



## Woman in Culture and Arts

# Reflection of the Concept of Spivak's Subaltern in The Nine Parts of Desire by Heather Raffo and Mastaneh, the History of the Forgotten by Naghmeh Samini

Tuba Mozafarinezhad<sup>1</sup> | Esmail Najar<sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Drama, College of Arts, Tarbiat Modares University. E-mail: [mozafarinezhad.t@modares.ac.ir](mailto:mozafarinezhad.t@modares.ac.ir)

2. Corresponding Author, Assistant Professor of Drama, College of Arts, Tarbiat Modares University. E-mail: [najar@modares.ac.ir](mailto:najar@modares.ac.ir)

Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article type:</b> Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 5 November 2023 Received in revised: 9 December 2023 Accepted: 16 June 2024 Published online: 30 December 2024</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Comparative Literature, Gayatri Spivak, Heather Raffo, Naghmeh Samini, Subaltern Studies.</i></p>	<p><b>Introduction</b> This study applies the theories of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, which were examined in "Subaltern Studies," to two plays: <i>Nine Parts of Desire</i> by Heather Raffo and <i>Mastaneh, the History of the Forgotten</i> by Naghmeh Samini. Spivak's theories emphasize the necessity of marginalized voices to assume responsibility, particularly in a global literature that is dominated by Western perspectives. This article illustrates the manner in which these plays reflect Spivak's toward authenticity and the agency of subaltern voices.</p> <p>Spivak's seminal works, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985) and <i>Death of a Discipline</i> (2003) have established the theoretical backbone for this study. Her critique of Western academic discourse highlights the manner in which it subsumes and silences voices associated with subaltern identity under the guise of inclusivity. The analyses of subaltern women in these plays are significantly influenced by her theories. The women who exist in Iraq under a variety of forms of suppression are embodied in Heather Raffo's (2003) novel, <i>Nine Parts of Desire</i>. Raffo's play explores the personal and collective struggles of these women, edging closer to Spivak's concept of the subaltern, who were capable of expressing their experiences in the face of systemic silencing. The same is true for the characters in the play and numerous other voices of subaltern bodies at present, including Layal, originally an artist from Baghdad, and Huda, a political activist.</p> <p><i>Mastaneh, the History of the Forgotten</i> by Naghmeh Samini (2023) is a play that revolves around the lives of Iranian women, who are extremely marginalized in both socio-cultural and political aspects. Systemic oppression has a significant impact on the lives of actual people, as evidenced by the plot's combination of personal stories set within historical and cultural contexts. Mastaneh and Sarah are presentations on the gender-class-culture matrices. Samini critiques social conventions that could perpetuate female subordination in her two stories, thereby supporting Spivak's argument that subalterns must independently reclaim the narrative. The play critiques the societal and political arrangements that guarantee the implementation of these practices in addition to discussing gender issues. Samini brilliantly illustrates the multifaceted nature of Iranian women's experiences and the pervasive influence of oppressive systems by depicting the daily struggles and triumphs of Iranian women, thereby adding substance to the discussion of subalternity.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> The methodology will involve comparative literary analysis, which will assess thematic aspects, character representation, and narrative structures. The critique of these plays is determined by the affirmations or negations of Spivak's assaults, but it is more significant to consider the perspectives of marginal women and the portrayals of their voices.</p> <p><b>Results</b> The plays serve as a valuable complement to Spivak's argument regarding the importance of reclaiming marginalized voices in literature, as they provide a platform for the expression of</p>

the lived experiences of subaltern women. That is the more prominent endeavor at maintaining their silence. In the context of broader socio-political contexts, both authors are able to achieve a rich articulation of subalternity through personal experiences.

Through their nuanced character portrayals and multilayered narratives, Raffo and Samini critique not only the specific conditions of Iraqi and Iranian women, but also the broader systems of oppression that perpetuate subalternity at a global level. Their works challenge monolithic representations by emphasizing the significance of contextual and intersectional perspectives in comprehending subaltern lives.

Both Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire* and Samini's *Mastaneh, the History of the Forgotten* investigate the experiences of marginalized women in distinct socio-political landscapes. The play by Raffo emphasizes the multifaceted oppression of Iraqi women through the characters of Layal and Huda. Huda's activism exemplifies Spivak's concept of the subaltern's struggle to be heard, while Layal's art protests against gender, political, and wartime oppression. Samini critiques Iran's socio-political oppression, while Raffo focuses on the intersection of gender, politics, and conflict in Iraq. In accordance with Spivak's theoretical framework, both plays offer a nuanced examination of the subaltern experience, thereby amplifying marginalized voices.

### Conclusion

This demonstrates the fundamental significance of literature in the advocacy of subaltern voices, as Spivak has argued: Women who are considered subaltern: The systems that confine them to this marginalization are subject to the unequivocal condemnation of the struggles and resilience depicted in the two critical texts, *Nine Parts of Desire* and *Mastaneh, the History of the Forgotten*. Simultaneously, they commemorate the resilience and autonomy of these women. The performances contribute an additional note to the perpetual symphony of subaltern studies by highlighting the voiceless. Raffo and Samini's works not only illuminate the lived realities of subaltern women but also reaffirm the necessity of their voices in the global literary canon. Their narratives necessitate a reevaluation of the potential of literature to function as a potent tool for the reclamation of marginalized identities and the promotion of social justice.

These plays underscore the importance of a nuanced and inclusive approach to narrative by emphasizing the intersectionality of identity and the intricacies of systemic oppression. They serve as a reminder that the struggle for representation and equity in literature and beyond is far from over, and that the voices of the subaltern must continue to be amplified and celebrated. In doing so, they make a substantial contribution to the ongoing conversation regarding the influence of narrative, diversity, and inclusion on our comprehension of the world.

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