

The Sad Songs of the Subaltern Subordinates

Shanmathi. S. and Ms. J. Sridevi

Abstract

The heartless hunger game of marginalization battles the downtrodden people who are socially and economically low. On the basis of race, caste and gender people are completely excluded from the world. The Subalterns are entirely imprisoned by the inequality. They are branded as marginalized in the society. The rights and opportunities are always gifted to the high ranked people. In India and America, the inferior ranked people face marginalization based on caste, class and race. Bitter truth is the gender-based suppression is existing all around the world. The extremely alienated and unnoticed community in the world is said to be the third gender called transgender. Here, the paper highlights the pain experienced by the subaltern people. The Indian Dalits, the coloured Americans and transgender are sailing in the same boat termed subalterns. In order to acquire the equal rights and recognition from the society, the main aim of this paper is to delineate the violence and adversities faced by the subjugated.

Keywords: African Americans, Dalits, Transgender, Marginalization, Subalterns.

Marginalization is found to be a ceaseless practice in all around the world. In a society a particular set of people is always separated from the common people. An individual or a clan who are below the margin level is termed as subalterns. The subalterns are being humiliated on the basis of class, caste, race and gender. The Government schemes and policies did not satisfy them, they long for the equal rights and respect in the society. The coloured people are suppressed by the whites, the Dalits are oppressed by the upper caste people and the transgender community is completely ignored by the entry world. The subalterns penned down their agonies and frustration in their poetry. They kept writing as a tool, to pour out their subjective and objective feelings. People may differ according to the race, caste, class, country and culture, but the humiliation faced by them is the same.

Meena Kandasamy is an Indian poet, translator, novelist and activist from Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Her works focuses on the exploitation of lower caste people in India and feminism. The pathetic condition of the Dalits, influenced her to eradicate the caste system through her immortal writings. Through her poems, it is understood that Dalit women are facing the brutal oppression more than their men. "Narration" her poem depicts about the cruel landlord who exploited a lower caste woman. This poetry reflects the voice of a Dalit woman who is seduced by an upper caste landlord. The rape victim questions everyone that, how she could be a Non-Dalit only during the time of rape.

I'll weep to you about
My landlord, and with
My mature gestures-
You will understand:
The torn sari, disheveled hair
Stifled cries and meek submission.
I was not an untouchable then. (1-7)



Meena Kandasamy

Courtesy: <https://www.poemhunter.com/meena-kandasamy/>

In this poem, the Dalit woman cries out about her tragic condition. Her torn sari and disheveled hair reveals the readers that she had lost her chastity. The wealthy landlord always sees the lower-class people in disgusting look and segregates them in every aspect because of their caste. When they found a Dalit woman alone, they forgot all their orthodox values and touched the untouchable women. The victim voices out that, how she could not be an untouchable by the time of rape. It shows that the landlords are playing in the lives of the untouchable female workers.

The Dalit women are doubly oppressed by the upper caste men in the society. In the poem, “Shame” Meena Kandasamy has portrayed how the high caste aristocrats escaped from their trial and how the female victim bore the blame and pain. Her heart pricked her for bearing the shame, so she committed suicide and took salvation.

Public’s prying eyes
segregate her—the victim.
But the criminals have
already maintained—
Their Caste is classic shield. (5-9)

.....
Bravely, in search of
a definite solution,
and elusive purification,
she takes the test of the fire-

the ancient medicine for shame. (22-26)

Here the victim blames the scar of disgrace and shame and not the accused. Even though the mistake did not lie in her path, the public's starring eyes killed her alive. The upper ranked men escape with the loops using his high caste as a tool. The caste shielded the rapist from the crime, he had committed. The poor lady at last decided to purify her mortal body which was stained by an upper class civilized animal. So she submitted herself to the fire which she considered it as a medicine for her shame. The Dalit women are polluted physically and psychologically by the superior ranked men.



Verlena Dillard

Courtesy: <https://plus.google.com/110211635450012824991>

Verlena Dillard in her poem *Don't Judge Me for Existing* speaks about how the blacks are surviving racism in American society. The coloured people and whites may vary according to their facial colour but not by blood. The poet reflects the painful feelings of the blacks throughout this passage:

Do you hate me because of the color of my skin?
like I'm a disease?
you don't think I have desires?

that I have needs? (9-12)

.....
You may think I'm nothing,
just push me into the mud,
knowing we both have the same colored blood.
You can't judge me by my appearance,
or by my race,
or even the color on my face. (16 – 21)

This poem questions the white racists that, why they did not like the coloured people. The poet wants to know the reason why the whites hate black, whether it is because of the skin colour or the diseased look. The coloured people are also one among the common people, but their desires and needs are not given importance. Dillard says that the white racists suppress them without knowing that they both have the same blood. He wanted to teach the whites that they could not judge anyone by their appearance or race or even with the colour of their face.

The poem “Wrong Color” by Christopher Stanard deals with the theme of racism. Christopher Stanard’s “Wrong Color” and Wole Soyinka’s “Telephonic Conversation” have the common theme of rejected opportunities of the coloured because of their race. It voices out against the opportunities which are not provided to the coloured people just because of their colour.

Gray suit.
Blue day.
Great Telephone interview.
They say they like my resume.
But
When the interviewer sees me
He does a double take.
Damn. (1 - 8)

The poet’s bitter experience replicates the common situation faced by most of the African Americans in the United States of America. The coloured are not less in intellect, but the whites are blinded by the racism. They were highly satisfied with the poet’s resume and telephone interview; unfortunately, they were not ready to accept his race alone. So the racist rejected him. It shows the brutal mindset of the white racists who considers more on race and not the caliber of a person.

Deborah Zambo’s “Who Am I?” is a transgender poetry. This poetry reflects the transgender lives caught in between the mixed gender. “Betrayed by my own body”(1) the first line itself shows the gloomy mindset of the poet who feels that he is internally and externally different.

Belonging nowhere
Insiable hunger
Desperate need
Unquenchable desire
Unspeakable pain

Aching for every day privileges
enjoyed by most people...(6-12)
My label is transgender. (17)

Here, the speaker feels that he does not belong to anywhere. Their desires are left unsatisfied. Their dreams are unfulfilled. Their desperate needs remain a question mark. The pain they feel inside their heart is unspeakable. Like every person, they longed for equal rights in the society. More than that they should be treated like other humans in the world. In many place transgenders are humiliated. There are so many weeping souls around the world, for mistakes not committed by them.

Through these poems, it is understood that the subalterns are marginalized in many parts of the world. The subalterns are always expected to remain submissive under the superior ranked people. These poems serve as an evidence for the existence of racism, casteism and gender discrimination in the world. The subalterns believed that their writings may bring light to their life, so they gave voice to their pen.

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Shanmathi. S

M.Phil. Research Scholar

shanmathimiel@yahoo.com

Ms. J. Sridevi

Assistant Professor of English

Arignar Anna Government Arts College
Villupuram
Tamilnadu
India