

FUORE SCRIBENDI

Friday, May 19, 2023

The Dalit Brahmin and other stories



The Dalit Brahmin and other stories (a collection of 28 stories) by Sharankumar Limbale, translated from Marathi by Priya Adarkar, grabbed my attention due to the introduction penned by Anand Teltumbde (no disrespect meant for the author & translator). This introduction is an extremely vital part of the book, a primer on the birth and evolution of Dalit writings, the author and his works and a guide on how to go about the stories (grouped into 6 categories). Also, every story is keenly analysed/reviewed here before ending in questions that provoke thought.

Dwelling on Dalit experience in post independent India, Limbale's stories open up a brutal world that's driven and conditioned by caste system. One story after the other, in vitriolic writing, the author lays bare how exploitation, humiliation, oppression, pain and shame are deeply embedded in a Dalit's daily life. From feudal villages to cities, slum dwellers to middle class Dalits, servility to violent revolt as response the stories cover a broad spectrum, easily unattainable in a similar sized novel.

Even as one suspects 28 stories on one subject might allow repetition, fiery lines and little twists at the end make each story different & impressive

Another reason that made me want to read this is the oxymoron term in the title - The Dalit Brahmin, used for the urban educated Dalit middle class who look down upon their own folk and cosy up to Brahmins and want to emulate their lives. Plagued by an inferiority complex, they want to distance themselves from everything that once pulled them down. That a few stories here focus on this mentality makes it different from most works that largely focus on the hegemony by Brahmins and zamindars.

How the author portrays women didn't sit well with me - if they are upper caste, they are selfish, insensitive harbingers of doom for a Dalit man, his family, his whole village; if lower caste, they are mere objects of sex.

Translation can never fully shoulder the cultural baggage but in Priya Adarkar's words, the power with which the author smacks us with truth stays unadulterated.

A brilliant and powerful collection of stories!

Divya Shankar at 3:04 PM

No comments:

[Post a Comment](#)




[Home](#)



[View web version](#)

About Me



 **Divya Shankar**
Bangalore, Karnataka, India
[View my complete profile](#)

Powered by [Blogger](#).