

**“Let me scream out my story”: Foregrounding the Dalit Experience in Shyamal Kumar
Pramanik’s *The Untouchable & Other Poems***

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Abstract: The word ‘Dalit’ like the word ‘woman’ or ‘black’, has a complex signification. While the nomenclature ‘Dalit’ marks a transgressive act of cultural reclamation and social agency, the term continues to be haunted by its specific histories of oppression and dehumanization. Stemming from the expressions and exclusions of a historically-layered power-discourse than from mere caste discrimination and prejudice, the Dalit experience remains multi-faceted and diverse. The present essay attempts a close reading of the poetry of the Bengali Dalit activist, Shyamal Kumar Pramanik, translated from the original Bengali by Jaydeep Sarangi & Anurima Chanda, as an honest, fearless, and evocative testimony of the Dalit social angst and the political hope for a more equitable world. Attentive to his nuanced use of imagery and language reflective of his political consciousness, this essay attempts to place Pramanik’s oeuvre firmly within the tradition of the Dalit literary agenda of subverting hegemonic epistemology through authentic and radical self-narration.

Keywords: Dalit, space, resistance, language, nature, hope.

T.M. Yesudasan, in ‘Towards a Prologue to Dalit Studies’, states:

In our academies, the production and distribution of knowledge goes through various procedures of rigorous social control. This process is called the politics of knowledge: to choose from a large body of information available, leave the rest out, subject the select knowledge to editing and interpreting, confer on it scientificity and objectivity, reduce its availability and limit its accessibility. In the academic assembly line, knowledge is produced by passing through these epistemological procedures of social control. What is always left out in these ideological apparatuses of the state is the history and knowledge of the oppressed. [...] The task of dalit studies is to release the