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Sinha, Lisha

Guru Ghasidas Viswavidyalaya
Bilaspur, India

lisha8013@gmail.com

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Sinha, Lisha
 Guru Ghasidas Viswavidyalaya, Bilaspur, India
lisha8013@gmail.com

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Abstract

India's struggle against the colonial invasion is fruitfully accomplished but only at a superficial level, for the country is still colonised economically and culturally under the garb of European consciousness. The following paper tries to contemplate colonial aftermath with special attention to the fact that the majority of people maintain a status-quo, thereby widening the bridges between the elite and subaltern classes, where the dichotomy between black/white, powerful/weak, upper classes/lower classes, master/slave is clearly demarcated. As its consequence, we find resistant nature being bred among the unprivileged classes against such new forms of exploitation. The paper focuses on the subaltern resistances, which are always viewed as an attempt of the oppressed groups to dethrone the colonial hierchies and their attitudes and has become a major issue in the present post-colonial scenario. Asif Currimbhoy's plays explore Indian subalternity through the portrayal of his varied characters and their actions, resisting against the oppressors reverberating the native voice.

The proposed paper attempts to showcase the fact that the postcoloniality can be considered in the light of anti-colonial resistance both against the imperial hegemony as well as the dominant western culture prevailing at various social strata. The paper will effectively consider the question of what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak asks. Whether subaltern can speak and thus will discuss how skilfully it is taken up in Currimbhoy's plays. The paper is also an attempt to elucidate the fact that how the subaltern speaks as well as protest against the dominant classes in order to live a free and peaceful life. The paper besides showcasing the various strategies of subaltern resistances, violent or non-violent, will also comment on how the plays demonstrate the various changes in India that came over after independence.

Keywords: Subaltern, Resistance, European Consciousness, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, Asif Currimbhoy

“...no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings.”(Foucault 245)

The “post-colonial” state of India becomes a problematic equation when the concept of constant ‘colonial’ becomes a part of the variable ‘post’. *The Penguin Dictionary of Third*

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World Terms, points out the effect of neo-colonialism or 'post' colonialism: the country after the independence has been transformed into a new kind of "a state thought to be at least institutionally free of foreign control, and one now possessing a greater measure of political autonomy than it did under colonialism" (250- 251). The imperial power of the British Empire still prevails in a way that it indirectly still controls the distant territories. The privileged classes of the country like capitalists, landowners, elites, and nonetheless patriarchy has gained control over the unprivileged group of individuals. The marginalized section of the society is constantly dominated directly or indirectly. As a consequence, they have usurped the vacant position of the colonizers and thereby marginalising 'others'. Marx's thought is rightfully interpreted in Anthony Brewer's *Marxist Theories of Imperialism* that, "Imperialism as constituting the political force that drives specific acts of colonialism (direct rule of a nation or people by another nation or people) or colonization (the establishment of settler colonies in foreign lands)" (25)

The concept of 'specific acts of colonialism', is clearly reflected in contemporary situation of the country. The unprivileged sections of the society are indirectly ruled by people who are settled at the various manifolds of power. The power play can be easily viewed in family relations, in an institution, parents over children, in an administration which lays down the constitution about how the people must behave or live, or in various binary oppositions like male/female, black/white, rich/poor. Post-colonial state in today's prevailing context is re-colonised under the various forms of power apart from the imperial power, about which Foucault in an interview "Critical Theory/intellectual theory", says: "I am not referring to power with capital 'P', dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are multiple, they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration" (38)

Freedom from the imperial power has transformed the post-colonial country into a new kind of colonialism: neo-colonialism, which is dominated by the new global order economically, culturally, and politically. Here colonialism is extended to a different level which gives rise to a new class of elites. Natives are discriminated on the grounds of race, gender, language, religion. This neo-colonialism offers ample space for heated debate among the post-colonial critics. The critics never cease to wonder that how the de-colonised country still remains under the clutches of the imperial influence. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana who coined the term 'neo-colonialism' aptly argues "the essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality it is economic system and thus its political reality is directed from the outside". (215)

The neo-colonial country, has created huge gaps between the various binary oppositions be it male/female, black/white, rich/poor. The new global order has set out things where the deprived individual has been lowered to the "inferior rank" and thus has been termed as 'Subaltern'. Subaltern is a term coined by Antonio Gramsci in order to distinguish inferiors' ranks of the society from their superiors in terms of race, caste, class, or gender. Ranajit Guha in his essay "The Prose of Counter Insurgency" states that, "Subalternity materialized by the structure of property, institutionalized by law, sanctified by religion and

made tolerable and even desirable by tradition”. (120). Perhaps Ranajit Guha wants to emphasize that the subaltern concept is a relational term in the sense, that it is a kind of identity attributed to an individual in a social process, that is, it is a socio-cultural construction. It describes a person by identifying through sameness as well as difference, the personal as well as social. And also, “the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or others” (208). Therefore, there is no subaltern, its existence is completely relational and exists only in relation to the dominant discourse that attributes it as ‘subaltern’. Perhaps this is the major assertion of the Subaltern Studies Group. The founding member Ranajit Guha, and other members like Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Amitav Ghosh, Partha Chatterjee and several others of the Subaltern Studies group have attempted to resurrect the subaltern through various stories of the individuals, essays, in order to gain them their rightful place in the mainstream. The critics have also tried to acknowledge people with the subaltern historiography with a target to reveal the excluded lives of the subaltern/marginalized groups and thus explore their condition, contribution as well as participation in the history of India which has been long neglected in the pages of Indian history. They also try to seek the reasons that compelled the subaltern groups to remain dominated and dictated by the institutions of domination.

However, Spivak seems to be doubtful regarding the role, which subaltern critics are trying to play. In her essay on subaltern, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak’, she expresses her doubt that whether the attempt of the postcolonial critics to give silenced others a voice will be effective or further worsen the situation. For example the abolition of Sati has allowed the postcolonial critics to cite the example of subaltern, but it also exhibits a negative implication, that the Europeans are civilized and Indians are barbaric. However, Spivak seems to be guilty and feels obliged towards the intellectuals. She contradicts her own statement that without the intervention of the intellectuals, the dominant discourses can never be questioned and dismantled without the counter-discourses. She takes the example of Sati practice (Hindu custom of burning the widow on the funeral pyre of the dead husband) as a case of subaltern. In the discussion of this Sati practice, the focus is upon the Indian customs and traditions. But one forgets to notice the widow around whom the discussion started. This conspicuous absence of the widow as subject leaves no space for the subaltern to speak. Further, towards the end of the essay, Spivak takes up the case of Bhubaneshwari Bhaduri’s suicide which was misunderstood as a consequence of Bhaduri’s illicit affair. In Reality, it was Bhaduri’s failure of taking up a task in the national revolt of the freedom. Thus, Spivak based on this instance, asserts the importance of the postcolonial critics to fill the gaps and exclusions created by the dominant discourses of the history. The intellectuals are of primary importance to bring up the voice of the subalterns because the subalterns are at weaker positions. They are rendered powerless against the injustices faced by them and thus she concludes ‘subaltern can never speak’.

Spivak may be conscious of the gaps and exclusions of the subalterns, but it is also equally true that, she remains unaware of the conspicuous absences within her essay itself. Firstly, she says that the intervention of the critics is required to bring the subordinates to the central stage. However, it further makes the dominant discourses more powerful because it

categorises and attributes a fixed meaning to the subalterns as the 'other' who are but inferior, a victim like Bhabaneshwari Bhaduri. And Spivak's attempt of giving 'voice' to the voiceless further subjugates the subordinates without allowing them to speak for themselves. The attempt to recover a voice and agency for the subaltern is doomed to be a failure, because the subaltern cannot be represented. The critics construct and perceive the subaltern in the image of their own. It feels difficult to agree with Spivak that subaltern can never speak for themselves. She feels that the labour, peasant, dalit, woman and such other minority groups are not in a position to force themselves against the oppressors. According to Foucault, at the site of power, resistance automatically exists. And since power operates at every strata of social structure, one can realize the cause and effect of such power relations, which gives rise to resistance. One kind of resistance is literary resistance which seeks to expose the depraved conditions of the marginalised. It enables the subaltern to express via the language of the critics. These writings attempt to rewrite the literary canons of the text from the marginalised point of view like that of Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea* or J.M Coetzee's *Foe*. Literary resistance can also be a direct counter-attack on the dominant classes like the writings of P.Sivakami Meena Kandasamy, Mahasweta Devi. The mission is to grab the language of the dominants and replace it with a newer kind of discourse in an attempt to thwart the prevailing discourse. The writers use the power of language to resist and challenge the existing power. Spivak upholds the importance of literary resistance in her essay "Can the Subaltern speak". But she at the same time, undermines the subalterns who are indeed capable speaking without the help of the postcolonial critics. The reality of the subalterns cannot be changed just because of few handfuls of critics fighting for them by writing books. Most of the writers are staying far away from the actual realities of the subalterns. The reality is: nothing brings change sitting back at home, one need to come outdoors, challenge, rebel and resist against the oppression. Subalterns existed long before Independence and so are their resistances. The marginalised may be powerless but there were always several attempts by the subalterns to challenge and dethrone the powerful. There are various instances of resistances on part of the subalterns. For Example, Rangpur [*dhing*] against Debi Sinha (1783), the Barasat Bidroha led by Titu Mir (1831), the Santa Hool (1855), "Sepoy Mutiny" of 1857, "Blue Mutiny" of 1860, Rebellious Singur and insurgent Nandigram in 2008, are such instances of resistances carried out by the subalterns.

If on one hand Spivak defends her literary resistance in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak", on the other hand the plays of Asif Currimbhoy justify that the subalterns are capable of various other forms of resistances to make them heard loud and clear. The plays of Currimbhoy attempt to revise and make fresh inclusions of neglected and marginalised sections of the society. His plays serve as the counter-cultural and counter-literacy consciousness, whereby the non-heroes emerge as heroes of the society. The plays work on multiple layers ranging over decades, in which India is rediscovered from colonial rule to independence, to chaotic post-independent India. The plays probe into complex socio-economic-political conditions, which existed during colonial era, independent era and gained newer dimensions in the post-independent era. His plays like *Clock* (1959), *Doldrums* (1960), *An Experiment with Truth* (1969), *Inqilab* (1970), *Sonar Bangla* (1972) seem to

backfire the dominant discourses because the characters like Mahatma Gandhi, Amar, Ahmed, Henry, Tony, Joe, Sumita act as agents of various forms of resistance and thus dismantle the theory of ‘subaltern cannot speak’.

In *An Experiment With Truth*, Asif Currimbhoy brings Mahatma Gandhi as a character. He plays a major role at the cross section of colonial India and post-colonial India to set out a parallel between history and story. The play rewrites history to include the exclusions through a story which brings forward those exclusions of the marginalised- that they are all capable of defending the dominant mores. The play portrays how the voiceless (subaltern) brings out their voice against the British rule during the last phase of the colonial India. Unlike the violent resistances displayed by the revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Chandra Sekhar Azad, Subhas Chandra Bose, the play slides down to a non-violent strategy of resistance practiced by Gandhi and his followers. Gandhi’s ‘Dandi March’ in the play projects the effective resistance of the natives against the colonisers. Colonialists have for a long time suppressed the natives. Throughout their rule, the natives are under constant threat. The natives feel powerless against the oppressive regime. Mahatma Gandhi uses alternative strategies of resistance to resist the imperial power by breaking their law, show disrespect and thus hurt their ego. This kind of non-violent resistance yet without a sense of fear and failure left the colonialists with a sense of defeat because the Satyagrahis were not a handful but in thousands who set forward to dethrone the hierarchies with the power of silence and non-violence. Gandhi chose to resist by picking up salt from the shores of Dandi and thus go against the laid rules of the colonisers. The ‘Salt march’ is a kind of experimentation of concepts like ‘Swaraj’ (self-government), ‘Sarvodaya’ (the welfare of all), ‘ahimsa’ (non-violence), and ‘Satyagrahis’ (truth-force) which provides an insight into new kind of resistance, a kind of liberation from the oppositional politics. Davis Jefferess while discussing on resistance turns to Gandhian thought that non-violence is “alternative narratives of resistance” that offers the promise of liberation without reverting to a fundamentally flawed oppositional politics. (104)

Starting with only seventy-eight Satyagrahis, the ‘Salt March’ becomes a mass revolution with thousands of natives, and also an example of a sense of equality. The people are from different layers of society. They move forward amidst the harsh environment only to gain their rights but in a silent and non-violent manner. They are ‘trained Ashramites’ filled with devotion, dedication, self-control. The resistance is not mere to own salt for the poor man’s sweat for his hard own wages. The struggle is to attain a life which will be their own and will not be guided or dictated by any external force of power. The powerful voice of the ‘voiceless’ subalterns creates a history when Gandhi picks up salt from the shores of Dandi. The disobedience against the rule is a passive resistance and does not move an inch nor raise itself physically against the violent lathi charges of the police.

Gandhi’s passive resistance is not only against the colonisers but also against the internal structure of the colonial structure of society, which created division among the human beings based on their class and caste. Gandhi’s resistance is not on the structures of power that operated at various levels of the society. He is concerned with the subject that is subjugated by power. One similar example can be that of the treatment of untouchables who

are deprived and exploited by the caste-ridden society. Mahatma Gandhi considered everyone as equal irrespective of caste, creed and religion. But unlike Gandhi, Kasturba is a believer of the caste system. Gandhi seeks to eradicate the biased attitude of his wife towards the lower class of the society. Gopal is a sweeper working for the ashram as well as for household. The main purpose of asking Gopal to bring a glass of milk from the kitchen, which is forbidden place for the untouchables, is an attempt to break the conventional norms followed by orthodox Kasturba. As a matter of fact, it is an intentional act of Gandhi to break the conventional norms of the society as a whole. Here we find how a subaltern takes the side of another subaltern, one who is doubly marginalized by both caste and imperialism:

Gandhi: Gopal, please bring me some milk. It's in Kasturba kitchen. (Gopal freezes)

Kasturba: (trying to conceal her agitation). I'll go...

Gandhi: (stopping her) No. (softly) No, Ba... I wish to talk to you. Gopal, bring it please. (Gopal leaves. A few seconds later he returns with the glass. Drops of milk are over his fingers. Kasturba's eyes remain fixed on his hand).

...ah ...thank you, Gopal. Give it to Ba, please... (Kasturba remains frozen.

Gandhi continues as if nothing has happened). (28)

Gandhi's unique notion of resistance has brought a huge change as it has stirred the minds of several people. They have learnt to speak against the dominants. And thus David Jefferess asserts that for Gandhi, "power is theorized at the level of experiencing the oppression" (123). Gandhi, who is himself oppressed by the colonial rule considers the situation of the oppressed and thus actively uses the non-violent strategy of resistance against the oppressors.

Non-violence is a peaceful strategy of resistance is considered as a noble fight against the tyrants. But another strategy of resistance is violent form of resistance which demands bloodshed in order to bring revolution. This violent form of resistance is evident in *Inquilab* which portrays the violent events of the Naxalite revolt of 1970 carried out against the capitalism and feudalism. The dominant elites of colonial India after post-independence have rushed to take the vacant positions of the colonizers in the form of landlords. This action on behalf of the elites gives birth to a new form of colonialism. But the youths get highly influenced by the Maoists ideas. Youths like Shomik, Ahmed, and Amar are the "Angry Young Men" who lead the revolution against the tyranny of the landlords. They become aware of the injustice done to the working class.

The multiple layers of power relations are visible in the play. But the characters display courage to break away from the dominating relations like institution, family and law. The main aim of the revolution is to gain respect and equality of the working class. The enraged students scrawl communist slogans on the walls of the classrooms and around the campus. Professor Datta, unhappy with the revolt, tries to pacify the students through his lecture on the freedom of speech, thought and the non-violent strategy applied by Mahatma Gandhi. But he is mocked, questioned, and assaulted by the students, because for the revolutionaries violence seems to be the only manner of resistance for the dispossessed and

deprived conditions of the working class. The term 'democracy' does not bear any sense of importance, as they feel the entire system of government is bourgeois in nature.

Prof. Datta:(raising his voice over the din of desk banging noise) These are institutions of democratic learning in a democratic government!

Teletype message ...: Bourgeois- Landlord Government of India.

Prof Datta: Principles founded on freedom of thought and speech by Gandhi, the father of nation!

...

Repeat: Class Enemies! Class Enemies Murdabad! Jotedars Murdabad! Police Murdabad! Inquilab! Inquilab Zindabad! (10-11)

Professor Datta believes in the free economy which is protected by law and enforced by law. But the revolutionaries are against such laws. His son Amar and Ahmed though belongs to the elite class, pleads for the proletarian. They want his father and bourgeois community to ponder over the poverty, hunger, inflation that heavily affects the people of the lower ranks. Here, one could recall Titu Mir, the son of a landowner, who led Narkelberia Uprising (1830-31), a fight against the exploitative conditions of the workers. Like Titu Mir- Ahmed, one of the leader of Naxalite and Amar one of the leader among the rebellious college students, moves beyond the boundaries of caste and class (Ahmed, Hindu turned Muslim and Amar, an elite turned in favour of proletariats) and come forward for the common cause of the working class, who constantly suffers at the hands of the government and its agencies. The agents of such government agencies think that distribution of the surplus land is one of the common accepted objectives and thus they have right to hold their land. And it is against such notion that the people like Ahmed and Amar are rebelling. In the play the character Jain represents the parasite landowners, who has owned the lands and controlled, subjugated the landless farmers. The revolutionaries in favour of collective farming aim to give land to the landless. And so they resort to the non-violent measures to grab the land: "Amar: Time's changing Jain-ji... It's too late now. ... (with deadly earnest) We'll grab the land, old man; the young like me are impatient and hungry. Then there'll be no distinction between the good and bad landlord, because being landlord is bad enough! ..." (19)

The violent form of resistance leads to the death of landlords like Jain, who was executed and hanged. Prof. Datta too gets killed by his own son Ahmed. The young powerless minds feel violence as the only means of resistance towards the neo-colonised society, the feudal and the landlords and thus make themselves heard across the country.

The one-act play, *The Clock* displays the social resistance. The post-colonial state has become free from foreign control. But in reality, it is still dominated politically, economically, and culturally. The play tries to bring fore the invasion of the capitalism into the daily lived experiences of the individuals. The acuteness of the situations is evident in the life of Henry. He represents the alienated Indian of the post-independent India. Throughout his life, he struggles for his sustenance. He sacrifices his own freedom and happiness. Henry is a salesman who has to complete targets every year. The everyday burden of work has turned him into a slave at the hands of the capitalists. He feels claustrophobic amidst such hectic schedule of his life. His frustration against this materialistic world is obvious because

it has changed his entire life. He is crushed under various responsibilities and duties. He is solely responsible to his wife, his children, boss and expectations of the society. Henry's life is within this four walls of responsibilities. The closed walls have lent him a sense of failure and hopelessness.

Henry: Sometimes when I get up in the morning, I feel kinda ... drugged. I can't bring myself to get out of bed and start the day's living all over again. I keep thinking of tomorrow And the day after the day after that...Tuesday...Wednesday...Thursday...Friday...Saturday...Sunday...Monday...Tuesday...until I've counted through all the days of the week, and all the weeks of the year... getting up, dressing, going to work, returning home, going to sleep...sorta purposelessness, don't you think?...No, there won't be no footprints in the sands of time when I'm gone. (17)

Macbeth was a slave to power and glory. And in the process of gaining such success, he thwarted his own life by plunging into unnecessary killings, which in turn, lead to futile consequences. And it was only towards the end, he realized that the means of success cannot bring happiness. It made his life appear meaningless to him. Henry too, like Macbeth, has become a slave to capitalist society and thus unable to accept the welcome and unwelcome aspects of life which is dictated by the capitalist society. Life for him has turned monotonous and meaningless. Henry is economically trapped by the bourgeois society which gives him unbearable and instable mental condition. Unlike Macbeth, he rebels against the social obligations by resigning his job which is his family's only means of survival. By resigning, he tries to win back his own sense of freedom from the oppressed system of the capitalism. For him, resigning his job is a kind of resistance, strategically used in order to gain a life of his own. He attempts to get rid of all the emotional aspects of his life including his family. He seeks to gain the carefree world which will not be bounded by the targets set by the neo-colonised world. Henry's resistance is not only towards the economic exploitation but also towards all the societal boundaries and limitations. His frustrations arise from the fact that situations do not turn according to his expectations. The unpredictable conditions of his life forces him to take responsibilities at an age when he was only a collegiate. He is bestowed with the responsibility of his pregnant wife. He quits his college and accepts a job below his expectation to survive his family. The societal expectations bound him emotionally as well as physically. So as a resistance, he resigns his only job in order to free himself from the dominant mores of the societal obligations. He not only resigns his job but also seeks to resign from his life and accept death as a means of liberation from the rooster coup of the society. Despite the warnings of the doctor to stay away from morbid alcohol, he plunges himself into heavy drinking. The purpose is only to get him unchained from his slavery.

In *Doldrummers*, the invisible domination of the colonizers in the form of neo-colonialism is quiet easily visible in the life of Tony and his friends. The play is a reflection of the wretched condition of the minorities. The play was banned by the censor board because it was considered obscene. But the censor board failed to perceive the critical conditions of the wretched natives of the contemporary society. Tony and his friends reside in the suburbs of Juhu Beach of the metropolitan Bombay. Like the landless farmers in *Inquilab* who are

institutionalized by law, Tony and his friends are materialized by the structure of property. They are aware of their failures and thus fail to live even in the imaginative world of happiness. The play displays alternative methods of resistance apart from non-violent or socio-cultural resistance. Throughout the play we find how the characters struggle to fight for their existence. They do not succumb to the strong dividing lines between rich and poor. Joe is a very interesting character in the play who serves as the mouthpiece for the rest of the characters. His friends are equally denied justice at the powerful hands of the upper class of the society. He constantly attempts to move away from the societal construction. He prefers not to be distinguished by the society, either through sameness or difference. Joe at the beginning of the play marks his resistance towards negative attitude of the dominants by singing his song which is but a musical and passive resistance, reminiscing the days of Mahatma Gandhi:

Joe: ...
 Satyagraha, Satyagraha,
 Hurrah for Satyagraha
 This passive resistance
 Tickles our existence (11)

The complex Joe is aware of the dominant nature of capitalism. He always tries to keep himself away from being overpowered by the dominant mores of the society. The society is a “ zoo” , the working class are the ‘monkeys’ and the capitalists are ‘hyenas’ who exploit the monkeys day and night both emotionally as well as physically, quiet similar to that of Henry in *Clock*. Joe’s strategy of resistance is denial of working for the capitalists. He also persuades others like Tony, Rita or Liza not to fall prey at the hands of the exploitations. His final resistance comes when he drowns himself into the sea to set himself free from the status of being a subaltern any more. He chooses the passive resistance like that of Satyagrahis because he is aware of the prevailing situation which is indestructible like a matter unlike his body. So he chooses to destroy his body and liberate his soul from the clutches of the power structures.

Quiet opposite to Joe, is the nature of Tony whose mode of resistance is to struggle for sustenance. Throughout the play we are subjected to Tony’s anger about not coming over his wretched state. It is his anger and resistance towards the neo-colonised that he accepts gifts from Liza. Tony feels that there is nothing wrong in exchanging gifts. He gives physical pleasure to Liza in exchange of her expensive gifts. Inexpensive items seem to liberate Tony from his poverty. He makes friends for benefits and thus tries to resist the poverty and hunger. Throughout the play, unlike Joe, Tony feels that status is a symbol of happiness. And only towards the end of the play, after the death of Joe, Tony realizes the worthy words of his friend who resists himself against the dominant courses of life by choosing death:

Tony: Joe...J... Remember the one on doldrums. Let’s sing this one together...for the last the last time.
 Let’s go my friend,
 We’ll go together, my friend,
 To where the doldrums ends.

Never fear, old man,
That's where it all began.

Blind though we be,
There's nothing left to see.

I'll lead you afar,
Beyond you Immortal star.

So hold my hand,
' Cause I understand,
' Cause I Understand... (92)

Tony understands the captive nature of the society. He realizes that the society plays with the individuals. It lures the individuals by letting them feel that they are safe with the societal constructions. But in reality it is only a trap to control them which his friend Joe has successfully cut through.

The largest gap in the essay of Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak" is the misconception about woman, whom she feels cannot speak under any circumstances. Only intellectuals can aid to the help of exploited women. She shares Moore Gilbert's thinking that gendered subaltern is "an empty space, an unacceptable blankness". Subaltern woman is a complete victim and oppressors are all powerful. However, the scenario is different in the case of Asif Currimbhoy's plays. In his play we can find the multiple projections of voices in the mainstream history which are activated and have come over their subjugated position. *Sonar Bangla* traces the evolution of such 'voiceless' subaltern woman into empowered woman who opposes against the various forms of exploitation. The conventional rules of the dictators fail to lower the spirits of the subaltern woman and as a result there is a kind of transgression where the normalcy is suspended and rules are overruled. Such "Transgressive" moments according to Neloufer de Mel lead to re-invention of tradition and re-inscription of the socially dictated norms especially in woman. (18)

Sonar Bangla has the theme of Indo-Pakistan war in 1971. The war has brutally affected the lives of the Bangladesh. The hegemonic powers of the tyrannical Pakistan wrought havoc on the lives of the villagers. Thousands of people are killed, wounded, and rendered homeless. And amidst this, the plot of women turns the worst who suffers the multiple layers of exploitation. Sumita is no exception, but unlike others she does not succumb to the situation. She fights back her depraved condition and breaks all the conventional rules ascribed to woman in society. At the very beginning of the play, we notice Sumita tries every possible means to save her daughter and herself from the lustful hands of the Jawan. She then switches over to Gandhi's form of Passive resistance. She hurts the ego of the Jawan by offering herself to him which angers as well as ashamed the Jawan. The strategy of passive defence saves Sumita and her daughter.

The once meek and hapless Sumita seeks refuge to violent means of resistance. The war renders her homeless. The widow Sumita joins Mukti-Fauj. Sumita realizes that her survival is more immediate and real than crying over her wretched condition. She is dispossessed and dehumanized yet desperate and fearless. She finally emerges out of the hopelessness into the hopeful dream of meeting her daughter Maya again. This desire of hers makes her break the myth of woman as weak and meek. She turns herself into the most ferocious member of Mukti-Fauj and becomes the “Most wanted” within Mukti –Fauj. Rightfully Meserves observes that: “ in Asif’s best plays the power of his women characters dominates the action... in retrospect one finds Asif Currimbhoy’s women characters whether minor or major, are stronger and more memorable than his men ” (x-xi)

Woman has always been the part of “man’s” life. She has always sacrificed for the benefits of patriarchy. Sumita on the other hand displays her strong sense of protest both against the patriarchy as well as the gendered oppression. She brings up her courage to question the dominant mores of the society. Sumita not only breaks the norms of the woman living indoors but also opposes against the oppressive patriarchy society. She does not even care to listen to the requests/orders of her saviour Arun. For Arun sticking to the Mukti-Fauj is important but for Sumita, her daughter Maya is more important. She leaves Arun for the sake of her child:

Arun: What are you sayin, Sumita? Dacca’s a stone’s throw from here. Everything we ever wanted. Yusuf’s dead. I can’t leave our group now. You can’t either.

Sumita: I will. I will. Let go of me.

Arun: Sumita, listen. For the last time. Leave me now...and you leave forever.

(Sumita looks up at him for a fractional second: a wide chasm suddenly between them, heart torn, but her mind decided. She struggles, frees herself, and runs like a deer...)

Sumita: (voice going faint as she disappears...)

Maya...Maya...Maya... (99)

Sumita denies the patriarchal domination and proves herself capable of moving alone all by herself without the support of the dominant gender. Nora Helmer of Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* moves away from her family to discover herself. Here, in the play, Sumita too walks away from Arun just like Nora Helmer, only to search for her daughter. And thus we can see how Sumita dismantles the theory of Spivak that “subaltern cannot speak”

However, the process of domination and subjugation is a continual process. Even if the subalterns rise and rebel, they will always be a subject of domination. The dominant discourses have set their foot in a firm manner. It is quiet difficult to displace them. Veena Das rightly observes, that being a subaltern is “the moment of rebellion is also the moment of failure and defeat” (312) But even then, the subalterns are like Bashai Tudu who will emerge in solidarity at the time of crisis, lead a battle, and resurface again at the next moment to make it a continuous process of oppression and rebellion. The oppressors try every means to subjugate the inferior ranks. However, subalterns will keep resisting without depending upon

the intellectuals to speak on behalf of them because silence is no longer a word in the dictionary of subaltern. They have adopted various strategies of resistance and all they seek is, to speak, to resist and never yield.

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Lisa Sinha is pursuing her Ph. D. on Postmodern Indian Drama in English from the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Guru Ghasidas Viswavidyalaya, Bilaspur, India.
