

Unveiling the Subaltern Narrative: A Study of Namdeo Dhasal's *The Current of Blood*

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Abstract

This article examines the poems in Namdeo Dhasal's *The Current of Blood*, and explores the subaltern narrative that permeates his work. By analysing the themes, language, and socio-political context of the poems, this study sheds light on Dhasal's powerful poetic expressions as a voice for the marginalised. Themes of caste-based oppression, social inequality, resistance, and the quest for dignity and justice are central. Additionally, the linguistic techniques employed by Dhasal to convey the raw emotions and lived experiences of the subaltern are analysed. Dhasal's *The Current of Blood* is a landmark in subaltern literature, showcasing the poet's profound engagement with the struggles and aspirations of the marginalised. Grounded in theoretical references from subaltern studies and postcolonial theory, the study sheds light on Dhasal's poems, depicting the lived experiences of the subaltern, capturing their struggles, pain, and longing for dignity and justice. The analysis reveals how the poet's powerful and evocative language expresses the raw emotions and lived realities of the marginalised. The article also explores the linguistic and poetic techniques employed by Dhasal to disrupt dominant narratives and assert the agency and resilience of the subaltern. The poet's use of vivid imagery, striking metaphors, and provocative language effectively communicates the subaltern experience, while simultaneously challenging social norms and interrogating structures of power. By illuminating the subaltern narrative within *The Current of Blood*,¹ the article underscores the transformative power of literature in advocating for social change and empowering marginalised communities.

Keywords: marginalised, subaltern narrative, caste-based oppression, evocative language, resilience, protest

Introduction

Namdeo Dhasal, a prominent figure in Dalit literature, emerged as a formidable voice in the Indian literary landscape with his landmark poetry collection, *The Current of Blood*. Published in Marathi in 1982, this collection encapsulates Dhasal's raw and unapologetic exploration of social injustices, political oppression, and the quest for liberation. Dhasal's poems in *The Current of Blood* not only confront the deeply entrenched caste-based discrimination prevalent in Indian society but are also a powerful medium for resistance and social transformation. This research

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¹ Namdeo Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, trans. Dilip Chitre (New Delhi: Navayana Publishing, 2014).

analyses the historical and social context that shaped Dhasal's writings, and examines the language and poetic style he employs, and explores the major thematic threads in the collection. Dhasal engages in the poetics of resistance, the portrayal of political oppression, caste and subaltern identity, and the quest for liberation. Namdeo Dhasal's poetry resonates with the experiences of the marginalised, particularly the Dalit community, and challenges the oppressive structures while providing a platform for the expression of their struggles and aspirations. Using visceral and incisive language, Dhasal invites readers to confront uncomfortable truths and engage critically with the prevailing socio-political realities of India. This article locates *The Current of Blood* in the broader context of Dalit literature, and its impact on the literary and social movements of its time. While undertaking a nuanced exploration of Dhasal's poetry the article sheds light on the historical, linguistic, and socio-political dimensions that make it a compelling and enduring piece of literature. I unveil the power of Dhasal's Marathi poetry, the urgency of his message, and the lasting impact of *The Current of Blood*, in which the themes of social inequality, political oppression, and the struggle for liberation manifest.

To comprehend Dhasal's poetry, it is crucial to understand the historical and social context of post-colonial India. The country was marked by widespread poverty, caste-based discrimination, and political turmoil. Dhasal, hailing from a Dalit community, experienced the harsh realities of caste oppression, which profoundly influenced his poetic sensibilities. Drawing inspiration from the Dalit Panther movement and Dr B. R. Ambedkar's vision of social justice, Dhasal employed his poetry as a weapon to challenge the existing social order.² Dhasal's poetry encompasses the marginalised voices and subaltern narratives, giving voice to the oppressed and marginalised communities. In *The Current of Blood*, Dhasal captures their experiences and aspirations, amplifying their struggles for dignity and equality. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues, the subaltern's voice has been historically suppressed by dominant structures of power.³ Dhasal's poetry emerges as a counter-narrative, challenging the hegemonic discourse and offering an alternative perspective. His poetry is a response to the socio-political challenges of the time, exposing caste-based discrimination, political oppression, and social inequalities.

Biographical Note

Namdeo Dhasal (1949-2014) was an influential Indian poet, activist, and one of the prominent voices in Dalit literature. Born on 15 February 1949, in Pune, Maharashtra, Dhasal emerged as a leading figure in the literary and social movements of the late twentieth century. His life experiences and struggles as a member of the Dalit community deeply influenced his writings, which challenged the prevailing social order and sought to empower the marginalised. Dhasal was profoundly influenced by the teachings and vision of Dr B. R. Ambedkar, who dedicated his life to eradicating caste-based discrimination and advocating for the rights of Dalits. The 1970s

² Shoba Sharad Rajgopal, "Dalit/black solidarity: Comrades in the struggle for racial/caste justice," *South Asian Popular Culture*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2021), pp. 81-86.

³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985), pp. 271-313.

saw a resurgence of Dalit empowerment movements in Maharashtra. Dalits mobilise to demand social justice, equal rights, and an end to caste-based discrimination and violence. The Dalit Panthers movement, co-founded by Dhasal in 1972, emerged as a powerful political and social movement in Maharashtra, inspired by the Black Panther Party in the United States. This era also witnessed the Maratha-Mahar Dalit agitation, where Dalits asserted their right to access public places and temples. Maharashtra had a politically fragmented landscape with multiple parties representing various interests. The Dalit Panthers sought to provide a unified platform for Dalit political and social action, addressing caste atrocities and discrimination.⁴

Through his poetry and activism Dhasal brought attention to the oppression faced by Dalits, and exposed the inherent inequalities of the caste system. Specific historical events like the Bhoodan (Land-Gift) movement, initiated in the 1950s by Vinoba Bhave, a prominent social reformer, which had encouraged landowners to voluntarily donate land to landless individuals, and the Kilvenmani massacre, a gruesome incident that occurred in Tamil Nadu in 1968, in which a group of Dalit agricultural laborers who were demanding fair wages and better working conditions, was brutally attacked and killed by landlords and upper-caste villagers, deeply influenced Dhasal's poetry. These real-life examples of atrocities and socio-economic challenges faced by Dalits gave Dhasal's poetry a bitter tinge. These events were catalysts for his poetic exploration of social justice, inequality, and the urgent need for change in an unequal society.

Namdeo Dhasal's debut poetry collection, *Golpitha* (1972), gained significant recognition as a landmark publication in Dalit literature. The collection shows the lived experiences of the marginalised, while exposing the harsh realities of poverty, caste-based discrimination, and social exclusion. Dhasal explores the complexities of human relationships, themes of love and desire, and socio-political commentary in his poems. His poems reflect his continued commitment to addressing social injustice. They offer powerful insights into the human condition and the resilience of the marginalised while exploring themes of identity, social inequality, and resistance. Dhasal confronts caste-based discrimination and systemic violence in his poetry. All his collections feature poems that address issues of identity, liberation, and the ongoing struggle for dignity and equality. Bama Faustina Soosairaj, a Tamil Dalit feminist and novelist,⁵ Sharan Kumar Limbale, a Marathi Dalit writer and poet,⁶ and P. Sivakami, a Tamil Dalit writer,⁷ are some of the prominent contemporaries of Dhasal who have played a vital role in shaping the discourse on caste, social justice, and identity in contemporary India.

⁴ Arild Engelsen Ruud, "Dalit Politics in India – Some Recent Studies," *Forum for Development Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2004), pp. 197-207.

⁵ Bama, *Karukku*, trans. Lakshmi Holmström, second edition (Noida: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁶ Sharan Kumar Limbale, *The Outcaste: Akkarmashi*, trans. Santosh Bhoomkar (Noida: Oxford University Press, 2003 [1984]).

⁷ Mittal Institute, "Tamil Author P. Sivakami on Lending a Voice to the Voiceless," *The Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2023). At: <https://mittalsouthasiainstitute.harvard.edu/2023/10/tamil-literature/>.

The Current of Blood as the Poetics of Resistance

Dhasal's *The Current of Blood* was written during the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period marked by significant social and political changes in India. It was a time of intense political activism, student movements, and growing consciousness about social inequalities. Caste-based discrimination was deeply entrenched in Indian society, with Dalits (formerly known as 'Untouchables') facing severe social, economic, and political marginalisation. The era witnessed authoritarian regimes and state repression, with the government suppressing dissenting voices and curbing civil liberties. The emergence of Dalit literature, a literary movement that aimed to address the experiences and aspirations of Dalits, gave Dhasal a crucial opportunity to shape Dalit literature with his powerful and provocative poetry. His poetry articulated the collective struggles and aspirations of the Dalit community, challenging dominant narratives and asserting a distinct Dalit voice, calling for social justice and equality. Dalits, Adivasis, and other subaltern groups, mobilised to demand their rights, resist marginalisation, and challenge inequalities.

Dhasal's poetry is a form of resistance against political oppression. He uses his verses to confront and expose the oppressive machinery of the state and advocate for justice and liberation. Dhasal's work serves as a call for action, inspiring readers to resist oppression, advocate for social justice, and strive for the liberation of the subaltern. His poems reflect the anger, frustration, and rebellion of the subaltern communities. Dhasal's utilisation of colloquial language, slang, and coarse expressions serves to disrupt the dominant discourse and gives voice to the marginalised. As Vinay Dharwadker contends, "The breaking of norms of language and form in Dhasal's poetry serves as a direct confrontation against the hegemonic structures that perpetuate social inequalities."⁸ *The Current of Blood* vividly portrays the lived experiences of Dalits, exposing the violence and dehumanisation inherent in the caste hierarchy:

The untouchable rises like the tide
his bones like ancient stories,
his soul a burning pyre,
his voice a tempest of liberation.⁹

These lines illustrate Dhasal's defiance against social inequality in the name of caste in Indian society. Dhasal's poetry also addresses the intersectionality of gender and subaltern identity.

According to Spivak, "subaltern" refers to marginalised groups who lack access to power and whose voices are often silenced or ignored. Spivak has made significant contributions to the field of subaltern studies and is known for her concept of the "subaltern" and her critique of representation.¹⁰ Spivak interrogates the paradoxical nature of subalternity, highlighting that

⁸ Vinay Dharwadker, *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 165.

⁹ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 48.

¹⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular," *Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2005), pp. 475-486.

while the subaltern exists as a subject of history and discourse, their voices are systematically silenced and excluded from mainstream narratives. Spivak's work underscores the importance of recognising intersecting identities in subaltern communities. Spivak asserts that the subaltern condition is not defined by a single axis of oppression but rather by the convergence of multiple forms of subjugation. This recognition of intersectionality acknowledges that caste, class, gender and other dimensions of identity intersect and compound the experiences of marginalised individuals. Spivak's insight into intersectionality challenges us to move beyond simplistic categorisations and explore the multifaceted nature of subalternity. Her call for a more nuanced understanding of subaltern voices prompts us to consider how these voices navigate and negotiate various aspects of their identities in their struggles against hegemonic forces.¹¹

Namdeo Dhasal's *The Current of Blood* resonates with Spivak's call for an intersectional analysis of subaltern identities. Dhasal's verses do not limit themselves to the singular lens of caste oppression but extend to encompass a broader spectrum of social and identity-related dimensions. Dhasal confronts the harsh realities faced by individuals marked by class disparities, gender discrimination and other societal hierarchies. His verses vividly depict the intersecting struggles of Dalit women, impoverished communities and individuals who are marginalised not only due to caste, but also due to their economic status or gender identity:

The subaltern woman,
her body bruised,
her spirit aflame,
breaks the chains of silence,
and claims her space in the revolution.¹²

These lines highlight Dhasal's commitment to women breaking free from societal constraints and actively participating in the struggle for liberation. Dhasal's poetry not only addresses social inequalities but also confronts political oppression and advocates for resistance.

In *The Current of Blood*, Dhasal amplifies the voices of the subaltern, particularly the Dalit community, who have historically been subjected to caste-based discrimination and social exclusion. Spivak's notion of subaltern agency can also be applied to Dhasal's poetry. Despite their marginalised position, the subaltern possesses agency and the potential for resistance. Dhasal's verses act as a means of expression and resistance, allowing the subaltern to articulate their experiences, assert their agency, and challenge oppressive hierarchies. Through his evocative language and vivid imagery, Dhasal empowers subalterns to reclaim their narratives and advocate for social justice. When examining the intersectionality of Dalit identity in *The Current of Blood*, we can draw upon the insights of scholars like Kimberlé Crenshaw. Like

¹¹ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," pp. 271-313.

¹² Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 62.

Spivak, Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of 'intersectionality'¹³ recognises that individual's experiences of oppression are shaped by the intersection of various identities, such as caste, gender, and class. Dhasal's poetry reflects this intersectionality as he explores the complex interplay of caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, and socioeconomic disparities faced by the Dalit community. By integrating the voices and experiences of Dalit women and individuals from diverse social backgrounds, Dhasal captures the multifaceted nature of Dalit identity and the intersecting forms of oppression they confront.

Frantz Fanon's theories on colonialism and liberation also offer valuable insights into Dhasal's quest for liberation. Fanon argues that the effects of colonialism are not only political and economic but also psychological, deeply impacting the oppressed.¹⁴ Similarly, Dhasal's poetry unveils the psychological and emotional toll of caste-based discrimination and the profound desire for liberation from oppressive systems. By channeling the anger, anguish, and resistance of the marginalised, Dhasal's verses embody Fanon's call for decolonisation and the reclamation of agency. By integrating the views and theories of Spivak, Crenshaw, and Fanon, we can contextualise and analyse Dhasal's poetry within a broader theoretical framework. This approach allows us to explore the subaltern's agency, the intersectionality of Dalit identity, and the quest for liberation as portrayed in Dhasal's evocative verses. Moreover, it sheds light on the socio-political implications of Dhasal's work and deepens our understanding of the themes of resistance, social justice, and empowerment:

The subaltern rises in defiance
his voice resonates through the streets,
as he confronts the oppressive regime,
demanding justice and liberation.¹⁵

Dhasal's poetic expressions become a site of resistance, enabling him to confront and subvert the dominant power structures. Through his words, he empowers the marginalised and gives voice to their struggles, hopes, and aspirations. He writes:

I am the voice of the voiceless,
the words that echo in the forgotten alleys,
I am the poet of resistance,
carving paths of defiance through silence.¹⁶

Dhasal's work embodies the spirit of rebellion, refusing to accept the dehumanisation and marginalisation of the subaltern. Dhasal's verses challenge and disrupt dominant narratives and

¹³ Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Colour," in *The Public Nature of Private Violence: Women and the Discovery of Abuse*, ed. Martha Albertson Fineman (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 93-118.

¹⁴ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 78.

¹⁶ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 112.

offer glimpses of alternative futures, envisioning a world free from oppression. Dhasal refuses to accept subjugation, and his poetry presents his relentless pursuit of justice and equality. Through his poetry we, witness the subaltern rising in defiance and demanding liberation.

Dhasal's poetry serves as a powerful force, challenging the status quo and inspiring readers to question and resist oppressive structures. He says:

In the shadow of tyranny,
we gather our voices,
defying the chains that bind,
we rise against oppression.¹⁷

This highlights the collective voice of the marginalised, defying the chains of oppression and standing up against tyrannical forces. Dhasal writes, “The weight of power crushes the innocent, but their spirits remain unbroken, weaving threads of resistance, in the face of tyranny.”¹⁸ Despite the crushing weight of power, Dalits weave threads of resistance, refusing to be silenced.

Dhasal's poetry unveils the stark realities of political oppression, while exposing the systemic violence inflicted upon the marginalised. Dhasal's poetry becomes an act of resistance, challenging the authoritarian regime and embodying the collective aspirations for freedom and justice. His words serve as a powerful weapon to dismantle the oppressive machinery. His verses unveil the realities of political oppression and critique power structures. Caste and subaltern identity are prominent and intertwined themes in Dhasal's *The Current of Blood*. His verses show the complexities of caste discrimination, and the assertion of subaltern identity: “I wear my caste like a scar, / etched upon my body, / a reminder of the hierarchy that deems me unworthy.”¹⁹

These lines encapsulate the impact of caste on personal identity. Dhasal vividly portrays the scars of caste, symbolising the stigma and discrimination faced by the marginalised. It underscores the hierarchical nature of caste, and the devaluation of Dalit lives. He further says:

Our existence defies your caste calculations,
we reclaim our subaltern identity,
forging a new path of resistance,
unburdened by the chains of tradition.²⁰

This reflects the assertion of subaltern identity by the marginalised. Dhasal emphasises their refusal to be confined by caste calculations. He highlights the subaltern's endeavor to forge a path of resistance, breaking free from the chains of tradition and reclaiming their agency. Meena Kandasamy, a contemporary Tamil Dalit poet, too expresses her anger and resentment in the similar language to Dhasal's poems. She writes in a poem from *Touch*, “We will rebuild / worlds

¹⁷ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 41.

¹⁸ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 41.

¹⁹ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 23.

²⁰ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 58.

from shattered glass/ and remnants of holocausts.”²¹ Dhasal's poetry subverts the dominant narratives that perpetuate caste-based discrimination. In his verse, he confronts the oppressive caste system, gives voice to the silenced, and challenges the hierarchies that suppress them.

The quest for liberation is a significant theme in Namdeo Dhasal's poetry. Dhasal's verses reflect the yearning for freedom from the shackles of oppression, whether it be political, social, or caste based. “We march, hand in hand, towards the horizon of liberation, our footsteps echoing with hope, as we dismantle the walls of tyranny,” asserts, Dhasal.²² These lines capture the spirit of collective action and the quest for liberation. Dhasal depicts the journey towards the horizon of liberation, where hope resounds in each footstep. The dismantling of walls symbolises breaking free from the constraints of tyranny. “Liberation whispers in the wind, beckoning us forward, urging us to rise, as we shed the chains of bondage”, he further writes.²³

These lines convey the alluring call for liberation. Dhasal portrays liberation as a whisper in the wind, urging individuals to rise and shed the chains of bondage. It highlights the transformative power of liberation, drawing individuals towards a future free from oppression. Dhasal's poetry encapsulates the quest for liberation: his call for radical transformation, and his vision of a world emancipated from oppression are powerful. In Dhasal's poetry, the quest for liberation becomes a driving force, challenging the existing power structures and envisioning a future where all individuals can experience freedom and equality. His verses envision a society free from the shackles of caste, class, gender, and political tyranny. Dhasal writes, “The subaltern dreams of liberation, breaking the chains that bind, building a new world of equality, where justice flows like a river.”²⁴ He employs colloquial language and street slang in his poetry, reflecting the raw and authentic voices of the subaltern. This choice of language adds to the immediacy and realism of his verses: “I am the scum of this universe / I have risen from the depths of despair / The streets have birthed me / The stench of the gutters runs through my veins.”²⁵ Dhasal uses coarse expressions to convey the intensity of emotions and experiences faced by the marginalised communities. His use of bold and unfiltered language challenges the sanitised and sanitised forms of expression often found in mainstream literature: “I spit out the scum of your exploitation / I piss on your crocodile tears / I defy your pretense of civility.”²⁶

He employs metaphors and symbols to capture the essence of the subaltern experience, the harsh realities of oppression, and the yearning for liberation. “The dark water of my veins / carries the weight of centuries / of blood-soaked chains / and the echoes of broken dreams.”²⁷ His poetry exhibits a dynamic rhythm and sound patterns, reflecting the pulse of the subaltern struggle. His verses often possess a rhythmic quality, with repetition and musicality that resonate with the oral traditions of his community. “The beats of my heart are a revolution / A symphony

²¹ Meena Kandasamy, *Touch* (London: Peacock Books, 2006), p. 60.

²² Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 75.

²³ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 89.

²⁴ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 94.

²⁵ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 17.

²⁶ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 36.

²⁷ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 53.

of rebellion / Thumping against the walls of injustice.”²⁸ Dhasal's poetic style incorporates strong political and social commentary. His verses serve as a platform for critiquing oppressive systems, exposing social inequalities, and advocating for justice and equality. “In this labyrinth of power and deceit / I raise my voice, a weapon of truth / I write my verses, a battle cry / I am the poet of resistance,”²⁹ he asserts. He effectively employs repetition to emphasise key themes and evoke a sense of urgency in his poetry. The repetition of words and phrases creates a powerful impact and reinforces the underlying message of his verses; “I am the subaltern, rising, rising / I am the subaltern, defying, defying / I am the subaltern, demanding, demanding.”³⁰ Dhasal employs evocative metaphors and similes to paint vivid pictures and convey complex emotions. These literary devices add depth and layers of meaning to his poetry: “Our dreams sprout like wildflowers in concrete jungles.”³¹ Dhasal skillfully utilises alliteration and assonance to create a musical quality in his verses. The repetition of consonant sounds or vowel sounds enhances the rhythmic flow of his poetry. For example, “The clamor of the crowd, a chorus of discontent.”³² Dhasal engages in creative play with language to convey his messages.

Dhasal's poetry exhibits an emotive tone, ranging from anger and defiance to longing and hope. He uses the power of words to evoke strong emotional responses in the readers, “Our tears irrigate the barren fields of resistance.”³³ Dhasal often employs fragmented syntax, breaking conventional grammatical rules to create a sense of urgency and fragmentation reflective of the subaltern experience, “In the midst of chaos, voices rise / In the midst of darkness, dreams ignite.”³⁴ Dhasal incorporates irony and satire to critique oppressive systems and expose social contradictions. His use of these literary devices adds depth and complexity to his poetic expressions. While poking fun at the so-called development and progress claimed by the political parties, he clarifies, “Beneath the veneer of progress, lies the rotten core of inequality.”³⁵ These lines demonstrate the varied and innovative language and poetic style employed by Dhasal in *The Current of Blood*. His use of metaphors, wordplay, and literary devices contributes to the richness and impact of his poetry, inviting readers to delve into the depths of the subaltern experience and the complexities of social and political realities.

Conclusion

Namdeo Dhasal's *The Current of Blood* is a powerful testament to his poetic prowess and his unwavering commitment to social justice. Through his evocative and intense verses, Dhasal explores a wide range of themes, including political oppression, caste-based discrimination,

²⁸ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 72.

²⁹ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 88.

³⁰ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 95.

³¹ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 19.

³² Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 41.

³³ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 68.

³⁴ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 81.

³⁵ Dhasal, *The Current of Blood*, p. 92.

subaltern identity, the quest for liberation, and the poetics of resistance. His poems offer a searing critique of the existing power structures, while also providing a voice to the marginalised and inspiring collective action for social transformation. Dhasal's use of vivid imagery, striking metaphors, and raw emotions captivate readers and compel them to confront uncomfortable realities. His poetry acts as a medium to expose the deep-rooted social inequalities, challenge the hegemonic narratives, and give voice to the silenced.

Dhasal's poetic style, characterised by its rebelliousness, reflects his own lived experiences as a member of the marginalised Dalit community. *The Current of Blood* stands as a significant contribution to Dalit literature, marking a defining moment in the literary landscape of India. Dhasal's work has paved the way for future generations of Dalit writers and activists, inspiring them to raise their voices against oppression and fight for social justice. This article examined various aspects of Dhasal's poetry, its historical and social context, language and the poetic style employed, as well as the themes of political oppression, caste and subaltern identity, and the quest for liberation.³⁶ *The Current of Blood* reminds us that poetry can be a potent tool for resistance, an instrument for challenging oppressive systems, and a medium for expressing the hopes and aspirations of the marginalised. Dhasal's legacy continues to inspire and provoke, urging us to critically examine our society and strive for a more just and egalitarian world. *The Current of Blood* remains a testament to the power of literature in shaping social consciousness and instigating meaningful change. Dhasal's poetry is an emblem of resistance and reclamation. It boldly challenges oppressive structures, dismantling the traditional hierarchies of representation that often silence the subaltern. It empowers the marginalised by amplifying their voices and forging a path towards agency within the multifarious dimensions of their identities.

³⁶ Laurie Hovell, "Namdeo Dhasal: Poet and Panther," *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1989), pp. 65-82.