

فحص لتابع سبيفاك المضطهد في الأدب الروائي

الناطق بالإنجليزية: دراسة لرواية شرف

للكاتبة ايليف شافاق

**Examining Spivakian's Subaltern in
Anglophone Fiction: A Study of Elif
Shafak's *Honor***

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الكلمات المفتاحية: التابع المضطهد، غياتري سبيفاك، شرف، أليف شافاق، النساء
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الملخص

غالبًا ما يشير التابع المضطهد إلى البديل، والاختلاف، والدونية، والتبعية. أدرجت غاياتري سبيفاك هذه الفكرة بشكل بارز في مؤلفاتها. وترى سيفاك أنه من المستحيل تصوير المجموعات الفرعية بدقة أو إسماع صوتها في الروايات التي أنشأتها المجموعات المهيمنة لأن التصوير المعتاد للمجموعات الفرعية التابعة يميل إلى إسكات أصواتها الأصلية. في إطار الاستعمار، لا يستطيع التابع المضطهد التعبير عن وجهة نظره، وبالتالي لا يزال غير ممثل. وفقا لذلك، تدرس هذه الدراسة كيفية تصوير التابع المضطهد، أو عدم تصويره، في الرواية المختارة (شرف) من قبل الكاتبة أليف شافاك (٢٠١٢). في هذه الرواية، يتم إهانة التابع المضطهد ويحرم من صوت للتعبير عن المشاعر الحقيقية أو تبرير السلوكيات. وغالبًا ما يتم تصويره على أنه شيء وليس كإنسان يتمتع بكامل الحقوق في السرد، مما يحرمهم من فرصة إخبار تاريخهم. عادة ما ينظر إليهم على أنهم كيانات أدنى عادة ما يتم سرد ماضيها من قبل قوى أكثر هيمنة.

Abstract

The term "subaltern" frequently pertains to subordination, inferiority, distinction, and alterity. This idea has been prominently featured in Gayatri Spivak's publications. According to Spivak, it is impossible to accurately represent subaltern groups or give them a voice in narratives that are produced by dominant groups, as the conventional portrayal of subaltern groups often obscures their genuine voices. Within the framework of colonialism, the subaltern is unable to express their perspective and, as a result, remains unrepresented. Consequently, this study investigates the method by which the subaltern is depicted, or not, in the selected novel *Honor* by Elif Shafak (2012). In this novel, the subaltern is dehumanized and deprived of the ability to express genuine emotions or justify their actions. Narratives frequently depict the subaltern as objects rather than human subjects, preventing them from recounting their histories. More dominant forces typically recount their past, and they are typically perceived as inferior entities.



Introduction

Subaltern is often identified as a group that is denied the opportunity to participate in society and is excluded from existing political systems. It addresses individuals or groups that are inferior in terms of rank and status as a result of their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion. According to Murphy (2021, p. 123), certain academics employed it in a broad sense to characterize marginalized groups and the lower classes as having no agency as a result of their social status. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist political activist, introduced the concept of the Subaltern in his article "Notes on Italian History," which was subsequently incorporated into his Prison Notebooks. "Subordinate" or "dependent" is the general meaning of the term, (Gramsci, 2011, p.12). The subaltern classes are delineated as low-ranking individuals or groups in a society who are oppressed by a governing elite, thereby preventing them from actively participating in the formation of local history and culture as active nation members. Gramsci, on the other hand, asserts that it is contemplating the workers and peasants who are enduring the fascist party's control in Italy. He believes that by engaging in discourse with these groups, he contributes to the amplification of their perspectives, as opposed to being the sole focus of discourse among the ruling and dominant classes.

In the early 1980s, the Subaltern Studies Group/Collective was founded by Ranajit Guha and a number of South Asian historians, critics, and researchers who borrowed from Gramsci's theory. Guha defined the term "subaltern" as the overarching characteristic of subordination in South Asian society, which encompasses factors such as class, caste, age, gender, and authority. Subaltern Studies Group has employed the Subaltern to transcend a variety of political and cultural dichotomies, including colonialism versus nationalism and imperialism versus indigenous cultural expression, in favor of a more comprehensive distinction between subaltern and elitist groups (Aschroft, 1994, p. 218). The other members of the group, including Guha, are of the opinion that British colonialism has had an impact on all publications on Indian national history throughout the course of history. The privileged classes' dominance and the resistance to imposed authority are the unifying factors of this group.

Gayatri Spivak re-evaluates the obstacles that marginalized communities encounter in the context of contemporary historical developments that are influenced by capitalist politics, which result in the suppression of revolutionary voices and the establishment of a labour divide in a globalized society. Spivak is an Indian scholar and critical theorist. Born on February 24, 1942, in Calcutta, India. She is renowned for her contributions to feminist theory, deconstruction, and postcolonial studies. Her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), which examines the exclusion of subaltern voices in colonial and postcolonial contexts, helped



her gain notoriety. Spivak has worked in a variety of academic capacities, most notably as a University Professor at Columbia University. In addition to translating and critically analyzing Jacques Derrida.

Spivak rejects Gramsci's assertion that subaltern groupings are autonomous and critically evaluates the Subaltern Studies Group's notion that subaltern groups can be identified. She argues that the perception of the "other" can facilitate the comprehension of the "self." She opposes the colonial and postcolonial representations of the subaltern identity that purport to provide a genuine and accurate perspective on history.

The concept of the subaltern underwent a significant transformation with the introduction of Gayatri Spivak, which resulted in a more sophisticated theoretical discourse. The current popularity of subaltern analysis is primarily due to her renowned article *Can the Subaltern Speak?* It was initially published in the periodical *Wedge* in 1985. After publishing an expanded version in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* in 1988, she reworked it for her book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999). In 2010, she responded to a collection of pieces that contemplated the essay's history. The title of Spivak's essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* is slightly misleading. Although it examines the ability of subalterns to communicate, its primary focus is on their ability to be heard. Spivak argues that this is being impeded by a multitude of issues. The most noteworthy feature is that individuals from more privileged backgrounds, such as professors, religious leaders, or other influential figures, consistently advocate for them. Subalterns are denied their own expression when the privileged engage in this behavior. At the same time she anticipates that subalterns will be able to establish an effective political voice if they are able to communicate and have a platform to be heard (the "speak" of the essay's title). The concept of the subaltern was broadened.

In her essay, she investigates the consistent mischaracterization of so-called "Third World" peoples (those from emergent countries) by research, particularly Western scholarship. She also demonstrates why subaltern women are doubly excluded, first as the colonized and then twice as women. Spivak emphasizes "epistemic violence," which refers to violence perpetrated through speech, writing, and ideas, as opposed to true physical assault (Raich, 2017, p.11). A form of epistemic aggression, as Spivak asserts in her interview, is the omission of subalterns from historical histories. Denying enslaved peoples the ability to communicate for themselves or have their accomplishments acknowledged effectively eliminates them from the world. Subaltern women are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon. According to Spivak, "if the subaltern has no history and is unable to speak in the context of colonial production, the subaltern as a female is far more deeply in shadow" (1988). Consequently,



Spivak posits that both colonialism and patriarchy stifle women. Patriarchy is a societal structure in which males hold the majority of power or control at all levels.

By including gender, Spivak elaborates on the issue of representing the subaltern. Women are significantly more subdued than men in their role as subalterns. Due to the influence of imperialist/colonialist object-constitution and nationalist/patriarchal subject-formation, women's voices have been muffled. The Subaltern, particularly when female, is further marginalised and silenced in the sphere of colonial production, as she argues, as they lack a history and a voice. Compared to subaltern males, subaltern women experience a greater degree of subordination and persecution. Their daily struggles often go unnoticed, resulting in their near-invisibility in society. She is of the opinion that subalternity is merely a rhetorical realm, which is referred to as the "secret" and the "(im)possible" (1988). As a result of the absence of communication opportunities, the subaltern remains mute. Many times, a dominant figure speaks on their behalf, assuming that they are unable to articulate themselves, even when they are given the opportunity. Positioned on the brink of the precipice, the Subaltern oscillates between representation, misrepresentation, and un-representation. "Spivakian subalternity" is a concept that presents a challenge to readers, as they endeavor to sense the absence of sound.

Elif Shafak, an anglophone writer (despite English not being her mother tongue, she demonstrates proficiency in both spoken and written English) and a woman marginalized in Turkish society dominated by men, prejudicially and unconsciously empowers women, the other gender, over the othering men, neglecting any sort of definition of women by means of their relativeness to other male peers. (Nihad, 2019, p.2903).

According to Elif Shafak's biography in Elif Shafak's *How To Stay Sane in an Age of Division* (2020, p. 2), the author is an award-winning British-Turkish novelist and the most widely-read female author in Turkey. With a total of seventeen books published, eleven of which are novels. She has gained international recognition with translation of her works in fifty different languages.

She concentrates on historical, philosophical, Sufi, and coexisting issues in the areas of cosmopolitanism, immigration, subcultures, feminism, and minorities (Nihad, 2019). Shafak was born in Strasbourg, France; however, she has resided in Turkey for an extraordinary duration. She composed in both Turkish and English. Shafak has developed into a prominent feminist activist and writer who integrates her experiences as a migrant, cross-border citizen, and female Muslim who strives for gender equality into her fiction. (Zouari, 2022, p.39).



Accordingly, Elif Shafak and Spivak can be seen sharing the idea of marginalized individuals, women in particular, who are frequently the victims of systemic discrimination, limited opportunities, unequal, restricted freedoms, and violence motivated by their gender. Both centered on feminism in the wake of colonialism and discussed how women are still oppressed and controlled by social norms, the consequences of political disputes and public perceptions of them, and the pressures they encounter, which impede their ability to exercise their rights or even identify with their true selves. Shafak is referred to as the voice that speaks up for the other's voice. As a result of the marginalization of the minority as others, the majority of her works contain the theme of identity dispersal and yearning for the past and origin. She was successful in casting female role models to support the notion of oppressed women. In an effort to demonstrate that they exist and have a voice, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or cultural affiliation, she writes about the marginalized, enslaved, and confined people in a limited context. With her role as a literary voice, she was able to articulate their voice and bring light on this universal issue.

Literature review

The large body of work generated by Postcolonial-feminism literature was influenced by political scientists, political economists, feminists, art critics, social reformists, and literary critics. The term "subaltern" is often used in postcolonial literature to emphasize how brutal tactics were used by imperialism and colonial authority to marginalize and suppress indigenous peoples. Postcolonial studies examine and challenge the Eurocentric worldview that guided the colonies' definition and treatment of the local people as "strange" and "inferior" people.

Gazala Gayas' "Suffering of Women Characters in Elif Shafak's Novel *Honour*" (2016) realizes that the story is about the struggles faced by women who live in various locations. In England as well as Turkey, males view women as the lesser sex. The English and Turkish villages have the same mentality. Locations have little effect on altering these mindsets. Women suffer as a result of being ruled by the dominant males in society. Numerous female authors have spoken out against this injustice. Turkish author Shafak sets her stories in both England and a Turkish towns. In this book, a son kills his mother to protect the "honor" of his family—a classic example of the so-called masculine ego.

Hafsa Akbar and Mushtaq Ahmad's "Cultural Politics and Identity Crisis: A Psychoanalytic Study of Shafak's *Honour*" (2019) seeks to examine the problems of identity crisis and cultural politics by using Shafak's *Honour* as a psychoanalytic case study within the theoretical framework of Nancy Chodorow's (1978) "The Reproduction of Mothering." There have been problems with identity crises and cultural politics since the dawn of time. Examining Shafak's work, one sees the old, inflexible ideas that give rise



to gender-specific cultural disparities. These political and cultural divides have brought up numerous identity-related concerns.

Nevin Faden Gürbüz's "The Perception of Multicultural Identity in Elif Shafak's *Honor*" (2019) claims that Elif Shafak, one of Turkey's most prolific, contentious, and well-known female writers, discusses gender norms, immigration, the pursuit of freedom, and the changes a person undergoes when they move to a new nation in her eight novels, *Honor*. Shafak expands on her previous writing on identity in *Honor*, examining what it means to be an immigrant when one still carries the normative cultures they have left behind. This essay highlights Elif Shafak's eighth novel, *Honor*, and how multicultural identity is viewed. The harmony of different cultures is known as "multiculturalism," encompassing racial, religious, and cultural groupings. It is exhibited via customs, beliefs, values, ways of thinking, and instructive speaking. *Honor* is a case study of a minority immigrant group consisting of long-term residents with languages and cultures apart from those of the host community.

Finally, a postcolonial reading of Elif Shafak's *Honor* and Daniel Benyamin's *Goat Days*, published in 2022 by Qusay Khalaf Hussein, provides an analysis of Daniel Benjamin's 2008 book "Goat Days" and Elif Shafak's 2011 book *Honor*. The research looks at postcolonial theory as a theoretical framework, using the viewpoints of well-known theorists like Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhaba. The research briefly explains the significant concepts in postcolonial theory, including subaltern, unhomeliness, and identity. Using Spivak's theory of subalternity, it is possible to see that the protagonists in both stories are social outcasts who have been denied fundamental rights in their own countries. They went to more advanced societies to search for a more prosperous existence and a promising future for their families. They face several difficulties, the most important being adjusting to the new culture, whose values diverge from their upbringing. The inability of these personalities to completely adapt to the new societies is illustrated by Bhaba's idea of unhomeliness. As a result, they are experiencing an identity crisis.

Thus, this study tackles new ideas that the subaltern represents in the selected Elif Shafak's novels, *Honor* and *The Bastard of Istanbul*. The study aims to investigate the portrayal of the subaltern in the selected novels. Accordingly, it examines how the writer depicts the marginalization occurring in their surroundings in her selected works by examining how gendered subalternity women's experiences of marginalization are represented in Anglophone fiction, particularly within the context of Turkish society, the thesis aims to bridge the gap in literary studies. Although class, race, or colonial dynamics are frequently the focus of postcolonial feminism and subaltern studies, this thesis will examine the understudied relationship between gender and subalternity. It fills a



knowledge vacuum by concentrating on Shafak's works and highlights the unique challenges faced by Turkish and diasporic women. It will also examine the narrative techniques Shafak employs to give voice to oppressed women, deepening our knowledge of the ways in which fiction can portray repressed or silenced female characters and advancing debates in postcolonial feminism and literary studies.

Discussion

Shafak's works have featured women and the challenges they face on a daily basis in order to dismantle the barriers that prevent women from speaking. Shafak remains appreciative of women for their willingness to disclose their silences in the novel *Honor*. She seems to dedicate particular attention to the stories that are suppressed, and by extension, the stories of women who are silenced, by providing them with a voice that can reverberate and be heard through the walls of the social fabric. Her novels, particularly *Honor*, depict women through the lens of subalternity, which is explored by depicting predigest views of women and the challenges of navigating a patriarchal society. The social fabric is interwoven within the minds of society, even when the characters relocate to a country with distinct social and cultural traditions.

A protagonist named Asma, Attempts to write her mother's narrative at the outset of the book with courage and fearlessness. In spite of the potential harm to her reputation, this action is considered patriarchal defiance, as it demonstrates that her narrative may have a negative impact on her, nevertheless is a necessary shout to be heard, which possibly is Shafak's voice resonating through her character, Asma.

In the novel, each male in each generation, whether a father, son, or even a brother, exhibited extreme behaviours that were motivated by the desire to control women in their lives, attempting to impede their right to free choice. According to Sandra Therase, Imprisonment, seclusion, displacement, and other life-altering consequences are the results of marginalisation. Additionally, it establishes numerous levels of social closure. The process of social closure involves one group bringing another group to its knees, thereby usurping all opportunities (Therese, 2022, p. 275). The inability to participate in any opportunity is a form of violence, specifically structural violence, which impedes the individual's ability to achieve anything due to the irregular and unjust distribution of power, as Johan Vincit Galtung describes it as "a monopoly of selected few." (Galtung, 1969, p. 169).

Women were the coin flipped in the air by men. De Beauvoir elucidates that the concept of the other is as ancient as awareness. The manifestation of a duality—that of the Self and the Other—can be found in the most fundamental communities and the earliest legends. This dualism was not



initially linked to the sex divide and was not founded on any empirical data. She additionally states that:

The feminine element was at first no more involved in such pairs as Varuna-Mitra, Uranus-Zeus, Sun-Moon, and Day-Night than it was in the contrasts between Good and Evil, lucky and unlucky auspices, right and left, God and Lucifer. Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought, (De Beauvoir, 1953, p.16).

In *Honor*, For the most part, Naze is the "angel of the house," the carer, and the individual who is primarily responsible for advising and teaching the children about the operations of the world. This is due to the influence of society. Naze continued when she informed her daughters, Pembe and Jamela, that "a girl's beauty was her only dowry" (Shafak, 2012, p.16) and that "women were made of the lightest cambric, whereas men were cut of thick, dark fabric." That is how Allah had designed the two: one was superior to the other, (Ibid). But according to the dichotomy elucidated by De Beauvoir, women are white, a colour that is cleverly interpreted by Shafak as a colour that is tainted by the lightest speck of dirt, while dark or black is a colour that does not indicate any mark if it is tainted. Another gender-based dichotomy is that females represent shame and are easily tainted, while men represent honour that cannot be tainted. In her teachings, Naze emphasises the concept of dualism, which is an antiquated paradigm that perpetuates the notion that males are superior and powerful, while women are inferior and feeble.

So it was that in the land where Pink Destiny and Enough Beauty were born, 'honor' was more than a word. It was also a name. You could call your child 'Honor', as long as it was a boy. Men had Honor. Old men, middle-aged men, even schoolboys so young that they still smelled of their mothers' milk. Women did not have honor. Instead, they had shame. And, as everyone knew, Shame would be a rather poor name to bear (Shafak, 2012, p.16).

Although patriarchal ideology has persisted in spite of the modifications to its structures. Additionally, South Asian culture anticipates that women will assume the responsibility of caring for the family, while men will assume the role of provider. Therefore, South Asian immigrant women may continue to be oppressed by patriarchal beliefs and norms within their marital families in their host country. Pembe's son Iskender assumes the role of the household's head of household due to the fact that his father, Adem, is absent due to his adultery with Roxana. After Iskender was incarcerated and sentenced to 14 years for the murder of his mother's identical sister, he mistakenly identified her as his mother. He composes letters in the form of journals and recalls the day he arrived at his residence, rung the doorbell, and no one answered, not even his mother, as he writes:

I rang the bell again. Not a peep. Where on earth was Mum? She couldn't be at the Crystal Scissors. She had quit her job days ago. I was the head



of the family since Dad had gone off and I didn't want her to work any more. She cried a lot but didn't resist. She knew I had my reasons. People were gossiping. Where there's smoke, there's fire. So I told her to stay home. I had to put out the flames. (Shafak, 2012, p.50).

What Iskender does to his mother and how he seeks to deprive her of her job, by ordering her not to work in the salon anymore, is considered an act of violence. In defining violence, the UN Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in September 1992, that:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life, (Mathur, 2004, p.23).

Such violence manifests in a variety of ways, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic. The process commences at a tender age, much like Iskender's endeavour to do so. The narrative of Iskender's father, Adem, recounts another instance of violence. He recalls the manner in which his father treated his mother when he was a young boy.

Can society grant wrongdoings? What is the extent to which an individual will go to maintain their reputation? Shafak endeavours to investigate and resolve these inquiries through her narrative. Shafak illustrated the consequences of making a decision on behalf of another individual. Adem, who was eighteen years old, departed Istanbul to visit his brother at a military station in the chapter titled "A Box of Baklava." He resolves to take a walk in a nearby village, where he encounters stray dogs, as he has no other plans. He flees from them, panting, and eventually arrives at a garden where a girl is seated and consuming pastry. Adem is enamoured with her and intends to wed her; however, the customs and traditions of this village are stringent. This lady is the youngest of eight sisters, and according to tradition, the older sisters must be married before the younger ones. Jamila's father declined Adem's proposition to marry her and determined that he should marry her sister, Pembe. Jamila's father, Berzo, elaborated: "You cannot marry her. She's already spoken for... 'She's engaged to a relative. They marry next year.' ... 'You want to marry a daughter of mine, take Pembe. They are same. You like one, you like the other'" (Shafak, 2012, p.95) the old man who was translating for Adem, explained that:

A year ago, Jamila's elder sister was going to get married. Just before the wedding the two families got into a fight. ... it turned nasty. Berzo called off the wedding. The groom's family was so upset they kidnapped Jamila in retaliation... They kept her somewhere for a few days. Then Berzo sent for them and gave his consent to Jamila's marriage. In return they brought Jamila back. (Ibid)

This decision is made by two parties, neither of whom represents Jamila's wishes. It merely demonstrates how decisions are made on her behalf, as if she has no choice in the matter, despite the fact that it is her



existence. Niraj Dang asserts that individuals are motivated to remain silent when they are compensated for their visibility rather than their ability to communicate. Furthermore, they are instructed in the strict principles of self-abnegation, sacrifice, and submission that are readily embraced by men (Dang, 2021, p.118). In her article, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak discusses the law of sati, which translates to "good wife." This law mandated that a widowed Indian woman sacrifice herself by throwing herself on top of her husband's corpse as it burned on a wooden pile and immolating herself. Although the British thankfully reduced the severity of this law, Spivak maintains that it did not align with women's desires. Spivak likely advocated for the abolition of sati; however, she explains that the process of its abolition was employed to enforce colonial rule and preserve the control of men over women's lives. Indian men favoured this law, viewing it as a symbol of loyalty, while colonial men regarded it as a crime. The women's perspective on the matter was not considered, as they were subordinated in their own environment by the Indian and colonial male patriarchy. (Riach, 2017, p.41).

Putting the the responsibility to the woman, stating that it is typically the women's fault if the marriage fails, and to attempt to rectify the situation and implement some form of damage control. In a message sent by Pembe to Jamila, Pembe explains that she and Adem have been facing marriage problems and that Adem does not love her as much as he loves Jamila. Jamila responds, "But I am worried about your marriage, Is there no way you can exert more effort to ensure that it is successful? You must do so for the benefit of your children" (Shafak, 2012, p.94). Pembe and Adem were both driven to seek out methods to feel accepted and cherished for their unique selves as a result of their separation. Adem became enamoured with Roxsana, a nightclub dancer, while Pembe encountered a kind chef. However, society does what it does best and intervenes in the form of religious and morally pertinent laws. This is a crucial measure to ensure that adultery was punished and dealt with against Pembe, rather than Adem, despite the fact that Pembe applied for divorce. The issue, according to Simeone De Beauvoir, is that women are still exceptional; if all women could access culture in the same way as men, they would derive the same benefits. Anti-feminists contend that women who are educated and intellectual are beasts. She also mentions that she is typically the sole individual who is held accountable and confronted with the consequences of the challenges women encounter.

After they have been thus injured, they are subjected to laws contrary to nature: married against their feelings, they are expected to be faithful, and divorce, if resorted to, is itself held a matter of reproach, like misconduct. A great many women are doomed to idleness, when there is no happiness apart from work... they are not angels, nor demons, nor sphinxes: merely human



beings reduced to semi-slavery by the imbecile ways of society. (De Beauvoir, 1953, p. 248)

Society begins to not only point fingers at the accuser when Pembe and Adem's marriage fails, but also to encourage Pembe's son, Iskender, to take responsibility and act in order to preserve his honour. Adem's sibling, Tariq, encountered Pembe and her boyfriend as they walked out of a cinema. The conflagration is further fueled by Tariq's description of his mother's actions to Iskender. Many individuals begin to converse, and rumours begin to circulate. Iskender is also under pressure to assume the role of the household's leader by an individual whom he refers to as the Orator. He informs Iskender that his parents are an English woman and an Egyptian father, but he does not endorse them, as he maintains that his parents are "so caught up in this world, they forgot the next. They have no faith. I feel sorry for them". He goes up and says that he loves them but does not respect them, as he tells Iskender that "If your parents slip up, you've got to stand up against them" (Shafak, 2012, p. 226).

Thus, in addition to the orator, His uncle also advises him to act and take some action as an enigmatic and religious figure who symbolizes the religious component of culture and illustrates how religion, when practiced inadequately, may have negative effects. In 1969, Johan Vincint Galtung articulated the concept of violence as a three-dimensional triangle with three dimensions: direct, structural, and cultural violence in his phenomenal article Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. The initial category of violence is direct violence, which is the direct expression of violence. This type of violence can be psychological, causing harm to the psyche through lies, brainwashing, indoctrination of various types, threats, and so forth, or physical, causing harm to the body.

After learning from his uncle about his mother's affair and feeling pressured by his religious orator friend to take charge as the man of the house, along with societal expectations weighing heavily on him, Iskender takes his mother's life in December 1978 to reclaim his honor and protect the family's reputation. He reflects on this merciless act of murder every day while in prison:

There I was on Lavender Grove, a knife in my hand. I heard the screams. Shrii, unending. Somebody was howling. Oddly, it sounded like my mother. But it couldn't have been her, for she was lying on the ground, bleeding. Echoes growing inside my brain. (Shafak, 2012, p.247).

Galtung defines cultural violence as arising when societal spheres such as religion, culture, society, and art are used to justify acts of violence. In this context, Iskender's actions are considered an honor killing. Honor killings, deeply rooted in cultural and traditional practices, largely impact Middle Eastern populations and migrants around the world, affecting thousands of women each year. These acts extend beyond basic human rights violations and are considered crimes against humanity and



democratic rights. While men typically commit honor killings, other family members—including fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, aunts, and others—often play significant roles in planning and executing the crime, (Ne’eman-Haviv, 2021, p.1- 2).

Based on Ne’eman-Haviv’s definition, the honor case is deeply rooted in cultural and traditional values, the same values that shaped Iskender's upbringing. According to Galtung’s definition of cultural violence, these roots are cultivated daily through various societal or cultural spheres. This type of violence works, according to Galtung by “changing the moral color of an act from red/wrong to green/right or at least to yellow/acceptable” (Galtung, 1990, p. 292). Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fischer suggest the “Dualism-Manichenism-Armageddon” syndrome; this perspective views the world as a struggle between good and evil, with the concept of Choosiness being a core cause of a violent culture. This mindset perceives the world in binary, opposing terms. This culture of violence, which legitimizes and contextualizes violent conflict resolution by embedding the inevitability and righteousness of violence in people's beliefs, can stem from certain interpretations of sacred texts or ideologies such as nationalism, sexism, racism, and others. Patriarchy exemplifies a violent system that intertwines direct, structural, and cultural violence in a destructive loop, where each form supports the others. Direct violence includes acts like rape, molestation, and intimidation. Structural violence involves abuses of authority, and cultural violence normalizes patriarchal aggression within a society (Ibid).

In a manner that society is supposed to guide an individual in becoming a good human being, it nevertheless instructs Iskender, a teenager who is enraged, to act and do the wrong thing that they consider to be right. This results in the reward of wrongdoings. Galtung posits that influence can be achieved not only by punishing wrong behaviours that the influencer deems wrong, but also by rewarding what the influencer considers right. However, it may be the opposite, which would increase the freedom of wrongdoing, thereby restricting somatic capabilities that are mediated by physical or psychological violence. (Galtung, 1969, p. 170). Honor killings are perpetrated for a variety of reasons, such as economic gain and general social prestige. Middle Eastern societies are collectivist, emphasising the importance of group cohesiveness and the establishment of an individual's position within a social group. These civilizations maintain strict adherence to cultural norms and practice severe social control. The family's respectable social status is of paramount importance in honor-based cultures (Vered Ne’eman-Haviv, 2021, p. 5). Thus, Iskender has absorbed cultural values that instill in him the belief that preserving his family's honor is paramount, regardless of the consequences. This belief leads to the death of his aunt Jamila, Pembe's twin sister, who



travels to London to support Pembe during a relationship crisis. Tragically, Iskender mistakenly stabs Jamila, thinking she is his mother.

Asma was the author of this story because, as a writer, she wasn't afraid to challenge social norms. This tale is deeply personal, drawing on her mother's hidden history, including the nature of her marriage and its changes. The story serves as resistance to gender roles and cultural expectations that demand women to be submissive and endure hardships. Pembe, trapped in a loveless marriage arranged by her father with Adem, who originally desired her sister Jamila, and she gave birth to Iskender. As an adult, Iskender tries to control Pembe's life and stops her from working at a beauty salon. Ultimately, these kinds of stories are more prevalent than people realize, repeating themselves under different names. In a way by properly representing women, Shafak, through her fiction made a subaltern, Pembe speaks out, breaking the silence and removing the barriers that have silenced women.

Conclusion

Regarding Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Elif Shafak contends that in patriarchal societies, women are marginalized and subordinated, unable to freely speak or be heard, which aligns with Spivak's arguments. Women remain oppressed even when they leave their home countries, as subaltern women are not free to speak, and violence against them is perpetuated under the guise of tradition. Shafak's novel *Honor* addresses these issues, highlighting the consistent marginalization of women regardless of their location. *Honor*, set in contemporary Turkey, depicts the struggles of women across three generations within traditional, patriarchal frameworks, exposing their silence and marginalization within their families and communities. The central character, Pembe, navigates her identity with a Westerner after her husband leaves her for another woman. Their son, Iskandar, influenced by cultural norms, mistakenly kills his aunt, thinking she is his mother, to restore his honor, and ends up in prison. The story is narrated by Pembe's daughter, Asma. Shafak explores the extent to which the subaltern is silenced by showcasing various women who, across different times, are silenced, marginalized, abused, and left to endure societal cruelty. Shafak, alongside Gayatri Spivak, effectively portrays the struggles of marginalized individuals who are devoid of representation and rights.



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