

Deconstructing Feminine Identity Using Spivak's Subaltern Lens*

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Abstract—This study examines Gayatri Spivak's contributions to post-colonial and subaltern studies. The study aims to identify the elements that make Spivak's work relevant, distinctive, and vital amid a deluge of literary theories. Throughout her work, Spivak explores the experiences of oppressed women. Subaltern women's identification and struggle have been fundamentally challenged in her publications. This study highlights Spivak's distinctive critical perspective, incorporating and transcending some essential modern critical theories, including feminism and subaltern studies. In addition, the study engages with post-colonial interpretations of the Bengali collection of short stories. The "Breast Giver" challenges the post-colonial narrative and consciousness within the preeminent ideological paradigms. According to the subaltern interpretation of the selected narrative, many different and complex ways exist to represent women. In addition, there are differing degrees of agency, prejudice, oppression, and possibility of action on the part of the main female character. Due to this, the texts' interpretations are diverse and varied, resisting readers' quick judgments about subaltern tyranny.

Index Terms—critical interventions, subaltern, feminism, Gayathri Spivak, deconstruction

I. INTRODUCTION

The value of cultural specificity has mobilised the modalities of resistance and consciousness in the post-colonial protagonists of the short story "The Breast Giver", which Spivak translated. However, like many others, this study discovers an unresolved inconsistency in Spivak's conceptual framework. She faults White feminists for their unjust treatment of non-Western women. Because receptive frames are so intrusive in her work, she excludes the idea of subaltern speech. Subaltern consciousness and its voices are represented in various ways, yet they are often misrepresented and unheard. There was a period when literary theory and the analysis of literary texts appeared to be separate fields of study. However, perception and theory have become more and more congruent recently. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we always interpret texts from a theoretical standpoint. Literature had beautiful aspects and contained didactic lessons for us to learn. Spivak uses a triangulation of three schools of thought, Marxism, psychoanalysis and deconstruction, to make her theoretical standpoint. Marxist critique uses social class and class relations as its primary analytical tools. Feminist criticism uses the idea of gender as its primary analytical and political tool, and psychoanalytic criticism addresses the characters' psyche.

According to Conway et al. (2009), "Due to the theoretical revolutions of the late 1980s and early 1990s and the prodigious growth of Poststructuralism, world literature and criticism suffered considerable alterations. Deconstruction

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was the first variation of Poststructuralism to enter the country. From there, it significantly impacted literary studies in England and America" (p. 44). However, Poststructuralism concurrently undermines structuralism by rigorously challenging or deconstructing some of its fundamental tenets and the strategies that flow from them. These and other justifications serve as the foundation for deconstructionist critique, demonstrating how linguistic instability continually calls into question the consistency of literary texts on the surface. The psychoanalytic constructs explain why we could internalise discourses that essentially enslave us. Lacanian insights have been remarkably insightful regarding readers' interaction with the text.

Subaltern refers to a lower rank. Gramsci (1971) coined the phrase to describe the Soviet Union's working class under the aristocracy's control. Peasants, labourers, and others denied access to dominant power might be considered subaltern classes. "The subaltern perspective examines social structures through the lens of various castes, genders, and racial groups subjected to subordination. It aims to give a different view of society from the perspective of the vast majority, who are typically underrepresented. Subalterns hold lower-level positions or entry-level positions on the corporate ladder. However, the phrase is also utilised to refer to someone lacking economic or political authority". (Gairola, 2002). According to Spivak (2022), people from third-world nations are considered subalterns. Due to their differences in terms of gender and other ideologies, they are unable to speak up. It is the subaltern who needs to speak. However, some voices do not fit into these hegemonic modalities of knowledge production and are consequently lost. To upend the current knowledge creation, it requires a conscious effort to give the subaltern a chance to be heard. By investigating the mechanisms underlying the alleged "return" of their voice, Spivak (2015) claims that the post-colonial subject is diverse and that an ongoing dislocation and effacement are instead revealed. The female subaltern occupies a crucial position in a social structure that Spivak disentangles.

Spivak's Influence

Gayatri, a writer and theorist regarded as an acclaimed academician who can claim to have affected literary creation globally, stands out among these various perspectives and schools of thought. According to Spivak, people from third-world nations are subalterns. Her multicultural upbringing and geographic diaspora subtly engrave Spivak's thoughts. Her writing frequently uses personal experiences to support and elaborate on her points. She occasionally serves as a stand-in for addressing the more serious political issues she raises, such as the fate of marginalised, subaltern communities in the south. However, such a claim ignores how critical Spivak's contribution is to comprehending her scholarly ties.

Darder and Griffiths (2018) note that "Spivak's career has developed through a profoundly feminist viewpoint on fragmentation. The Marxist criticism of race concerning nationality, ethnicity, and the role of women formed a complicated intellectual trajectory" (p. 83). Due to her unique academic trajectory, Spivak has attracted a rather diverse international following. According to Spivak, the idea of gendered oppression has gained much attention since it implies that women have experienced double subordination, first due to nationality and second due to gender. Colonised women were doubly ignored under a colonial regime because they were unheard inside their own patriarchal culture. Spivak became the first colonial theorist to have a comprehensive feminist strategy considering imperialism's partnership with female writers. Among the essential post-colonial philosophers, Spivak stands for the voice of diversity. Spivak employs socioeconomic class as a central area for his analysis. The subaltern has been the most consistently focused of Spivak's post-colonial theory. Spivak uses the word Subaltern (A term coined by Gramsci) to refer to the lower classes of imperial and neo-colonial society, including the homeless, the jobless and day labourers.

Theoretical Background

The British Colonial engagement with India led to the birth of the term subaltern. Subaltern, thus, is a term for inferior status. It implies that there are inferior modalities of knowledge. Proving that narratives of power and politics are responsible for constructing the inferior, subaltern historiography aims to restore the proper proportion of expertise. For various diverse subject positions not specified by dominant political discourses, Spivak prefers to use the term "subaltern." She claims this term is appropriate because it encompasses social identities, women's conflicts, and colonialism. She contends that this term's adaptability is crucial since it allows for including a wide range of topics, particularly those pertaining to the underserved group. Spivak embraced the post-colonial revolution because she was dedicated to accurately expressing the lives and experiences of such populations. She documented the political and social injustices in her writings in post-colonial cultures.

A subaltern is a person who has been sidelined and who has a lesser impact on a social hierarchy. As mentioned earlier, the phrase was first used by Antonio Gramsci to describe people under the dominance of the elite class. According to David (2021), "Because of their race and cultural aspects, women are also viewed as subalterns and treated as outcasts on two different levels" (p. 761). The propensity of some French feminist critics to describe and narrate the life experience of underprivileged women using their primary world narrative is one of the issues covered in Spivak's essay "French Feminist Theory in an International Frame." In Spivak's opinion, this strategy will likely neglect significant racial, cultural, linguistic, and social class disparities and risk reinforcing preconceptions about "Third World" women.

The application of Spivak's theory to the analysis of Spivak's translation (Norton Anthology, 1069-1089) of Mahasweta Devi's short narrative has two implications for this study. First, it leads to more critically aware readings of the chosen work that are contextually aware and sensitive to how women are treated. "Connecting with Spivak's work also highlights the necessity for international feminist philosophy, which is mindful of the intricate networks of patriarchal power systems and context-specific linkages between gender and power" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 154). The many settings and circumstances

of subalternity are mapped out and covered by Spivak's subaltern theory. Her theory has dialogic potential, which goes beyond the fact that it can be universally applied to different national and cultural dominant paradigms. The well-known, read and cited essay can highlight the valuable possibilities of feministic inquiry. The passage describes the events surrounding the murder of a young Bengali lady, which suggests a futile attempt at self-representation. Spivak concluded that "the oppressed cannot speak" because her attempts to speak outside the established patriarchal channels were rejected. Critical readers falsely claim that she writes incomprehensibly, expresses extreme views, and uses dense language. Therefore, subaltern speech falls short of dialogic expression. As a result of this misinterpretation, Spivak is concerned about the casual use of the term "subaltern" and its adoption by other disadvantaged communities but not necessarily "subalterns".

Everyone believes that the term "subaltern" refers to oppressed people. Spivak is especially wary of the misuse of the phrase by individuals who only want to assert their lack of participation in the hegemonic discourse system. She says,

My definition of a woman is straightforward: it rests on the word 'man' used in texts that provide the foundation for the corner of the literary criticism establishment I inhabit. You might say that this is a reactionary position. Should I not carve out an independent definition for myself as a woman? (Spivak, 1987, p. 77)

Barrett and Michele (2004) note that Many people wish to assert their inferiority. They ought to investigate the mechanisms of discrimination. They cannot communicate since they are a part of the dominant narrative. They ought not to refer to themselves as subalterns. To distinguish her position as a post-colonial philosopher and the tangible, practical lives of the Subaltern, Spivak highlights the representation aesthetically and politically. As a result, Spivak has developed a more effective technique that acknowledges oppressed women's voices and untold tales without speaking on their behalf. Another well-known and widely read work by Spivak is *On Other Realms: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987). She "studies the link between language, women, and culture in both Western and non-Western cultures. She creates a unique synthesis of deconstructionist, Marxist, and feminist techniques that is useful for researching our own and other people's worlds. "The repeated argument in Spivak's work that the three disciplines—Marxism, Feminism, and Deconstruction—can only be comprehended and applied by paying attention all the time to their interdependence and re-articulation, which is why it is so powerful and evocative" (Beverley, 2001). Spivak requests that the challenges and experiences of women from the Third World be included in the expanded definition of the subaltern. The established idea of the subaltern is expanded and complicated by focusing on the gendered placement of subaltern women. Spivak criticises the gender illiteracy of prior post-colonial theories by posing the question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" from a feminist perspective. It also exemplifies how Spivak broadened the scope of the term "subaltern" to include women. According to Spivak, the sexed subaltern has no place to speak. As a result of their agency and voice being so deeply ingrained in Hindu patriarchal moral norms and the British Imperial depiction of oppressed women as a victim of a savage Hindu culture, the author claims that the oppressed cannot speak. According to Spivak, a female subaltern cannot be heard or understood in the male-dominated national independence war framework. She claims that the oppressed cannot speak; therefore, even if she tries her hardest to speak, no one will be able to hear her. This oppression means their utterances are never acknowledged within the dominant political representation structures.

As a champion of minority voices, Spivak challenged some of the dominant ideas of the day using the views of Althusser (1972). Typical examples of such an idea include the notion that Western countries are more developed than non-Western countries. Spivak's thought is defined by her search for a critical vocabulary to describe oppressed experiences. According to Spivak, the term subaltern encompasses a range of subject positions that are not determined by dominant political discourses. As Spivak notes, the term subaltern is flexible since it can take into account social identities and struggles that do not fit into reductive categories. Expressing her views on subaltern, she remarks.

I like the word 'subaltern' for one reason. It is genuinely situational. 'Subaltern' began as a description of a certain rank in the military. Gramsci used the term under censorship: he called 'Marxism monism' and was obliged to call the proletarian 'subaltern.' That word, used under duress, has been transformed into the description of everything that doesn't fall under strict class analysis. I like that because it has no theoretical rigour. (Spivak, 1990, p. 141)

II. DISCUSSION

Spivak's Perception of Feminism

"As Spivak's deconstruction emphasises, feminism may initially seem challenging to understand. Spivak discusses her abilities as a woman in literary critique. She strenuously refutes the traditional definition of woman, predicated on the word man. She attempts to characterise women from a deconstructive standpoint. For them to adopt a position, she also begs for specificity. She bases her beliefs about feminism on the works of Marx and Freud (Hartman, 1981). She says they appear to present proof from the realm of man or man himself. She observes that Freud and Marx advocate for normality and health, whereas Marx advocates hierarchy. To analyse the role of women, she also refers to Marx's ideas of use, exchange, and surplus value and associates these economic concepts with childbirth. She is adamantly opposed to the notion that "wages" (created by men) are the only sign of labour that adds value. She also disagrees with men's strategic exclusion of women from the capitalist economy (Spivak, 1986).

Spivak makes a case for the value of women as a product. This depiction of the human link to production, labour, and property lacks the woman's physical, emotional, legal, custodial, and sentimental circumstances. The woman is positioned

as an agency in any production process because she has a physical place of creation in the womb. According to Spivak, Marx and Freud, she disregarded the notion that the womb was a production site. She claims that if this is considered, the idea of sexual identity will be substituted by womb desire to counteract male domination. She refers to the current environment, where women's emergence into the computer era and the modernisation of women in progress force us to address the gaps and ambiguities in our presumptions regarding people's liberation to work from home and the enduring values of the middle class. Gayatri Spivak emphasises the importance of the female body pointing in two radically different directions. First, she wants to draw attention to the clitoris as the location of a revolutionary excess to the reproduction process. Second, she wants to highlight that no account of production by a classical Marxist includes the womb's reproductive power.

The Quintessence of the "Breast Giver"

The concepts and views of Spivak discussed earlier in this study are exemplified using the short story "The Breast Giver". One of India's most notable authors, Mahasweta Devi, was also a social fighter for equal rights. Breast Stories by Mahasweta Devi was initially written in Bengali, and Spivak translated it into English. In "The Breast Giver," Mahasweta Devi discusses women's identities as body, worker, and object. The woman's expression of anguish in the short story is analysed as the subjectivity of a gendered subaltern. In this tale about a Brahmin woman named Yashoda, women are viewed as objects.

Yashoda, a "professional mother", cannot recall when she was not breastfeeding a child. Twenty living and dead children were eventually born in her marriage to Kangalicharan. The son of Mr. Haldar, a wealthy babu from the area, decides one day that he desires to drive his brother-in-law's car. Kangali passes at that precise moment, and the son drives over him. Haldar beats his son and takes Kangali to the hospital. Mr. Haldar understands Kangali and Yashoda well and holds Brahmins in the highest regard. He begs the physician to do everything he can. However, the doctor cannot preserve the feet, so Haldar gets crutches manufactured for himself. Kangali tells Haldar that he can no longer manage the community store. Haldar makes a shop for him on the porch corner where many pilgrims come at the 'Lionseated stop', a pilgrimage spot.

Haldarbabu suddenly dies, leaving Jasodha's husband, Kangali, in real trouble. Yashoda aspires to provide food for her defenceless children and disabled husband. She visits the Haldar Babu's home and approaches the mistress to request a position as a cook in vegetarian cuisine. The mistress, who is now in control of the mansion and the rice storage, is grieving the loss of her husband. She has a large family with six daughters and six sons who have all been married. She asks Yashoda if she will assist her in feeding one of the grandsons when she gets there, and Yashoda agrees to remain until the evening. The mistress does not entirely accept her son's midday whims as to why Kangali lost his feet.

Nevertheless, she envies Jahoda's breasts. Yashoda acknowledges that she experiences a flow of milk whenever she delivers. The second son of the mistress regularly gets his wife pregnant, but he wishes she could maintain her figure. When he saw Yashoda, Suddenly, he had an idea. He informs his wife that he has found a woman with large breasts, and they could use her to feed her children so that she can maintain her beauty. So, his second son informs his mother to request Jasodha to breastfeed her children in her absence. So, the mistress asked Jasodha to provide breast milk for her grandson.

When Yashoda gets back home, she tells Kangali about the offer. He is initially suspicious, but when he realises, he is getting so much wheat through the large home, he becomes happy. Since Yashoda can only feed if she is carrying, and when she is nursing, she starts to have many children. She is a skilled mom, and Kangali is a seasoned father now. The Haldar household values Yashoda highly. She becomes a Brahma incarnation and bears children. The mistress of the house requests that Yashoda's husband, Kangali, take over the cooking. Kangali agrees to the mistress' suggestion to take over the cooking so that his wife can concentrate on her duties as the breast giver. To Yashoda, everyone is committed.

Yashoda has had twenty pregnancies in the past thirty years. Unfortunately, Mrs. Haldar passes away, and his in-laws overthrow Yashoda's rule. They see doctors and undergo procedures to stop becoming pregnant. The daughters-in-law go to work in defiance of the older woman. Mrs. Haladar, the older woman, passes away. Although Yashoda regrets the Mistress' passing, this also marks the end of her as a milk mother. She sobs hysterically and mourns. Yashoda develops a misunderstanding with her husband, and he leaves her.

Yashoda is "half-crazy by the unfairness of the universe", and there is no baby in the room where she is not nursing. Since she doesn't want to be at home and her husband now resides in the temple, she asks the daughter-in-law if she will prepare food and provide service. Yashoda's success depended entirely on having children; now that she cannot, it is her "descending time." She no longer receives consideration from anyone. Her body starts to deteriorate, and her mind starts to become fuzzy. Her breasts appear vacant. Finally, one of the daughters-in-law enquires about what is wrong with her. The oldest son advises them to find out because anything unpleasant happening to a Brahmin girl would be horrible. Yashoda's left breast is blazing red; the doctor recommends to the daughter-in-law that Yashoda may have cancer. The oldest son laughs at the situation and says he won't take her to the clinic because she only wants some ointment. The cream doesn't work, and the eldest child summons Yashoda's sons out of concern that she'll die.

When Kangali learns this, he sobs and feels guilty for ridiculing her. He laments that she has no cure for her, and he is horrified to see her wounds. Yashoda starts to feel sick, losing consciousness. The babu's elder brother, Haribabu, takes her to the hospital. The doctor explains that she won't survive very long. She won't get better, so the only option is to treat her until she dies. Yashoda no longer remembers her husband. Kangali tells his boys there is no purpose in visiting the

hospital. Her breasts smell awful, and she has open wounds. She realises that she is about to die when she starts to get freezing hands and feet one night. She finds it absurd that she "nursed so many and will pass away alone. She wished that someone would be near her. She passed away around eleven that night. At the Halder residence, no one answers the phone. Yashoda's body is cremated by an untouchable.

Analysis of the "Breast Giver" through a Subaltern Lens

It is nothing new in this society to oppress already deprived women. A race or group of people is oppressed worldwide, and they are deprived of their fundamental rights due to the social group to which they belong. Whatever the situation, women experience double discrimination due to their social standing and gender. Devi's tale depicts a poor Brahmin woman who was compelled to become a wet nurse and abandoned when ill. With the aid of the short story "Breast Giver," Spivak explains this women's exploitation in more detail in her essay. This is done to refute the notion that childbirth is unpaid household work. According to the plot, Yashoda must have multiple pregnancies to fulfil the criteria of her employment as a wet nurse and provide the Halder family with a consistent supply of breast milk. Her health suffers significantly due to her body's ongoing abuse during conception, gestation, delivery, and nursing. Yashoda is diagnosed with breast cancer, goes untreated, and ultimately dies in agony. According to Spivak, no autonomous identity of a woman can exist in a society and culture when there are binary oppositions that encourage and maintain women's subordination. (Spivak, 1978).

When Yashoda's spouse loses both feet, she is forced to become a professional mother, which is where her oppression starts and lasts until her death. She is compelled to work as a skilled wet nurse or mother for the well-off Halder family to help her husband and kids. She gives birth to 20 kids to uphold the terms of her employment. Everybody in her community gave her the title of mother goddess during that time. Later, she takes on a new identity when she is diagnosed with cancer. Yashoda passes away alone in a government hospital, bringing the story to a close.

Yashoda is represented as the "divine engine," solely acknowledged as a device for generating milk and not viewed as a lady. In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak offers a theory of subalternity, stating that "the oppressed have no history and therefore cannot speak. In this tale, Yashoda is a subordinate woman with no unique personality. She is presented as the spouse and mother of Kangalicharan's children. She lived her life for her husband and kids. Yashoda never once tries to blame her husband for her current situation. Kangali feels Yashoda's affection just as much as the kids do. She personifies the fertile land to produce a bountiful harvest to feed her disabled husband and her defenceless children. Her spouse treated her like an object by suggesting she serve as a wet nurse in exchange for a decent meal from the large house. He would not consider her sorrow or agony. He forced her to be a professional mother in this way. Mahasweta Devi depicts Yashoda's sorrow through the second son, who says, "She was a foolish person who raised many of us, and we neglected her" (61).

Yashoda, the manifestation of God, chose to become a professional mother after raising numerous children and was abandoned by all. The lesions on her breast "continued teasing her with a hundred tongues, a hundred eyes," Spivak notes. It is abundantly evident that her body, more precisely her spirit and mind, are being rejected. To sum up, Spivak has depicted Devi's biography very differently from Western feminism, in which the notion of class and the underprivileged do not take centre stage. Asian women have other ideas on how to live their lives, which require a different interpretation. Yashoda was a subordinate woman who endured suffering her entire life before passing away.

Focusing on class as a determining factor, Spivak mixes a Marxist viewpoint with a deconstructive perspective on texts and identities. She aims to show how colonialist texts create the illusion of coherence by positing false contrasts between a purported centre and a similarly fictive margin and how their language invariably undermines the coherence they aim to create. Given this deconstructionist viewpoint, Spivak cannot avoid the conclusion that human identity is fundamentally unstable without a solid centre.

Negligence of the Subaltern Women

Although the story is set in pre- and post-independence India, Spivak wittily alludes to some medical facts and circumstances while vocalising the massive gender gap and medical illiteracy. Yashoda was wedded at a young age before developing the necessary emotions for marriage. There are suggestions that she may have been exposed to negligent custody of children, insufficient formal education, lack of social experience, and lack of hygiene. Motherhood is the only predominating aspect of her existence, followed by her sensual husband's repetitive sexual routines, endless nursing, morning sickness, and stillbirths—all of which likely began when she was still an adolescent mother. A contrasting situation, Romance, numerous pregnancies, and joy can be seen inside the rooms of Halder's family women. Men who secretly seek out other women or brothels to satisfy their sexual desires run the danger of engaging in unsafe intercourse, contracting STDs, refusing to use birth control, and putting their families at risk are also a part of the royal man's routine.

A lady physician and a midwife converted the ground floor of Halder House into a maternity ward, which reeked of disinfectants, Johnson's baby powder, and baby food. Women were denied medical comforts regarding sexual and maternal health, cleanliness, family planning, and contraceptives. When Kangali met with an accident, he obtained all medical treatment, care, compensation, and assistance. Yashoda's lifespan of unbroken motherhood is also negated, as she receives medical neglect throughout her early-stage cancer symptoms. Yashoda's inability to read restricts her ability to notice physical changes. However, foreign-educated desi Halder babus and their wives settled on costly cosmetics and other royalties. The conventional philosophies rejecting vaccinations for infants and women and medical attention during the initial stage of Yashoda's cancer diagnosis were the worst forms of exploitation unleashed on Yashoda. They

disconnect the phone to ignore their responsibility towards their milk mother's death. The gender differences and discrimination in medicine are made clear through Kangali and Yashoda's medical treatment.

Economic Wage Division

Yashoda was never given cash payments. Her life was always at stake because she had no retirement funds, no personal funds, and no one to turn to for assistance. The Mistress' criteria for choosing a wet nurse include an objectified projection of Yashoda. Still, they disregard the importance of screening and medical diagnostics for diseases transferred through breastfeeding. All of a mother's energy is devoted to creating a haven for her kids' emotional needs. An imagined and symbolic order is expected from motherhood, which obliterates all individuality, authority, and autonomy.

Projection of Class and Subalternity

Due to several degrees of exploitative oppression caused by caste and class-based oppression, marginalised women are depicted as submissive, quiet, helpless, and "silent subalterns." Because ideas about gender, sexuality, or patriarchy cannot be consistently applied or across cultural boundaries, identity politics rejects the concept of feminist homogeneity. Literacy gaps and barriers to education create an illiterate-literate power difference, which is justifiable by the exploitative relationships among physicians and members of the Haldar family and individuals like Yashoda, Kangali, Nanbin, etc. Yashoda's bosom was glorified as a million-dollar contract between mistress and Haldar women, exposing the wealth gap as the division of feminism's sisterhood. Yashoda has been a nursing mother for a long time at the expense of economic and gender politics. It is especially difficult for working or professional mothers to combine their responsibilities and time with their children. The narrative incorporates multiple identity politics. The Haldar family's men must choose between their wives' physical beauty and raising their children. Yashoda's life and well-being are sacrificed in the second son of the mistress's million-dollar savings strategy to save his bride and his European vision of prettiness. Their women would no longer have the right to use the word "no" as an excuse, ensuring sexual equality. The male gaze of Halder's men on other women reveals the endlessness of gorgeous delusion.

Objectification of Subaltern Women

There may be a sense of distance between this female protagonist, Yashoda and other characters in Western texts. Hence, Subaltern textual readings might change according to the context. However, Spivak believes that the first world writers disregard the marginalised, oppressed, and subaltern women. According to Spivak, civilisation and society ruled by opposites that encourage and maintain women's subordination cannot support any independent characterisation of a woman. Spivak turns the spotlight on such a male-dominated civilisation's negative or trivial portrayal of women. He concentrates on the classifications of women who are marginalised. Notwithstanding Western feminism's breakthroughs in securing privileges and rights for women, subaltern, colonised, and working-class women are only a few of these groups. Spivak emphasises the cultural differences between First World and Third World women, which she believes have been overlooked by First World/French feminists.

Recognising that the Subaltern theories are based on a traditional Marxist understanding of history, Spivak begins to question their use of the Marxist paradigms because, in her opinion, the classifications of Marxist ideology are too limited. She broadens the study's focus to include various liberation struggles in her writings. However, she does not openly dismiss the Marxist methodology. In Spivak's opinion, the historical investigation of the Subaltern Studies will be able to capture the complexity of the Indian colonial past if it tracks the change from feudalism to capitalism. A matching change in the methodology is required due to Spivak's shift in the focus of Post-colonial theory. The Marxist paradigm is inapplicable to subaltern studies since there are other complex and distinct issues. Spivak advocates deconstruction as a better strategy to expand the scope of feministic discussion beyond the lens of Marxism. Spivak is accused of imposing an elitist foreign academic discourse on the history of post-colonial theory. But Spivak has supported her use of fragmentation, which she believes gets to the core of the problem, namely, the creation of the subaltern subjecting her argument.

Using deconstructive tactics, Spivak may be painted as unconcerned or uninterested in the local agency. She argues that by using the story of Mahasweta Devi, an alternative rhetorical location for articulating the history of subaltern women can be found in literary texts. The Marxist methodology would force Spivak to locate a post-colonial awareness and then objectify the subaltern by subduing them with knowledge after giving back some of her causality and self-determination. Spivak's concern with the experiences of oppressed subaltern women broadens the scope of this study. Spivak views this as a double effacement between a woman and a subaltern. In the essay, she claims: "The track of female sexuality is double-effaced within the subaltern subject's effaced itinerary. Spivak does not neatly outline the emancipation of oppressed women in the real spirit of deconstruction. She offers a ray of hope for the subaltern woman. Spivak develops a reading approach through analysis that can help us hear, recognise, and comprehend the perspective of the oppressed.

III. CONCLUSION

As a rhetorical strategy, Spivak's incomplete and provisional writing emphasises the limitations and openings of Marxism and feminism. As a historian of Subaltern Studies, Spivak strongly opposes the notion that the subaltern is an all-encompassing theory on women's rights. In contrast to the silencing of women from nationalist history, Devi's female subaltern characters offer a critical counterpoint. Spivak suggests that literature can provide an alternative space for articulating Subaltern women's resistance, which men in the official historical discourse have traditionally dominated.

Spivak illustrates subaltern women's agency and resistance in the post-colonial world through Mahasweta Devi's historical fiction. However, it is essential to remember that Spivak's reading of Devi's female subaltern characters is a critical counterpoint to the silencing and erasure of women in British colonial archives and nationalist elite narratives.

The contributions of Spivak to feminist theory have fundamentally altered how feminism is perceived today. Throughout her writings, she has criticised Western feminists who claim to speak on behalf of all women. The author challenges the notion that most women are alike and highlights how diverse and distinctive each culture's women are. Spivak emphasises the importance of giving Third World women material histories and many considerations in feminist theory. The short tale thus becomes an archive as it provides insight and perspective into the lives of women who must experience many internal and external traumas. Spivak also makes a case for the value of fiction as a different medium for examining how women's lives are shaped by the special interests of those who hold positions of authority.

This paper's primary concern, analysed through a subaltern interpretation of the texts, is the hegemony of dominant political discourses and the resulting subjectivities. Spivak contends that these marginalised communities, whose histories were erased from the national liberation movements, can only be given voice and space via literature. The translated version of Spivak's *The Giver* provides a prime illustration of this. Yashoda was a production tool according to the logic of value creation. We observe an inversion of the gendered division of labour in Yashoda's decision to sell her womb to sustain her family. This decision also challenges the male-centric notion of the working class at the core of traditional European Marxism.

Spivak has been criticised for commodifying Mahasweta Devi's writing to appeal to a global audience in her adaptations of Mahasweta Devi's novels. Spivak includes Western philosophical discourse unrelated to the characters or the portrayed culture. Spivak recognises this problem and works to solve it by creating texts for the third-world women. Mahasweta Devi's stirring and evocative literature might not result in representation in government for the underprivileged.

The complex union of Marxism, feminism, and deconstruction that underpins her critical work is what is most intriguing about her involvement with the post-colonial predicament. For a typical reader, Spivak's eclectic approach appears quite complex. It is challenging to distinguish where one thought ends, and another begins in her vital work because various theories are interconnected. Her versatility demonstrates her commitment to exploring subaltern women using diverse methods. Spivak has rethought Marxist conceptualisations of class struggle and class consciousness, which consider women's experiences and histories. Yashoda, the subaltern protagonist, challenges the assumption that childbirth is a selfless act.

Oppression is experienced by people of all classes, regions, languages, ethnicities, religions, generations, and genders in post-colonial societies such as India. This means that any general or theoretical statements made by educated, metropolitan intellectuals may miss out on crucial social differences on behalf of disempowered subaltern populations. According to Vaitinen (2022), Spivak's critical work has, in sum, made a significant contribution to the literature study as a discourse. Additionally, it attempts to undermine the dominance of colonial narrative in traditional English literary works. Her translations and analyses of Mahasweta Devi's writings highlight the significance of Spivak's translated work in articulating the untold stories of underprivileged women and at least beginning to conceive their importance in the modern world. Her significant contribution to contemporary literary criticism and public intellectual tradition is her unrelenting capacity to rewrite and rethink past conceptions and discussions regarding post-colonialism. Her ideas have attracted a sizable global audience. The arduous method of self-criticism and rewriting highlights the significance of Spivak's previous post-colonial ideas and shows how current events still have much in common. The translation and commentary of Spivak on Mahasweta Devi's fiction serve as a powerful counterpoint to the exclusion of underprivileged women from India's predominant historical and political discourse.

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