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Chapter-7

Writing the Unwritten: Dalit and Adivasi Narratives as Counter-Discourses of Power

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Abstract

This chapter examines how Dalit and Adivasi narratives function as counter-discourses that challenge dominant epistemological frameworks and power structures in contemporary India. Drawing upon subaltern studies, postcolonial theory, and critical race theory, this study argues that these marginalized narratives are not merely representations of subaltern experiences but are active sites of epistemic resistance against Brahmanical and colonial historiographies. Through a qualitative analysis of selected autobiographical, literary, and oral narratives, the chapter demonstrates how Dalit and Adivasi storytellers employ narrative strategies—such as testimonial recounting, mythic re-interpretation, and embodied knowledge articulation—to

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foreground marginalized epistemologies and assert agency within hegemonic discourse. The analysis reveals that these counter-discourses operate simultaneously at linguistic, cultural, and political levels, disrupting traditional hierarchies of knowledge production and paving the way for a more pluralistic understanding of Indian society. The chapter concludes by discussing the pedagogical and political implications of integrating these counter-narratives into academic curricula and public discourse, emphasizing the transformative potential of centering marginalized voices in knowledge construction.

Keywords

(Dalit narratives, Adivasi narratives, counter-discourse, subaltern studies, epistemic resistance, postcolonial India)