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Voices from the Margins:

A Comparative Analysis of 'Subaltern Otherness' in Boesman and Lena by Athol Fugard and (پیام زن دانا) The Message of a Wise Woman by Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi

Mohammadreza Dabirnia*

Abstract

This study explores the concept of the "subaltern other" in Athol Fugard's *Boesman and Lena* and Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi's (پیـام زن دانـا) *The Message of a Wise Woman*. By examining the racial, gender, and economic dimensions of subaltern identity in the South African and Iranian contexts, it investigates how colonialism and patriarchy shape the experiences of marginalized women. Using a multidisciplinary approach that combines postcolonial theory, feminist criticism, and critical race studies, this research employs a comparative framework to analyze both universal and culturally specific aspects of subaltern experiences.Central to the study is an exploration of marginalized female voices in male-dominated societies and how these voices are both suppressed and subtly resistant. The research also examines narrative strategies, character development, and the linguistic choices made by Fugard and Sa'edi, considering how language functions as both a tool of oppression and a medium of resistance. The authors' positionality and the ethical implications of representing subaltern experiences are also critically analyzed.This study concludes that both works highlight the enduring effects of colonial and patriarchal oppression, while also demonstrating the resilience and agency of their marginalized characters. By analyzing the intersection of race, gender, and class in

* PhD student in Comparative Literature, Heinrich Heine University, Dusseldorf, Germany, mohammadreza.dabirnia@hhu.de

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shaping subaltern identities, this research contributes to postcolonial and feminist scholarship, offering insights into the complexities of subaltern resistance and representation across different cultural contexts.

Keywords: comparative literature, postcolonial studies, subaltern other, Athol Fugard, Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi.

1.Introduction

1.1 Statement of the problem

One significant difference between Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's works and the colonial discourse analysis of critics such as Edward Said is that Spivak's criticism is not confined to nineteenth-century English literary culture and the historical context of imperialism. Unlike Said, who focuses on dominant literary texts from the European literary tradition, Spivak highlights the rhetorical and political agency of postcolonial literary works to question and challenge the authority of colonial master narratives (Morton, 2003, p. 112). This approach aligns with Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which explores the ambivalence and negotiation inherent in colonial and postcolonial identities (Bhabha, 1994, p. 112).

Spivak’s thinking weaves together various critical ideas, texts, and situations in novel and illuminating ways, making it challenging to distill her ideas into a single key point. However, the evolution of Spivak's most significant interventions can be tracked in a manner consistent with her political spirit and theoretical complexity (Morton, 2003, p. 9). This is comparable to the methodologies employed by other postcolonial theorists, such as Frantz Fanon, who examined the psychological effects of colonization on both colonizer and colonized (Fanon, 1963, p. 250).

Despite many former European colonies gaining national independence in the second half of the twentieth century, Spivak argues that the consequences of European colonialism have not simply faded away. Instead, the cultural, political, and economic lives of postcolonial nation-states continue to be influenced by the social, political, and economic systems established during colonial rule (Morton, 2003, pp. 1-2). This perspective is also reflected in the works of Ania Loomba, who emphasizes the enduring legacies of colonialism in contemporary global structures (Loomba, 2005, p. 14).

Spivak contends that the popular perception of deconstruction as apolitical and relativist is reductive and simplistic. She consistently and convincingly demonstrates

that deconstruction has been a powerful political and theoretical tool since its inception, revealing rhetorical blind spots or grounding errors that sustain traditional ideas of truth and reality (Morton, 2003, p. 4). This view complements the arguments made by Jacques Derrida, the father of deconstruction, who asserted that deconstruction disrupts the foundational concepts of Western metaphysics (Derrida, 1976, p. 158).

Spivak criticizes Western feminism for failing to support women's rights while ignoring the experiences of "Asian, African, and Arab" women. She argues that Western feminism overlooks the struggles of "Third World" women, challenging the notion of a "global sisterhood" (Spivak, 1986, p. 226). Chandra Talpade Mohanty echoes this critique, highlighting the homogenizing tendencies of Western feminist discourses that obscure the diverse realities of women in the Global South (Mohanty, 2003, p. 501).

The term "subaltern," according to Spivak, is useful because it is flexible and can encompass social identities and conflicts (such as women and the colonized) that do not fit into the reductive categories of strict class analysis (Morton, 2003, p. 45). In writings such as "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak broadens the meaning of the term by referring to social groups that are "further down" the social scale and thus less visible in colonial and Third World national-bourgeois historiography. Her research focuses particularly on the female subaltern, who is doubly disadvantaged by economic poverty and gender subordination (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 80). This concept is further elaborated by Ranajit Guha and the Subaltern Studies group, who investigate the historiographical silences and erasures of subaltern peoples (Guha, 1982, p. 7).

2. Literature review

In recent years, the field of comparative and postcolonial studies has become more expansive, addressing the limitations of earlier research that was often confined to a single geographical or cultural area. Scholars in this domain now engage with a broader range of subjects, integrating interdisciplinary perspectives from various fields of the humanities and social sciences. This shift aims to overcome the restricted scope of earlier studies and to foster a more comprehensive understanding of "otherness" and its representation across diverse cultures and historical contexts. However, while these advancements have brought a more nuanced view of postcolonial identities, many studies still struggle to move beyond superficial

analysis or fail to address the complexities of cultural hybridities and the entanglements of colonial power structures.

A key contribution to this expanded discourse has been made through the works that compare colonial and postcolonial narratives across different writers and traditions. These studies often reveal shared thematic concerns, such as the construction of identity, resistance, and the impact of colonial legacies on both the colonized and colonizers.

2.1 Recent Key Studies

Hoda Esmaeiltabar and Esmaeil Najar (2023), A Comparative Analysis of Aime Cesaire's The Tempest and Gholam Hossein Saedi's "Cheshm Dar Barabar-e Cheshm" ("An Eye for an Eye") from the perspective of Michel Foucault (Literary Interdisciplinary Research, Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, Vol. 5, No. 10, Autumn & Winter 2023-2024, 31-54).

This comparative analysis examines the works of two playwrights: Aime Cesaire, a French Caribbean writer, and Gholam Hossein Saedi, an Iranian playwright. Esmaeiltabar and Najar utilize Foucault's theories from Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison to explore the role of punishment, authority, and resistance in both plays. The study highlights the similarities and differences in how both playwrights use punishment as a tool of control, focusing on the relationship between power and the body. Esmaeiltabar and Najar's research contributes to postcolonial studies by showing how punishment, whether physical or psychological, serves as a mechanism for colonial power structures to subjugate and dominate. This study is valuable for understanding how both plays critique authoritarian rule and explore the complex nature of colonial legacies through the lens of punishment. Paul Prece (2008), Writing Home: The Postcolonial Dialogue of Athol Fugard and August Wilson (Doctoral Dissertation, Kansas University, Kansas).

This comparative analysis examines the works of two renowned playwrights, Athol Fugard from South Africa and August Wilson from America. Prece's study highlights the cultural and thematic parallels between the playwrights, focusing on postcolonial narratives and the shared concerns of race, resistance, and colonial oppression. Prece's work contributes significantly to understanding the postcolonial dialogue between different geographical regions and cultures, and is especially valuable in showing how performative elements can bring depth to such analyses.

Lisa Lau (2009), "Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals", Modern Asian Studies, 43(2), 571-590.

Lau's article explores the phenomenon of re-Orientalism, where individuals from the East perpetuate Western stereotypes about the East. This concept critically challenges the dichotomy between the West and the East and offers a more complex view of postcolonial identity formation. Lau's work is essential for understanding how colonial discourse can be internalized and perpetuated, even by those it has marginalized.

Lila Abu-Lughod (2002), “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others”, American Anthropologist, 104(3), 783-790.

Abu-Lughod critiques the Western feminist narrative that often frames Muslim women as needing "saving," which echoes Gayatri Spivak's concerns about the silencing of subaltern voices in Western discourse. This article contributes to the broader postcolonial critique of Western feminist paradigms by highlighting the diverse experiences of women in the Global South, encouraging more context-specific and culturally sensitive analyses.

2.2 Integration with Current Research

This study builds on these foundational works by analyzing how the postcolonial themes of cultural hybridity, identity, and "otherness" are expressed through literary and theatrical works across multiple regions and historical periods. Unlike earlier studies that may have been limited to specific geographical or cultural contexts, this research incorporates a broader, more globalized perspective. By examining both Fugard’s and Sa'edi's works, this research aims to demonstrate how different postcolonial narratives intersect, overlap, and diverge, revealing the complexities of colonial legacies and the ongoing process of decolonization. Discussion and Analysis.

Furthermore, this study integrates interdisciplinary approaches, combining literary analysis with performative theory, cultural studies, and critical race theory. The analysis also incorporates gender, race, and class as integral components of postcolonial identity, examining how these intersecting factors contribute to the resistance against colonial and imperialist power structures. The critical engagement with these broader theoretical frameworks will help to reveal the nuanced ways in which colonialism continues to shape contemporary postcolonial discourse, while also offering new insights into the ways in which marginalized voices challenge the dominant cultural narratives.

3. Discussion and Analysis

3.1 Autocratic/colonial symbolization

In Boesman and Lena, the changes in circumstances and the destruction of the slum atmosphere belonging to people of color become more noticeable with the introduction of new foreign innovations. The term "innovation" in this context refers to the processes by which humans can influence their surroundings (Rivière, 1992, p. 128). According to Latouche, the metaphor of the car holds a unique position among many authors as it represents the West and its hostile forces (Latouche, 2000, p. 77). The symbolic appearance of technology, such as cars and non-native agricultural tools like tractors and bulldozers, acts as a colonial substitute and indicator of the ongoing intervention by Western foreigners in non-Western communities.

These technological symbols represent the imposition of foreign, forceful events onto the subaltern, creating a symbolic challenge for the eastern human or subaltern. In Fugard's play, colonizers use science and technology as tools to destroy the homes of the marginalized and force them to flee. This is vividly illustrated in the dialogue:

BOESMAN. It's no use, baas. Boesman's done it again. Bring your bulldozer tomorrow and push it over! (Fugard, 1991, p. 170).

The destruction of Boesman and Lena's home by a bulldozer symbolizes the broader theme of colonial dispossession. The use of heavy machinery to dismantle the slum reflects the brute force of colonial power and the technological superiority wielded by colonizers. This dynamic is consistent with broader postcolonial critiques, which often highlight the intersection of technology and power in colonial contexts (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, p. 211).

Furthermore, the portrayal of these innovations as destructive forces aligns with the views of scholars like Edward Said, who argued that the imposition of Western technology and culture serves to reinforce the subjugation of the colonized (Said, 1978, p. 92). The presence of these technologies in the play not only underscores the physical displacement of the characters but also symbolizes the erasure of their cultural and social identities.

In Boesman and Lena, the destruction of Boesman and Lena's home by a bulldozer symbolizes the broader theme of colonial dispossession. The use of heavy machinery to dismantle the slum reflects the brute force of colonial power and the technological superiority wielded by colonizers. This is consistent with postcolonial

critiques, which often highlight the intersection of technology and power in colonial contexts (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, p. 211). Similarly, Fugard's portrayal of the bulldozer as a tool of destruction brings attention to the ways in which technology was often used to solidify colonial control by literally and symbolically erasing the presence and identity of the colonized. The mechanization of the colonial system reflects how technological advances were applied to oppress marginalized communities, symbolizing the imposition of foreign forces onto the subaltern (Latouche, 2000, p. 77).

3.2 The subaltern postcolonial discourse

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak emphasizes the importance of discussing the subaltern above all else. The issue of the subaltern, or the marginalized and oppressed groups within postcolonial societies, is deeply rooted in colonial studies and is used to describe various levels of postcolonial hierarchies. Spivak's perspective on postcolonialism centers on a large group of visible or unnoticed colonized people in historical periods who could not speak for themselves or their situations. She advocates for the decentralization of the colonizing narrative by using a constructivist method to amplify the voices of the colonized subaltern in underdeveloped countries.

Spivak, like Homi K. Bhabha, believes that imperialism was not only a territorial and economic project but also one that inexorably created subjects. She argues that "imperialism is a way to establish the global normativity of the mode of production story," transforming the native into a proletariat. She asserts that "to neglect the subaltern today is, willy-nilly, to continue the imperialist project" (Young, 2004, pp. 201-202). Class categorizations also obscure distinctions within the subaltern groups: "one must argue that the colonized subaltern subject is irreversibly diverse" (Spivak, 1988, p. 26).

In Fugard's Boesman and Lena, the play leads us back to the theme of marginalization. We meet two "Coloured" people from Korsten, the non-white shantytown. Boesman and Lena, an even more marginalized and impoverished couple, have been evicted, and before the show begins, their home has been demolished. The play starts with an "empty" stage (Walder, 1984, p. 70), symbolizing the void left by apartheid, which deprived people of color of the possibility of daily living. The characters reminisce about the white bulldozer that destroyed their homes, reflecting the lives of marginalized social groups dominated by men and white-skinned individuals.

Fugard depicts the life, livelihood, and concerns of the oppressed through artistic representation. The writer's depiction of the daily lives of gender-based and racially oppressed people illustrates the events resulting from the Apartheid era with a precise approach, turning toward their colonial actions against society's inferiors.

In contrast, Habibi's short play (پیـام زن دانـا) The Message of a Wise Woman considers women as empowered individuals capable of protesting and rebelling against patriarchal powers that have historically oppressed them (Habibi, 2019, p. 193). This play challenges patriarchal structures by orienting women and racial issues, aligning with feminist and postcolonial theories, which have evolved to defend "others" against oppressive power structures (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 249).

The feminist movement has consistently demanded equal access to means of knowledge and participation in knowledge creation, arguing that inherited knowledge is constrained by predominantly male institutions. Feminist intervention in humanities academics has challenged normative and universalist assumptions of gender-biased knowledge systems, encouraging women to become active participants rather than passive objects (Gandhi, 1998, pp. 43-44). According to Michel Foucault, discourse domination is confronted with various forms of resistance, indicating that the existence of authority depends on the presence of resistance points (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). Thus, patriarchal discourse, despite its invasiveness and historical domination, continually faces resistance.

In Fugard's Boesman and Lena, the characters' marginalized status is central to the narrative. Boesman and Lena are two "Coloured" individuals living in a non-white shantytown, having been displaced by the apartheid regime. Fugard portrays their situation with acute sensitivity to the subaltern condition, where the characters' voices are often suppressed or ignored by the dominant colonial power. This reflects Spivak's notion of the subaltern as a group that is silenced by historical and social forces. As Lena is repeatedly subjected to both racial and gendered violence, her voice is reduced to a whisper, symbolizing the double oppression faced by marginalized individuals under colonial and patriarchal structures. Boesman's attitude toward Lena, as he mimics the oppressive behaviors of the colonizer, reflects the internalization of colonial power dynamics (Bhabha, 1994, p. 85).

3.3 Racial subaltern

Race is intrinsically linked to postcolonial theory for two main reasons. First, race has historically been a dominant subject of discrimination and prejudice, remaining

an unavoidable fact in modern society. While we can rationalize race as a defective and self-destructive construct that imprisons its users in limiting networks, it remains a social reality that must be acknowledged in contemporary social and personal relationships (Griffiths, 2018, p. 22).

The significance of this concept lies in its nature as a social classification that exerts unreasonable effects on temperament and politics in most societies. Bhabha (1994) connects race to the larger history of discourse formation, particularly its relationship to modern discourse. In Boesman and Lena, the atmosphere is heavily influenced by race, with the history of racial discrimination playing a significant role in the characters' experiences. The transformation in postcolonial societies includes the translation of time into the atmosphere of discourse, where Boesman and Lena are subjected to deprivation and discrimination due to racial prejudices.

White-skinned people, as racists, limit not only the acceptance of racial differences but also believe in their superiority, creating an evaluative framework for making global judgments:

Lena. Listen to me. You'll never sleep long enough. Sit close. Ja! Hotnot and a Kaffer got no time for apartheid on a night like this (Fugard, 1991, p. 172).

Frantz Fanon believed that the black man could only dream of being white because he was trapped in the infernal circle of racism. The colonized black is compelled to "escape his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence... the Negro, having been made inferior, progresses from humiliating insecurity to despair" due to the rage, self-doubt, and injury he feels from this impossible situation (Fanon, 1963, p. 63). Meanwhile, racist whites are also deformed by bigotry's dehumanizing practice, trapped in identities defined solely by their violent rejection of non-whites (Lindholm, 2007, p. 220).

BOESMAN. Show it to me! Where is it? This thing that happens to me. Where? Is it the Pondok? Whiteman pushed it over this morning. Wind will do it to this one (Fugard ,1991, p. 175).

Boesman admits that he thinks his race is worthless in comparison to white people.

BOESMAN. Must I tell you why? Listen! I'm thinking deep tonight. We're Whiteman's rubbish (Ibid., p. 170).

The dynamics of racial discrimination and internalized racism are evident as Boesman and Lena navigate their interactions with other marginalized characters. Boesman's treatment of the elderly black man in the play reflects the internalization of the colonizer's oppressive mentality. The symbolic use of the term "Kaffer," considered one of the worst racial slurs, highlights the depth of internalized racism and the perpetuation of racial hierarchies:

BOESMAN. He's not brown people, he's black people.

LENA. They got feelings too. Not so, Outa? (Fugard, 1991, p. 153)

Boesman imitates the colonizers' temperament, aspiring to the perceived higher status of white men. This imitation reflects a dual mentality and abandonment of self-identity, leading to the creation of a counterfeit identity. According to Homi Bhabha, colonial imitation tends toward the different "other," with extreme imitation resulting in alienation and despair. This process reveals the hegemonic ways in which authorities expect subaltern individuals to conform (Bhabha, 1994, p.85).

In Sa'edi's play (پیـام زن دانـا) The Message of a Wise Woman, the focus shifts to the Arabic race, highlighting the cultural and racial dynamics within patriarchal societies. The portrayal of Arabic sheiks and their men searching for the wise woman reflects the intersection of race and gender in postcolonial discourse. Tzvetan Todorov's concept that a person's temperament is influenced by their racial, cultural, and ethnic group is evident as the play contrasts the wise woman with other characters, emphasizing gender-based discrimination (Todorov, 1992, p. 96).

Both plays illustrate how racial subalterns navigate their marginalized positions within oppressive societies. The exploration of racial dynamics in these works highlights the pervasive impact of colonial and patriarchal oppression, while also showcasing the resilience and resistance of marginalized figures.

Boesman and Lena also engages deeply with the concept of racial subalternity. Boesman's treatment of the elderly black man, whom he calls "Kaffer"—a derogatory racial slur—highlights the internalization of racist ideologies within the oppressed groups themselves. This mirrors Frantz Fanon's analysis of how the colonized subject internalizes racist values imposed by the colonizer, which leads to both self-hatred and a perpetuation of colonial hierarchies. Boesman's racism toward the elderly man reflects the psychological scars left by colonial oppression, where the colonized adopt the values of their oppressors to gain a semblance of superiority in the oppressive hierarchy (Fanon, 1963, p. 63). Lena's role as a

submissive partner further explores the complex intersections of race, gender, and power in postcolonial society, as she embodies the subaltern who remains silenced and oppressed by both colonial and patriarchal structures.

3.4 The gender subaltern

One of the most important issues that connect feminist and postcolonial approaches is their focus on the study of marginalized "others." According to Spivak, the term "subaltern" is useful because it is flexible; it can include social identities and conflicts (such as women and the colonized) that do not fit into the reductive categories of "strict class analysis" (Morton, 2003, p. 45). By focusing on the dominance and reflection of historical discourse pressure in literary works, plays, and the superiority of men and patriarchy, these approaches highlight how societal norms contribute to the extensive exploitation of women.

In *The Second Sex (1949)*, Simone de Beauvoir argues that man is the subject and woman is the Other. A woman's experience is ancillary, alien, and unpleasant, whereas a man's experience is primary and absolute. As a result, a woman's entire selfhood is denied in a patriarchal society, and she is cut off from her own subjectivity (Makaryk, 1993, p. 620). These combined approaches similarly characterize women in the plays by Fugard and Sa'edi.

Western colonizers identify colonized people's identities by pitting "self" against "other," dividing civilized from non-civilized, and patriarchal authorities identify women's identities by employing gender clichés and dualities such as man/woman, mind/body, and dominant/obedient (Bomarito & Hunter, 2005, p. 238). Sheila Rowbotham in Women, Resistance, and Revolution demonstrates that the colonization of developing nations and women's oppression under imperialism are strikingly similar (Rowbotham, 1972, p. 37).

Marginality, a key term in subaltern studies and postcolonial criticism, refers to the experience of being on the margin, resulting from the dual structures of various dominated discourses such as patriarchy, imperialism, and ethnic orientation (Shahmiri, 2010, pp. 126-127). Lena's marginalization in Boesman and Lena symbolizes the postcolonial subaltern who is subjected to patriarchal domination, native ethnicity, and colonial society. Spivak argues that the construction of the "Third World Woman" in literature represents the paternalistic, colonial process that Mohanty outlines, wherein the local is turned into a self-consolidating other for the Western feminist (Young, 2004, p. 205).

Fugard's characterization of Lena illustrates that she embodies multiple layers of marginalization: being a woman, being black, and being part of an underdeveloped society. This marginalization is evident in her interactions and the constant suppression by Boesman and white individuals. Lena's silence contrasts the colonizer's and colonized's communication dynamics, highlighting her position as "the other."

Fugard depicts Lena's marginalization and suffering through various elements in the play. The initial description of the drama clearly reflects Lena's inferiority:

> *After a few seconds, a coloured woman—Lena—appears. She is similarly burdened—no mattress, though—and carries her load on her head. As a result, she walks with characteristic stiff-necked rigidity. There is a bundle of firewood under one arm. Also barefoot. Wearing one of those sad dresses that reduce the body to an angular, gaunt cipher of poverty* (Fugard, 1991, p. 136).

Lena represents the voice of a native subaltern woman subjected to double colonization. Her European name, which is ironic for a black woman from southern Africa, signifies her mixed heritage and the rejection by both races responsible for her existence. Her life in the industrial suburbs and her treatment by Boesman reflect the harsh realities of her marginalized status:

> *Lena. Why must you hurt me so much? What have I really done? Why didn't you hit yourself this morning? You broke the bottles. Or the Whiteman that kicked us out? Why did you hit me?* (Fugard, 1991, p. 175).

Lena's character also highlights the intersection of race and gender oppression. Boesman's contempt for white people and his mimicry of white dominance is projected onto Lena: BOESMAN. Sick of it! You want to live in a house? What do you think you are? A white madam? (Fugard, 1991, p. 150)

In Sa'edi's play (پیام زن دانا) The Message of a Wise Woman, the narrative explores a woman's resistance against the patriarchal system. The woman in the play is depicted as a slave to the sheik, reflecting her lack of respect and identity within that society:

> The second Arab: no, I always take them forcefully, I used to go like a hunter, and I used to put a trap and trap them, and finally I killed it under cloak and then put some ropes around their neck and took them (Sa'edi, 2019, p. 116).

In both plays, women's double subordination results in underestimating women, lack of independent social and personal identity, lack of access to authority and opportunities, and isolation. According to Alice Walker, there are four types of personality: "the suspended woman," "the assimilated woman," "the emergent woman," and "the freed woman" (Tyson, 2006, p. 410).

On the other hand, in Sa'edi's play, we see the narration of a woman's suffering as she decides to be a victim of the patriarchy system no longer and to end their avarice and domination. As a representative of other oppressed women, this woman takes action. In this narration, we need to start with a description of this woman's situation. This woman is not a character in the play. She is a slave and a means of the sheik's pleasure, and she is forced to be his slave because she has no respect or identity for the people of that location.

The second Arab: no, I always take them forcefully, I used to go like a hunter, and I used to put a trap and trap them, and finally I killed it under cloak and then put some ropes around their neck and took them (Sa'edi, 2019, p. 116).

The second Arab: I have taken the other women for him as well, I have found them with this rope and this musical instrument, I have tied their hand, their feet, and their mouth, and I have taken them to the sheik's house (Ibid, p. 163).

As a result, it is asserted that women's double subordination is associated with some consequences such as underestimating women, lack of an independent social and personal identity, lack of access to authority and opportunities, and isolation. In the discussion of gender, Alice Walker, one of the theorists in the postcolonial feminist approach, introduces four types of personality: "the suspended woman," "the assimilated woman," "the emergent woman," and "the freed women" (Tyson 2006, p. 410). We can draw the following conclusions from the analysis of the female characters in the two plays:

3.4.1 The Imprisoned Woman

This type represents women who are victims of both men and society. They have no right to choose and are unaware of their surroundings. Lena and the victim women in Sa'edi's play fit this description.

3.4.2 The Freed Woman

This type represents women who recognize their abilities and are aware of their desires and goals. In (پیـام زن دانـا) The Message of a Wise Woman, the third woman

embodies this type by bravely expressing her complaints and taking action against the Arabic man:

The third woman: No, man, neither am I afraid of the sheikh's court, nor of himself or anybody else. Because I know that there is nothing terrifying (Sa'edi, 2019, p. 164).

In conclusion, both Fugard and Sa'edi use their plays to highlight the gender subaltern, showcasing the struggles and resistance of women within oppressive patriarchal and colonial systems. The exploration of these themes reveals the pervasive impact of gender and racial oppression while also highlighting the resilience and agency of marginalized women.

3.5 The economic subaltern

As discussed previously, we can clearly observe the economic inferiority of colonized people in Fugard's Boesman and Lena. The characters' status as slum dwellers with no material possessions highlights the economic disparities central to postcolonial discourse. This economic viewpoint is evident in themes such as unemployment, vagrancy, and exploitation.

Low wages, repression of protests, demanding work conditions, and inevitable labor force migration drove the African workforce away from their families. Laws such as the "pass rule" forced workers to leave their children and wives to work in distant centers, sending minimal payments home, which exacerbated their suffering, particularly for women (Walder, 2019, p. 9). The play depicts slum dwellings and settlements in city suburbs, illustrating how limiting Africans to low-wage work and restricted living spaces results in economic underachievement:

LENA. Or Missionvale! Redhouse! There's a chance of a job there on the saltpans (Fugard, 1991, p. 143).

Another notable issue in the play is land displacement. Characters are relocated from slums to even worse locations, such as muddy areas. The valuable muddy lands near Port Elizabeth emphasize this theme.

The artistic link between racial and economic inferiorities is evident from the beginning of the play when men carry women like animals according to African traditions. Lena's struggle with the heavy load symbolizes her burden under economic and racial oppression:

Here? Much-hidden information is placed at the center of Fugard's play in this single word. She asks incredulously, 'Here?' In this open, mudslide-infested landscape? Is this the point at which you want to stop? She inquired, 'Where are you?' With this question, Lena informs us that when and where they stop is up to Boesman, the man who is the governor and governs both here and in the larger territory of the drama. (Fugard, 1991, p. 123).

4. Conclusion

The intersection of feminism and postcolonialism is evident in that both approaches seek to challenge dominant authority while incorporating the voices of the silent, oppressed, and marginalized. These two dramas revolve around themes of authority, oppression, inequality, dependence, identity crisis, class, race, and gender. They depict the marginalization of inferiors and provide opportunities for resistance and survival against patriarchal and imperialist discourses. Consequently, it can be concluded that relying on Western views to represent women in developing countries in literary discourses is ineffective, as the levels of pain and suffering experienced are not comparable to those of Western women. Spivak's analysis attempts to explain the diverse lives of women in colonized and patriarchal countries more appropriately by examining these layers of oppression.

The portrayal of two female characters in underdeveloped countries in the plays (پیـام زن دانـا) The Message of a Wise Woman and Boesman and Lena illustrates their life struggles, pain, and suffering with exemplary delicacy. A comparative analysis of these works allows us to explore cultures and subcultures beyond the Western world, observing the social systems that have resulted in terrible outcomes for people, particularly women. This supports the idea that comparative literature is a form of cultural study. According to Spivak, there is no such thing as a "subaltern other" with a powerful voice that can be easily heard. She concludes that the identity of the truly inferior group is defined by its difference and marginalization.

Fugard's creation of Boesman and Lena depicts the situation of inferiors in various economic, racial, and gender-based aspects. Fugard creates three inferior characters, each experiencing a level of oppression, and portrays the difficulties of black people's and especially women's lives during the era of racial and discriminatory governments. The play reflects the bitterness of colored skin in southern Africa during the apartheid government. According to this evaluation, the postcolonial approach is based on the meaning of the "other," expressing the

differences between the colonizer and the colonized based on cultural, ethnic, and geographical distinctions, including race, gender, and color.

In (پیـام زن دانـا) The Message of a Wise Woman, the discourse of the other subaltern, similar to what Spivak describes for Asian and African women, is highlighted in a native atmosphere. The position and difficulties of a woman's character in this context significantly differ from those of a Western woman, criticizing the suitability of the Western feminist model for analyzing such discourses. Postcolonial existence is always dual, with its appearance as original and valid and its expression as repetitive and different. This duality divides the barriers of colonial circumstances and distinguishes between the colonizer's and the colonized's distinctions, the Hegelian master-slave dialectic, and phenomenological projections of otherness.

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