicate with one another.

After slavery ended, black poets continued to use their art as a means of self-expression and resistance against the racial oppression they faced. The Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s saw the emergence of many black poets, including Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay, who used their work to celebrate black culture and challenge stereotypes.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Black Arts Movement brought about a renewed interest in black poetry and literature. Poets such as Amiri Baraka, Nikki Giovanni, and Sonia Sanchez used their work to address social and political issues facing the black community, such as racism, poverty, and police brutality.

Today, black poetry continues to thrive, with contemporary poets such as Terrance Hayes, Claudia Rankine, and Tracy K. Smith using their work to explore issues such as identity, race, and social justice.

Black feminism recognizes that the experiences of Black women are distinct from those of white women and Black men and that their struggles are often overlooked or marginalized within mainstream feminist and civil rights movements. Black feminist theory and activism aim to center the experiences and perspectives of Black women and to challenge and dismantle the systemic oppression and marginalization they face.

Key themes of Black feminism include the importance of intersectionality, which recognizes the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression and the need to address them simultaneously; the value of Black women's leadership and perspectives; and the recognition that the personal experiences of Black women are political and deserve attention and analysis.

Alice Walker is an American author, poet, and activist who has made significant contributions to the field of black poetry. Her work often explores themes of race, gender, and social justice, and she is known for her unique use of language and imagery.

One of Walker's most famous works is the novel *The Color Purple*, which was later adapted into a film and a Broadway musical. The novel explores the experiences of black

women in the South during the early 20th century and has become an important work in the canon of African American literature.

In addition to her novels, Walker has also published several collections of poetry, including *Once*, *Revolutionary Petunias*, and *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful*. Her poetry often reflects her experiences as a black woman and her commitment to social justice.

Walker's contributions to black poetry are significant not only for the quality of her writing but also for the ways in which she has inspired and empowered other black poets to speak their truths and share their experiences with the world. She has also been an important advocate for environmentalism and animal rights, demonstrating the intersections between social justice and environmental activism.

The truly remarkable trait of the poetry of Alice Walker and Vijila Chirappad is that it not only challenges the elite/upper-class poetics in its creation of a different poetics, sensibility, language, consciousness and cultural paradigm but also widens our visions of being and becoming: a new becoming for woman; a new becoming for humanity; and a new becoming for nature. In that sense, it effects a new disclosure of the inside and the outside: a glimpse of the outside from the hut without a window, a search beyond the color of skin. Both these poets have shouldered the profound responsibility of transforming their literary sensibilities into protest against the age-old discrimination their people are made to endure. Their poems are not expressions of their lamentations and helplessness, instead, they are strong poetical pronouncements of their resistance against injustice and their fight against the oppressors.

Chapter 1

Poetry and Resistance

Poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is how we help name the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily(Lorde 283)

Poetry has often been used as a medium for social critique, as it allows writers to express their opinions and observations on various social, political, and cultural issues in a powerful and imaginative way. Through metaphors, imagery, and symbolism, poets can convey their views on issues such as inequality, injustice, oppression, and discrimination, while also appealing to the emotions of their audience. This can lead to increased awareness and understanding of important social issues and can even inspire change. Examples of poets who have used their work to critique society include Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and Claudia Rankine. Through their writing, they can shed light on these issues and challenge the status quo, inspiring readers to think critically and promote change. Poetry has a long history of being used for social critique, dating back to ancient civilizations, and continues to play an important role in contemporary society.

Poetry has been used as a medium of protest throughout history to express dissent, raise awareness, and challenge oppressive systems and structures. Poets have used their words to address issues such as political corruption, social injustice, and human rights violations, and their work has often served as a source of inspiration and encouragement for movements fighting for change. Poetry's power lies in its ability to connect with people on an emotional

level and to articulate complex ideas and feelings in a compact and impactful way, making it an effective tool for dissent and advocacy.

Poetry is often seen as the voice of the voiceless because it provides a platform for marginalized groups to express their experiences and emotions in a creative and powerful way. Poetry has the ability to bring to light the struggles and injustices faced by individuals who may not have a strong presence in mainstream media or society. Through its lyrical and evocative language, poetry can create a sense of empathy and understanding, giving a voice to those who are often unheard. Subalterns, or marginalized groups, often use poetry as a medium of protest to express their political, social, and cultural struggles. Poetry provides them with a platform to voice their experiences and perspectives, and to raise awareness about their issues.

Literature's proximity with matters of politics has long piqued the interest of academics, literary critics, and readers. It is recognized that literary art forms have always had a strong relationship with the political climate of society, dating back to the time of the ancient Greeks. But unlike other literary genres like prose, drama, and fiction, poetry frequently bears an unjustified stigma of being largely mystical, abstract, elitist, or incomprehensibly profound. Because poetry tends to emphasize aesthetic sublimity, its ability to successfully communicate political or socio-cultural themes has always been under intense criticism. Despite widespread pessimism over the magnitude of poetry's impact on society, several poets achieved significant success by fusing literature with political and social consciousness.

Resistance poetry is a genre of poetry that protests against social, political, and economic oppression. It often serves as a form of activism and raises awareness about issues of injustice and inequality. Resistance poetry can take many forms, ranging from protest songs and performance pieces to more traditional forms of verse. It has a long history, dating

back to the oral traditions of ancient civilizations, and continues to play a critical role in shaping public opinion and inspiring social change today.

Resistance poetry is a form of poetry that aims to resist or challenge dominant power structures or oppressive systems. The politics of form in resistance poetry refers to the ways in which poets use poetic forms and techniques to subvert or challenge dominant literary and cultural norms, and to create alternative ways of seeing and understanding the world.

One of the key strategies in resistance poetry is to challenge the conventions of mainstream poetry by using unconventional forms and techniques. For example, poets may use unconventional line breaks, syntax, or punctuation to disrupt the reader's expectations and to create a sense of dissonance or disorientation. They may also use unconventional structures, such as free verse or fragmented narratives, to resist traditional forms' constraints and create a sense of urgency or immediacy.

Resistance poetry uses language in ways that challenge dominant cultural narratives and values. Poets may use language to challenge and subvert stereotypes, challenge oppressive systems and power structures, or create alternative ways of seeing and understanding the world. They may also use language to amplify the voices of marginalized communities and challenge dominant narratives that erase or marginalize those voices.

Overall, the politics of form in resistance poetry is about using poetic forms and techniques to resist dominant power structures, challenge oppressive systems, and create alternative ways of seeing and understanding the world. By using unconventional forms and techniques and by using language in innovative ways, resistance poets can create powerful works that challenge the status quo and inspire social change.

The "politics of poetics" refers to the ways in which poetry and other forms of creative writing can be influenced by political and social factors, and in turn, how they can be used to reflect and shape political and social realities.

Poetry has always been a powerful tool for social and political commentary, from ancient times to the present day. It can be used to express dissent, challenge authority, and critique social norms and inequalities. At the same time, poetry can also be used to reinforce existing power structures, celebrate dominant cultural values, and marginalize those who do not conform to these norms.

The politics of poetics can also refer to the ways in which different literary traditions and forms are valued and promoted, and how they are used to construct national, cultural, and gender identities. For example, certain forms of poetry may be privileged over others, depending on their association with particular cultural or political movements.

In recent years, there has been increasing attention paid to the politics of representation in poetry and literature, with a growing recognition of the need to amplify the voices of marginalized communities and challenge the dominance of mainstream literary culture. This has led to a proliferation of initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and inclusivity in literature, such as literary festivals, anthologies, and publishing houses focused on promoting underrepresented voices.

Overall, the politics of poetics is a complex and dynamic field, shaped by a wide range of cultural, historical, and social factors. It raises important questions about the role of literature in society, the power dynamics that shape literary production and reception, and the ways in which poetry and creative writing can be used to challenge or reinforce existing power structures.

The politics of form and poetry refer to the ways in which the structure and style of poetry can reflect and engage with political issues and ideologies. Form in poetry refers to the rules and conventions that govern the way a poem is structured, such as rhyme scheme, meter, and stanzaic structure. The choice of form can have political implications, as certain forms may be associated with particular political or cultural traditions.

For example, the sonnet form, which originated in Italy in the 13th century and became popular in English literature in the 16th century, has often been associated with love and romance. However, in the 20th century, many poets began using the sonnet form to explore political themes, such as oppression, social inequality, and war. W. H. Auden's "Spain" and Claude McKay's "If We Must Die" are examples of political sonnets.

Similarly, the free verse form, which eschews traditional meter and rhyme, has been used by poets to challenge dominant literary and cultural norms. In the mid-20th century, poets associated with the Beat movement, such as Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, used free verse to express their countercultural views and critique mainstream American society.

In addition to form, other poetic devices, such as metaphor, imagery, and tone, can also have political implications. For example, a poet might use nature imagery to criticize industrialization or employ irony to subvert political propaganda.

Overall, the politics of form and poetry demonstrate how the aesthetics of poetry can intersect with and reflect political issues and ideologies.

The oppressed or underprivileged segments of society were primarily responsible for the necessity for a strong tone of protest in literary expression. Political poetry began as only an embodiment and reflection of the societal and political state of the human sphere, but it gradually advanced and developed thanks to the poetry of the oppressed class of people's

fight, resistance, and protest. Although the means and sources of persecution vary from region to region, all oppressed communities throughout the world are fundamentally compelled to endure a comparable range of mental and emotional agony. Blacks and Dalits are two of the minority groups that experience the most widespread discrimination worldwide. If caste was the main cause of class oppression and separation in India, race was the main factor in the broad racial division in the United States of America. Even though Dalits and African Americans are geographically far from one another, their histories of struggle and the quest for equality are very similar. The terrible predicament of Dalits, who have been categorized as "outcasts" or "untouchables" for more than 4,000 years, is comparable to that of African Americans throughout the time of apartheid, Jim Crow Laws, slavery, and even today. "Dalit solidarity has to be with Black solidarity and education on the issue is a form of protest itself. The reason Dalit and Black power can talk to each other is because there is energy between them" (Yengde 214).

"Comparisons between oppressed groups are not only natural but also sometimes necessary; natural because their struggle to reclaim the human space denied them for centuries is almost similar; necessary because the group that has taken a lead in reclaiming that space influences the other group in devising their strategies, far removed from the area of their operation" (Kapoor 13).

Because oppressed people have been denied social, political, and individual dignity since time immemorial, their fervent desire for equality and need to express their rage has resulted in the particularly compelling creation of Dalit literature and African-American literature. The lives and living circumstances of these people were kept hidden from the general public's attention until the latter half of the twentieth century because the mainstream literary space frequently ignored the worldview and even the existence of these backward regions. The mainstream literary arena was rejected by Dalits and African-Americans, who

emerged with a unique avant-garde literary tradition in which they began defining the kind of living they were forced to live and turned their writings into protests against oppression and exploitation.

Dalits and Black people both face discrimination and oppression based on their identities, but the nature and context of their experiences are different. Dalits, also known as "untouchables," are a marginalized group in India who have been subjected to the caste system for centuries. On the other hand, Black people have faced centuries of slavery, segregation, and institutionalized racism in many countries, including the US and UK. While both groups have suffered historic and ongoing forms of discrimination, their experiences are unique and need to be understood in the context of their respective histories and cultures.

Women are the targets of the harshest discrimination of any disenfranchised group in the world. Women who are members of any minority class might be referred to as the "oppressed among the oppressed" since they experience gender discrimination in addition to racial, social class, and caste-based persecution. Even when the oppressed class began to voice their desire for equality, its women continued to be covered by the growing weight of patriarchy and misogyny. The few women who were able to escape the oppressive grip of gender, race, class, and caste discrimination worked tirelessly to protect other women from becoming victims of similar injustices. The majority of the time, women writers from underrepresented groups concentrated on exposing the various forms of exploitation that affect women from lower socioeconomic classes, giving their literature a strong feeling of activism.

American dramatist and journalist Lisa Victoria Chapman Jones compares Black women to "bullet proof divas" whose "sense of dignity and self cannot be denied; who, though, may live in a war zone, goes out every day greased, pressed and dressed and has the lip and nerve which she uses to raise herself and the world" (Jones 3). Almost every artistic

creation by Black women, whether it be in the form of music, writing, or painting, is inextricably linked to their pursuit of independence and sense of community as Black women. Black women's poetry is inextricably linked to Black feminism, and it frequently focuses on issues like affirming one's identity as a black woman and expressing one's unwavering demand for equality. One of the most well-known Black women poets is usually regarded to be Jamaican-American poet June Millicent Jordan. Her ferocious commitment to women's rights, political activism, sexual liberation, etc., permeates her poems. She continually advocates for the necessity to uphold one's identity and individual as well as collective freedom in her poems because she has firsthand experience living as a black oppressed woman.

Women in subaltern classes often face multiple and intersecting forms of oppression based on their gender, class, and other identity factors. They may face limited access to education, employment opportunities, and healthcare, as well as discrimination and violence in their homes and communities. In many cultures, women in subaltern classes may also face cultural and social norms that reinforce patriarchal attitudes and practices. The combination of poverty, gender discrimination, and cultural attitudes can lead to a cycle of marginalization that is difficult to break, perpetuating the plight of women in subaltern classes. Addressing this issue requires addressing the root causes of oppression and promoting gender equality, access to education and resources, and challenging harmful cultural attitudes.

For example, a Black woman from a low-income background may face discrimination based on her race, gender, and class all at once, making her experience of oppression far more complex than any one of these factors alone. The intersection of these identities can also result in a lack of access to resources, opportunities, and protections, and can leave women in a vulnerable position. Addressing the issue of triple discrimination requires

recognizing the unique experiences and challenges faced by women and taking a holistic approach to address the root causes of oppression and promote equality and inclusivity.

The entry of Dalit women into the literary mainstream in India is also a result of these women's evolving feminism. Like their counterparts in the African American community, Dalit women have discovered the importance of speaking up for their goals and ideas. Kerala's Dalit poetry has not yet developed into a full-fledged radical movement that is capable of opposing the dominant social and cultural forces, in contrast to states like Maharashtra and Gujarat. The belated growth of Ambedkarism among the underprivileged can be attributed, in particular, to the Congress party's domination of the Marxist and nationalist ideologies, to the late arrival of Dalit poetry in Malayalam. The Dalits of the state were being ruled by “the harijan” consciousness, created by the Congress, and the “working class” consciousness, constructed by the Communist Party. Since the beginning of the new millennium, Dalit poetry in Malayalam has been moving slowly but steadily towards a realm where conventional canons are challenged, if not dubbed, as irrelevant.

One of the very few Malayalam Dalit women poets is Vijila Chirappad. Vijila has effectively carved out a position for herself in a field dominated by elitist and patriarchal hegemony with her powerful and appealing poetry about the injustice they are exposed to on the basis of caste and gender. Her poems are not merely expressions of Dalit women's helpless lamentations; rather, they are an aesthetic form of protest in which she explicitly expresses her resistance to oppression as a Dalit woman. The poetry of Vijila stands out for its exquisite aesthetic quality and undercurrents of activism while expressing and examining the various hardships they are subjected to.

She writes about the experiences and struggles of the Dalit community through her poetry. Her work is often described as resistance poetry, as it resists the dominant narrative and sheds light on the marginalization and oppression faced by Dalits in Indian society.

Through her powerful words, she seeks to raise awareness about the ongoing struggle for justice and equality for Dalits and to bring about change in the lives of those who are marginalized.

The emergence of Black females into resistance poetry can be traced back to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, many Black women used their poetry to address issues of racial inequality, sexism, and poverty. These women, such as Maya Angelou and Gwendolyn Brooks, used their poetry as a form of protest against the oppression they faced. Their works inspired other Black women to use poetry as a form of resistance, leading to the growth and development of this genre. Today, Black female poets continue to use their work to address social and political issues, making important contributions to the larger conversation on race and gender.

Alice Walker is an African-American author, poet, and activist who has used her writing to address themes of racism, sexism, and poverty. She is best known for her novel "The Color Purple," but she has also written poetry that reflects her commitment to social justice and resistance to oppression.

Walker's poetry often explores themes of self-discovery, spirituality, and the experiences of Black women. Her work reflects her commitment to resistance and the power of women to reclaim their dignity and agency in the face of oppression. Through her writing, Walker challenges societal norms, raises awareness about the issues faced by Black women, and offers a vision for a more just and equitable world.

Her poems, like *Be Nobody's Darling* and *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* are considered important works of resistance poetry, as they address the struggles and triumphs of Black women and challenge societal norms that seek to silence and marginalize them. Alice Walker's poetry is an important example of how the arts can be used as a tool for

resistance and change, and continues to inspire others to use their voices to promote social justice. Another example is the African-American poet Maya Angelou who used her poetry to address themes of racism, sexism, and poverty.

By using their art to give voice to their experiences, subaltern women poets play an important role in shaping social and political discourse and bring attention to the issues they face. Through their poetry, they offer a powerful form of resistance and a vision for a more equitable future

Chapter 2

Towards the Aesthetics of Dalit Poetry: A Study of the Selected Poems of Vijila Chirappad

In many of the Indian languages, Dalit literature has established itself as a distinct and significant category of writing. Over the past fifty years, a number of writings in this category have developed as a powerful voice of Dalit communities in various literary genres.

Communities that had been subjected to prejudice, exploitation, and marginalization as a result of the hierarchical caste system now have a new voice and identity through the emergence of Dalit Literature. Understanding the meaning of the term "Dalit" is crucial in order to comprehend the nature of Dalit literature. The Sanskrit term for "Dalit" has the meanings "grounded," "suppressed," "crushed," or "broken to pieces. In India's lengthy historical history, the term "Dalit" is used to describe people or groups who have experienced social marginalization or oppression. This phrase was initially used in reference to the exploitation of those who were traditionally referred to as "shudra" in the Hindu community by the renowned social reformer and advocate for Dalits in Maharashtra, Jyotiba Phule. It alludes to those individuals and groups who are marginalized and excluded from society's norms.

Later, the name "Dalit" was also used to translate the British government's official designation for what is now known as the Scheduled Castes—"depressed classes"—into Hindi and Marathi. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar used the term to give a new, respectful, and powerful identity to the so-called "untouchable" castes by using the term 'Harijan' (children of God) suggested by Gandhi and which was found to be a patronizing word. However, the term "Dalit" didn't start to be used frequently until the 1970s when political parties

representing scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other groups that experienced discrimination and exploitation based on their ethnicity at birth began to mobilise. Literature written by the members of the Dalit communities or literature that is specifically written to represent the typical social, historical and cultural aspects of the Dalit communities is described as Dalit literature. It is literature with a clear social commitment that aims to further concepts of justice, equality, and resistance to injustice, suffering, and economic exploitation.

The modern movement for Dalit writing in India began in the Marathi language in the 1960s with the Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangh as a platform alternative to mainstream Marathi literature. It was influenced by the philosophy of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule. Ambedkar's politics and literature helped him establish himself as a steadfast Dalit anti-oppression advocate. The Annihilation of Caste is his famous book. The movement of the African Americans led by Martin Luther King, activities of black panthers and the "Little Magazine" movement as the voice of the marginalised served as background triggers for Dalit resistance writing in India. Before the 1960s, writers like Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav, Shankarao Kharat, Narayan Surve, and Anna Bhau Sathe highlighted Dalit challenges and struggles in literature. Baburao Bagul, who lived from 1930 to 2008, is regarded as a pioneer of Marathi Dalit writings. His uncompromising portrayal of societal exploitation in his 1963 collection of short stories, *Jevha MiJat Choralī* (When I Concealed My Caste), suspended the established principles of Marathi literature. The Dalit literature movement in India was further strengthened and cemented by Namdeo Dhasal, the founder of Dalit Panther. In addition to being translated into English frequently, Dalit writings have also been published in Gujarati, Kannada, Punjabi, Hindi, Malayalam, and Bengali. All literary genres, including poetry, short tales, novels, dramas, and memoirs have been employed in Dalit writing.

Literature reflects the Dalit experiences and with their constant pain and suffering they cannot write a beautiful poem, invoking the poetic muse. The Dalits experience constant pain and suffering thus, they cannot write a beautiful poem with a proper structure. In the autobiographies, short stories, novels, poems by the Dalits they prefer to use confessional mode. Their status as previously untouchable still proves to be a barrier. Their trauma is definitely of historical importance. According to Manu Smriti, four kinds of people in society borne out of the body of Lord Brahma, the supreme God. According to this mythology, Brahmin was born out head, Shudra was born from the feet, Vaishya from the abdomen, and Kshatriya from the arms. Shudra was the main target of this plan to live in servitude.

The untouchables were denied formal education for a long time, which would have inspired them to launch a legitimate literary movement to voice their opposition to the monopoly of the established literature. Since the 1970s, a large number of Dalit poets and writers have produced poetry, short tales, novels, and autobiographies that are replete with themes related to caste oppression, identity issues, poverty, untouchability, and revolt.

Dalit literature is characterised by its outspoken calls for the dismantling of societal hierarchies as well as its fundamental critique of the caste system and all forms of prejudice. The literature that questions the status quo is political and social commitment literature. It is literature that challenges exclusion from society's and culture's mainstream. Literature is what champions human dignity and equality. The majority of Dalit authors also concur that, as opposed to mere entertainment or pure intellectual sophistry, the primary goal of literature should be to effect social change.

Dalit consciousness is a term used to describe the political, social, and cultural awareness and identity of Dalits, who are a historically oppressed and marginalized community in India. Dalit consciousness is a movement for social justice and equality, and it seeks to empower Dalits to assert their rights and reclaim their dignity. It emphasizes the

need to challenge caste-based discrimination and exclusion, and to create a society where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their caste, class, or gender.

As Baburao Bagul wrote, “Dalit Sahitya is not a literature of vengeance. Dalit Sahitya is not a literature which spreads hatred. Dalit Sahitya first promotes man’s greatness and man’s freedom and for that reason it is a historic necessity... Anguish, waiting, pronouncements of sorrow alone do not define Dalit Sahitya. We need literature heroically full of life to create a new society.” (Bagul 54)

The early appearance of the reformation and renaissance movements in Kerala under the leadership of Sree Narayana Guru, Sahodaran Ayyappan, Ayyankali, and Kumaran Asan in the 19th century has its reflections in the Dalit lives too. Dalits in Kerala are provided with better education and job opportunities now. Today, social evils like untouchability and caste discrimination are not readily visible in the society but caste issues are still lingering in the minds of people. Dalit writers in Kerala are fighting against that invisible but visible discrimination in the name of castes. New generation poets Sajin P. J, Valsala Baby, K.K. Nirmala, Praveena K. P, Shaju Nellai, Pushpa Joy, B. Madhukumar, Balu Pulinelly and Johnson Cheeranchira are making distinctive voices in the world of Malayalam poetry to create a casteless and classless society. The poets are seeking the horizon by breaking the shells of casteism.

By its very nature, Dalit literature remains at the margin as its challenges are mainstream. The representation of prejudice and exploitation unites this realistic rather than romantic literature. The mainstream literature's silence on surrounding socioeconomic realities and its romanticization of Indian society and its hierarchies are harshly criticized by Dalit writers. Dalit writers have used such language and slang expressions that are generally considered unacceptable and colloquial by mainstream writers. Marxist and Ambedkarite ideologies can be seen in the content of Dalit literature. In general, it can be said that Dalit

literature in India has improved in both quantity and quality and has had a significant enough impact to challenge canonical literature. Dalit literature places a strong emphasis on the realities and experiences that are not represented in other works of literature. The Brahmanical predominance in society and literature has been successfully challenged, and it has given the Dalit masses the means to speak out for their rights and convey their suffering. In this way, it has aided in the development of social identity as well as literature.

Feminist Dalit poetry refers to poetry written by Dalit women who assert their identities as both Dalit and feminist. Women writers from Dalit groups have started to find a place in Dalit literature. The reality and experiences that are not depicted in other literary works are heavily emphasized in Dalit writing. Since the Brahmanical hegemony in society and literature has been successfully challenged, the Dalit people now have the ability to express their pain and cry out for their rights. In this sense, it has contributed to the growth of both literature and societal identity. Women authors from Dalit communities have begun to establish themselves through Dalit literature.

Vijila Chirappad is a contemporary Dalit poet in Malayalam, who use their poetry to resist, in a variety of ways the continuing marginalization and discrimination. She was born at Perambra village in Calicut, Kerala. Her poems are a bitter comment on predicament of the Dalits who still live in poverty, hunger, the problems of their colour, race, social status and their names. Vijila Chirappad is one among the very few Malayalam Dalit women poets. In a sphere that is dominated by elitist and patriarchal hegemony, Vijila, has successfully carved a niche for herself with her strong and compelling poems about the discrimination they are perpetually subjected to on the basis of gender as well as caste. Vijila entered the mainstream literature through her poems with throbbing issues.

Her poems are not mere manifestations of Dalit women's helpless lamentations, they are a form of aesthetic protest through which her resistance to oppression as a woman and

Dalit is explicitly expressed. Vijila's poems are distinct for its perfervid aesthetic quality with undertones of activism while expressing and exploring the multifaceted tribulations they are forced to endure. The Dalit poetries are a public exposure of their private and collective trauma. most Dalit texts, in one way or other, address the politics of location.

The author uses bleak colours to depict the Dalit women's pitiful state in the poem *Oru Penpattiyude Athmakadha* (An autobiography of a Bitch). They are depicted as scrawny, ravenous babes smelling the vile chewies in the trash heap. People rush over to grab her male children and drag the female ones away. They are neither powerful enough to bark at the strangers coming to their home nor are they beautiful enough to decorate their houses. Above all they have no milk, no flesh, not even a smooth skin to be bargained at the markets. The poem ends on a melancholy note.

"O world.... o world.

Our race is destined to hide in the backyards

To stare at the heap of waste

To curl and satisfy with the darkness

In the out houses" (Chirappad 27-32)

In her poem *Kaikkalathunikal* (Kitchen Rags), she portrays the evolution of a little girl's frock into a dirty kitchen rag:

Holding close all the dirt,

kitchen-rags.

I never settled it to

drench and dry,

even stiffen once.

.....

These old times,

how delicate was it then.

once it was kunjimol's frock.

now near the furnace (Chirappad 14).

The poem reveals the pathetic plight of Dalit women who are made to live their lives as domestic servants devoid of any dreams or aspirations as a result of the extreme caste as well as gender subjugation. The transformation of "Kunjimol's frock" to a dirty kitchen rag is the miserable transformation of the innocence and playfulness of a girl child into victim of severe hardships and afflictions from the society that treats her like an object for male satisfaction and fulfilment of domestic chores. The poem takes deviation from usual rhythmical and lyrical patterns to introduce the everyday issues before the readers. Poet is getting critical about the concept of casteism, and its promise in bringing solace to the minds of the people.

In Vijila Chirappad's poem *Sumangali* (The Married Woman), she uses the blood red sindoor which married women wears on the central hair partition on their forehead, as a symbol of sanction given to man that permits him to exercise his sexual dominance over his wife. Through her poem, she gives voice to those innumerable vulnerable victims of marital rape, a grave matter which is still popularly considered as a myth or delusion.

Vijila Chirappad didn't let her status as a persecuted minority vanquish her strong sense of activism. Their ardent need to give voice to the voiceless reflect unmitigatedly in all their works. Autobiographical quality is intimately present in Vijila Chirappad's poems as well. Vijila's poems, such as *Munpe Parannaval* (She who flew ahead), *Purampokku* (Wasteland), *Amma Oru Kalpanikakavithayalla* (Amma is not a romantic poem),

Penkriyakalude Prasadhanam (The publication of Womanly deeds), *I Can't Grow My Nails*, *Oru Penpattiyude Aathmakadha* (The Autobiography of a Bitch) etc., gives an authentic first-hand exposition of the everyday harsh and impecunious life situations of Dalits in Kerala.

When the poet laments this woman's condition, she is expressing her resentment. She, a person, and the fish from the market all enter homes through the same door. All Indians are my brothers and sisters, Chandrika heard as she entered the house.

In her poem *Purampokku* (Wasteland), she writes

Returning daily from the market place

Both the fish and she share

The same path

The one through the back door

Entering through the very same route,

While hearing the television

Blare the pledge aloud on August 15

All Indians are my brothers

And sisters (Chirappad 12).

The poem "Purampokku" clearly depicts the discriminations a Dalit has to suffer. As a result of their poverty-stricken background, most Dalit women are forced to take up jobs as domestic servants where they are treated as untouchables because of their minority status. Even now, Dalits are refused to enter through the front door of an upper caste household since they are discerned as "impure" and inferior. When the poet laments this woman's condition, she is expressing her resentment. She, a person, and the fish from the market all enter homes through the same door.

The same idea is expressed in the poem *Munpe Parannaval* (She who flew ahead) also, in which she says that her mother knew how to operate fridge, grinder, TV and LPG, even though they have none of these at their home, because

Like in Madhavi Kutty's stories

And the novels of MT

She is Janu

The servant (Chirappad 21).

The mother figure in the poem "Mother is not a Poetic Figment of Our Imagination" represents the difficult reality of Dalit life. She is not a beautiful romantic poem. In the poem the mother is blabbering about the miseries of her life. In her complaining voice one can hear the problems the lower class suffers. Even if they have a piece of land and a roof over their heads they might not be having electricity or water at home. The voice of the ignorant mother turns into a social critique. She mutters that people who own a rubber plantation, a TV, and a phone are the true BPLs in this country. When she is prepared to leave the house to work for a living, she tells her daughter to turn off the radio because it is entirely in Sanskrit, which is just a problem for the higher classes.

Vijila says even though Kerala has a strong communist history casteism is imbedded in the minds of the people. One cannot cast it away from the subconscious realm of their minds. Kerala society has witnessed a lot of revolutions against casteism, for the upliftment of Dalit especially Dalit women. Casteism, according to Vijila, is deeply ingrained in people's thinking despite Kerala's long history as a stronghold of communism.

Dalit women writers have lived their lives in agony, misery, oppression and subjugation. Being a Dalit woman from birth presents a dual challenge. Women face several

social limitations in nations like India. The barriers are a little stiffer, particularly in rural India. Education for a Dalit lady in this situation is a demanding task. Even if some of them were able to complete their education and have written brilliant pieces that ignited their advocacy. They wrote to raise awareness of the pitiful circumstances Dalits have been in and to call for their emancipation. Their works are characterized by an autobiographical voice, and of course a strong invocation for womanhood to free themselves from the invisible chains of oppression. Dalit women are referred to as "Dalit among the Dalits" or downtrodden among the downtrodden because they are thrice alienated on the basis of their class, caste and gender. Women of Dalit communities may be the most marginalized. They are the ones who are most vulnerable to repression and discrimination. In the past few years, the genre of Dalit poetry has been increasingly important in Malayalam literature.

Vijila's poems have been successful in creating a framework that is exclusively for women. They deal with female realities such as menstruation, marriage, cooking, relationship between daughter and mother, between sisters etc. The poetry of Vijila provide a distinctly subjective perspective on gender, including how she sees herself and the outside world. Her speech is characterised by a distinctly feminine flair. Her use of majoring is sufficient evidence for this. Her writings have a rather strong autobiographical undertone that describes what women feel, think, and perceive in a world that is predominately masculine. We discover a true attitude to the facts of daily life as we go through her poems.

Chapter-3

Exploration of Protest in Black Poetry: A Study of Selected Poems of Alice Walker

Black women in Africa have faced a long history of oppression and marginalization. This includes economic, political, and social discrimination, as well as violence and exploitation. In many societies, traditional gender roles and stereotypes perpetuate discrimination against women, and black women often face additional discrimination based on their race. Despite this, black women in Africa have been at the forefront of resistance movements and have made significant contributions to their communities and societies. Efforts to address the oppression of black women in Africa must be intersectional, taking into account the ways in which race, gender, and other factors interact to shape their experiences.

Poetry has been used as a medium of protest by black women in Africa for centuries. It has been used to express their experiences of oppression, discrimination and marginalization. Poetry has been used as a form of resistance, to give voice to the struggles of black women, and to challenge the dominant narratives and power structures that have marginalized them. Poets used their words to speak out against racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. Their poetry has been an important tool in the fight for social and political change in Africa.

The struggle for equality of black women is reflected in poetry through themes of racism, oppression, and marginalization. Poets such as Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Nikki Giovanni have used their work to give voice to the experiences and perspectives of black women, highlighting the unique challenges they face in a society that often marginalizes and oppresses them. These poets use powerful imagery and language to convey the pain, resilience, and strength of black women, and their work has helped to raise awareness and understanding of the ongoing struggle for equality and justice.

Almost every artistic creation by Black women, whether it be in the form of music, literature, or painting, is inextricably linked to their quest for independence and sense of community as Black women. Black women's poetry is inextricably linked to Black feminism and has frequently focused on issues like claiming one's identity as a black woman and expressing one's unwavering demand for equity.

Black women have long played a crucial role in the fight for equality and freedom. The 1970s was a defining decade for contemporary black feminism. African American women across a diversity of fields stepped forward to demand that attention be paid to the double burden of being black and female, a complex identity often overlooked. Influential writers from Angela Davis to Alice Walker and Toni Morrison wrote about gender within the context of race. Their sophisticated powerful stories centered upon the concerns of black women and gave readers throughout the world a window onto their experiences. Shaped by the works of this generation of feminist legal scholars Kimberle Crenshaw introduced intersectionality in 1989. Black feminists think that racism and sexism are intertwined. Intersectionality is the term for this. The Oxford English Dictionary now includes the term intersectionality. Crenshaw's concept has spread in influence, inspiring political action from 'Black Lives Matter' to the Me Too Movement. Black feminist continues their important work focusing attention on the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class. Because the mainstream feminist movement, which is dominated by white middle-class women, does not effectively confront the racism that black women face, black feminism has emerged. The National Black Feminist Association began operations in 1973. The term "womanism" was originally used in 1979 by Alice Walker. Womanism is a black feminist theory. One of the most well-known works about black feminism is Patricia Hill Collins' 1991 publication *Black Feminist Thought*.

Black feminism is a movement and ideology that centers the experiences and perspectives of Black women in the struggle for gender and racial equality. It emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the ways in which mainstream feminist movements often excluded and marginalized Black women. Black feminists argue that the intersection of race and gender creates a unique oppression that cannot be fully understood or addressed by considering either dimension alone. They also critique the ways in which mainstream feminist and civil rights movements have been led and dominated by middle-class, straight, cisgender Black men. Black feminism continues to be an influential movement in contemporary feminist and anti-racist activism.

Black feminism puts a focus on the experiences of Black women, taking into account how they are positioned in relation to other social and political identities as well as racism, sexism, and classism. In addition to being barred from black liberation movements because to their gender, black women have also been excluded from mainstream feminism due to their race. Black feminism emphasises and engages with the numerous facets of identity that women possess, which is important since it offered them the chance to discuss being black and gender inequity at the same time. Black women played a crucial role in the black liberation and gender equality movements despite the prejudice and discrimination they experienced.

Black feminism rose to prominence in the 1960s, as the civil rights movement excluded women from leadership positions, and the mainstream feminist movement largely focused its agenda on issues that predominately impacted middle-class White women. From the 1970s to 1980s, Black feminists formed groups that addressed the role of Black women in Black nationalism, gay liberation, and second-wave feminism. The Anita Hill issue in the 1990s helped Black feminism gain popularity. Social media advocacy helped black feminist ideologies gain more traction in the 2010s.

Black feminism proponents contend that Black women are situated inside power structures in fundamentally different ways from White women. The term "white feminist" became popular in the early twenty-first century to denigrate feminists who avoid discussing intersectionality. Black feminism's detractors contend that racial or gender divides lessen the force of the general feminist and anti-racist movements.

Black women have always been central to the struggle for freedom and equality. The 1970s was a defining decade for contemporary black feminism. African American women across a diversity of fields stepped forward to demand that attention be paid to the double burden of being black and female, a complex identity often overlooked. Influential writers from Angela Davis to Alice Walker and Toni Morrison wrote about gender within the context of race. Their sophisticated powerful stories centered upon the concerns of black women and gave readers throughout the world a window onto their experiences. Shaped by the works of this generation of feminist legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw introduced intersectionality in 1989. Feminists of color contend that racism and sexism are intertwined. This is called intersectionality. In 2015 intersectionality was added to the Oxford English Dictionary. Crenshaw's concept has spread in influence, inspiring political action from 'Black Lives Matter' to the Me Too Movement. Black feminist continues their important work focusing attention on the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class. Because the mainstream feminist movement, which is dominated by white middle-class women, does not effectively confront the racism that black women face, black feminism has emerged. The National Black Feminist Organization began operations in 1973. The term "womanism" was first used in 1979 by Alice Walker. A black feminist theory is womanism. One of the most well-known works about black feminism is Patricia Hill Collins' 1991 publication *Black Feminist Thought*.

Black feminism centers on the experiences of Black women, understanding their position in relation to racism, sexism, and classism, as well as other social and political identities. In addition to being barred from black liberation movements because to their gender, black women have also been excluded from mainstream feminism due to their race. Black feminism highlights and engages with the many aspects of identity that women have, which was significant because it gave them the opportunity to talk about being black along with gender inequality. Despite the prejudice and discrimination they faced, Black women were and still continue to be critical to the black liberation and gender equality movements.

The civil rights movement excluded women from leadership roles, and the mainstream feminist movement mostly concentrated on concerns that primarily affected White middle-class women, which led to the rise of Black feminism in the 1960s. From the 1970s to 1980s, Black feminists formed groups that addressed the role of Black women in Black nationalism, gay liberation, and second-wave feminism. Black feminism entered the mainstream with the Anita Hill affair in the 1990s. In the decade of 2010, social media advocacy helped black feminist ideologies gain more traction.

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Among the notions that evolved out of the Black feminist movement are Alice Walker's womanism and historical revisionism with an increased focus on Black women. bell hooks, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Davis, and Patricia Hill Collins have emerged as leading

academics on Black feminism, while Black celebrities have encouraged mainstream discussion of Black feminism.

Slavery is the seedbed of Black feminism .Black women were considered property and not people, they were the least. Intersectionality is embedded within the tapestry of feminist.

The main ideas of Black feminism include intersectionality, self-determination, empowerment through solidarity, challenging societal norms and Decentralizing the dominant

By intersectionality the black feminists argue that the intersection of race, gender, and class oppression creates unique experiences for Black women that cannot be fully understood or addressed by focusing on one aspect of identity alone. The Black women must have control over their own lives and bodies in order to be truly free. This includes the right to make choices about their own health and reproductive rights, as well as the right to define and shape their own identities. Black feminists argue that the struggles of Black women are interconnected with those of other marginalized groups and that true liberation can only be achieved through collective action and solidarity. Black feminists critique societal norms and institutions, such as the nuclear family and capitalism, that they argue perpetuate oppression and harm Black women and other marginalized groups. Black feminists assert that the dominant narrative of society should be deconstructed and reconstructed to give voice to the marginalized group and to make sure their stories are told.

Alice Walker is known for incorporating themes of black feminism in her poetry. She explores the intersectionality of race, gender, and class in her work, highlighting the experiences of black women and the ways in which they are marginalized and oppressed. In her poetry, she addresses issues such as domestic violence, sexual oppression, and the

importance of self-acceptance and self-empowerment for black women. Some of her famous poetry collections include "*Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful*" and "*Revolutionary Petunias*".

In her poetry, Walker frequently addresses the intersectionality of race and gender and the ways in which they shape the lives of black women. She explores the double oppression that black women face, both as women and as members of a marginalized racial group.

One example of this is her poem "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens" which reflects on the rich cultural heritage of black women and the ways in which it has been suppressed and devalued by society. The poem also speaks to the resilience of black women and their ability to create beauty and meaning in their lives despite facing oppression. Another example is her poem "We Alone", which speaks to the experiences of black women in the Civil Rights Movement and their often-overlooked contributions to the struggle for equality.

In summary, Alice Walker's poetry reflects her feminist and Black Feminist views and her desire for social change and equality. Her work often centers on the experiences of Black women, their struggles and their resilience. They have often been marginalized and excluded from opportunities and resources, leading to significant disparities in health, education, and economic well-being. Additionally, they have faced violence, particularly sexual violence, at disproportionately high rates.

Walker's themes of Black female empowerment and sovereignty made her an incredible asset to a community of people that too often aren't recognized for their accomplishments. Walker's voice continues to be the loudest in a period in modern culture where these voices are regrettably muffled by foes.

I am the girl

with the dark skin

whose shoes are thin

I am the girl

with the rotted teeth

I am the girl

with the wounded eye

and the melted ear (Walker 317).

'Remember me' an autobiographical poem by Alice Walker discusses the themes of racial discrimination and gender discrimination. In the beginning, she makes a reference to her own childhood. She lived in a society where African-Americans were mistreated and badly abused. The 'I' in the poem is actually the personification of black women whose lives are darkened by the injustice of being black and being a woman in a world dominated by men. She wants her readers to realize the intersectionality of the oppression that women of colour face, not only as women but as women that are part of an identity that is marginalized.

The lines, "I am the girl holding their babies, cooking their meals, sweeping their yards, washing their clothes," suggest that the speaker is a woman who is fulfilling traditional gender roles within a community. She is performing tasks that are typically associated with women and often go unrecognized and undervalued. The lines, "Dark and rotting and wounded, wounded," convey a sense of pain and suffering. The word "dark" could refer to the speaker's skin colour, suggesting that she is a person of colour and has experienced racism and discrimination. Overall, these lines highlight the way in which women, particularly

women of colour, are often expected to fulfill traditional gender roles and perform domestic labour without receiving recognition.

The line, 'I am the woman with the blessed dark skin' shows the transition in the mind of the poet. Now the poet identifies herself as a woman with distinct physical characteristics. She describes herself as a woman with "blessed dark skin," which could be interpreted as a celebration of her heritage and identity as a Black woman. This line is particularly significant because historically, people of colour have often been subjected to discrimination and prejudice based on the colour of their skin. Despite the challenges she has faced, the speaker identifies herself with pride and asserts her existence. She becomes more optimistic and realizes that racial inequality cannot rule their lives anymore.

The poem "Women" by Alice Walker is a celebration of the strength, resilience, and valour of women. It begins with the lines:

"Women. They were women then My mama's generation Husky of voice--stout of Step"

In her opening remarks, the speaker praises the fortitude and strength of the women who came before her.. She says the women of her "mama's generation" were "Husky of voice" and "stout of / Step," suggesting that they didn't have the luxury of being dainty and delicate. Implicitly because of how difficult it was for them to advance in society due to the twin hurdles of racism and sexism, they had to speak sternly and proceed steadily in the direction of their ambitions. In fact, the speaker also refers to how they "ironed / Starched white / shirts," probably alluding to the domestic labour that Black women were frequently constrained to in a post-slavery but still racist society.

The poet pays a glowing tribute to the previous generations of African women who fought for the education of girls. This poem was written by Alice Walker for her mother. She

speaks about how the women of the previous generation (her mother's generation) were strong and determined despite coming from poor and illiterate backgrounds. These women had to face prejudice because of their skin colour but were determined to fight for equality and education for their children. She conveys a feeling of deep respect and admiration for the women. The poet praises the strength, courage and perseverance of her "mama's generation". She provides them characteristics often associated with men to demonstrate that these women also have assertiveness in their "fists," anger in their "voices," and resolve in their walk. The description of these women as "husky of voice--stout of step" emphasizes their physical strength and suggests that they were not to be underestimated.

The poem continues, "With fists as well as Hands How they battered down Doors And ironed Starched white shirts" (Walker 159)

Here, the speaker emphasizes the resilience and determination of these women. They were not afraid to fight for what they believed in, and they were willing to use their strength to break down barriers. The image of "ironed starched white shirts" suggests that these women were also concerned with maintaining their appearance, even as they fought for their rights. "How they led Armies Headragged generals Across mined Fields Booby-trapped Ditches To discover books Desks A place for us" (Walker, p.159)

The women of this generation are portrayed as strong. They led armies, demonstrating their ability to command respect and to fight for what they believed in. The image of "headragged generals" suggests that these women were not afraid to lead, even if their appearance did not fit traditional notions of beauty. The fact that they crossed "mined fields" and "booby-trapped ditches" highlights the danger and difficulty of their efforts, yet they persevered to create "a place for us."

The poem concludes with a tribute to the speaker's mother, who has survived many challenges and struggles.

Overall, "Women" is a powerful tribute to the strength of women, particularly those of the speaker's mother's generation. Through her vivid descriptions of these women's struggles and triumphs, Alice Walker highlights the resilience and determination that have always been a part of women's history.

The speaker begins by highlighting the strength and tenacity of the women who came before her. She says the women of her "mama's generation" were "Husky of voice" and "stout of / Step," suggesting that they didn't have the luxury of being dainty and delicate. They had to speak gruffly and walk resolutely in the direction of their goals, implicitly because the twin barriers of racism and sexism made it incredibly difficult for them to move up in the world. Indeed, the speaker also mentions how they "ironed / Starched white / shirts," likely nodding to the kind of domestic work Black women so often found themselves limited to in a post-slavery but still-racist society.

The poem "Torture" by Alice Walker is a powerful call to action in the face of oppression and injustice. The opening lines establish a pattern of response that is both resilient and empowering: planting a tree in response to torture. This act of planting serves as a symbol of hope, growth, and renewal, and suggests that even in the darkest of times, there is always something that can be done to resist and overcome.

As the poem continues, the pattern of planting a tree in response to violence and oppression is repeated with increasing urgency. The repetition of the phrase "plant a tree" creates a sense of rhythm and momentum, driving the poem forward and emphasizing the importance of taking action in the face of injustice. The use of the second person "they" also

creates a sense of separation between the oppressed and the oppressors, highlighting the brutality of those in power and the need for collective action in response.

The final line, "When they assassinate your leaders," marks a turning point in the poem. The use of the word "assassinate" suggests a particularly brutal and calculated act of violence, and underscores the vulnerability of those who dare to speak out against injustice. However, even in the face of such violence, the call to action remains the same: "plant a tree." This suggests that even when leaders are taken from us, the struggle for justice and freedom must continue, and that we must remain committed to the work of planting and nurturing new life.

In conclusion, "Torture" by Alice Walker is a powerful and stirring poem that emphasizes the importance of taking action in the face of oppression and injustice. Through the repeated use of the phrase "plant a tree," the poem suggests that even in the darkest of times, there is always something that can be done to resist and overcome. By emphasizing the importance of collective action and the resilience of the human spirit, the poem offers a message of hope and renewal that is as relevant today as it was when it was written.

Conclusion

Alice Walker and Vijila Chirappad are both poets with distinctive styles and unique perspectives, but there are some common traits that can be identified in their poetry. Strong feminist ideas are shared by both writers, and many of their poems express their concern for the rights and empowerment of women. As a pioneer in the feminist movement, Alice Walker is well-known, and Vijila Chirappad frequently addresses issues affecting women in Indian society in her poetry. They have a strong commitment to social justice and frequently utilise their poems to draw attention to injustice and inequality problems. They highlight problems like racism, poverty, and violence in their poems, frequently use strong language and vivid imagery to get their point across. To express their thoughts and feelings through poetry, both poets make extensive use of vivid natural imagery. Vijila Chirappad employs images of nature to explore themes like rebirth and renewal, whereas Alice Walker frequently uses the natural world to reflect on the human experience. Their poetry is very personal and frequently introspective since they draw on their own experiences and feelings. While Vijila Chirappad's poetry is renowned for its close-up depictions of the challenges of daily existence, Alice Walker's poetry frequently addresses themes of self-discovery and healing. Their poetry successfully employs symbolism to explore difficult subjects and feelings. Alice Walker often employs symbols such as water and fire to represent different aspects of the human experience, while Vijila Chirappad uses symbolism to explore spiritual themes and the interconnectedness of all things.

The poetry of Alice Walker and Vijila Chirappad is truly remarkable because it broadens our perspectives on being and becoming, including a new becoming for women, a new becoming for humanity, and a new becoming for nature. It also challenges the elite/upper-class poetics by developing a different poetics, sensibility, language, consciousness, and cultural paradigm. This results in a fresh disclosure of the inside and

outside: a look outside from the windowless hut, a quest that goes beyond skin tone. Both of these poets have taken on the enormous burden of using their artistic sensibility to oppose the long-standing prejudice that their people are subjected to. Their poems are not expressions of their lamentations and helplessness, instead, they are strong poetical pronouncements of their resistance against injustice and their fight against the oppressors.

By highlighting the challenges and injustices experienced by marginalised populations and empowering them to fight against oppression, the resistance poetry of Alice Walker and Vijila Chirappad has significantly altered society.

Black feminism and social justice have found a forceful voice in Alice Walker's poetry. Her work frequently addresses issues of identity, oppression, and resistance while focusing on the lives of Black women. Her poem "Women," which honours the fortitude and tenacity of Black women, has motivated countless women to embrace their identities and fight for their rights.

Similar to this, Vijila Chirappad's poetry is centred on the sufferings of Dalit and female marginalised populations in India. Her poetry challenges the prevailing Brahminical worldview by exposing the caste-based violence and injustice that these groups experience. Many Dalits and members of other marginalised communities have been motivated by her efforts to speak out against injustice and call for social justice.

Walker and Chirappad have inspired readers to challenge the status system and envision a more just society through their poems. Their efforts have helped individuals become more conscious of social concerns and inspired them to take action to bring about change. Additionally, their poetry has given voice to underrepresented groups and assisted in amplifying their experiences and tales.

In conclusion, the resistance poetry of Alice Walker and Vijila Chirappad has influenced society significantly by enabling underprivileged groups to speak out against injustice, fight oppression, and demand it. Their poetry has motivated numerous others to take action in order to make the world fairer and just, serving as a potent tool for social change.

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