

Close Scrutiny of the Unheard Voices of Subaltern People: In Mamang Dai's "The Voice of the Mountain"

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Abstract

Literature has the power to amplify the stories of those who have been historically marginalized. Subaltern identifies people who don't have voice of their own. They are economically and geographically backward people who are exploited by those in power. Subaltern people are subjugated and exploited and are neglected by upper class society. In this paper Mamang Dai's one of the famous poems "The voice of the mountain" deals with the alienation, identity crisis and day to day issues faced by the Subaltern people. It also talks about how ruthless the subaltern people are cornered in the society by the privileged class. In this poem Mamang Dai compare Subaltern people's voice and Mountain together. The main goal of Subaltern Studies is to proclaim the rights of the voiceless and to have a systematic and informed discussion of those people. To those marginalized people, Indian literature has started to pave the way for their voices to be heard.

Keywords: Subaltern, Unheard Voice, Nature, Mountain.

Mamang Dai often celebrates nature and honour its primordial forms. She is an Indian journalist, Poet and novelist. Dai is the recipient of 2017 SahityaAkademi award for her novel "The Black Hill". SahityaAkademi is one of the highest literary awards in India. She is also the recipient of fourth highest civilian award of the Republic of India – The Padma Shri in the year 2011. She is one among the very few writers who wrote in the native language. She belongs to the language called Adi. Her notable works "Arunachal Pradesh: The Hidden Land 2003, Mountain Harvest: The Food of Arunachal 2004. Her folklore text was "The Sky Queen and Once Up on a Moontime 2003. Her first novel was "The Legends of Pensam" it was published in the year 2006 that was followed "Stupid Cupid" 2008, Escaping the Land"2021. Her poetry collections "The Balm of Time" was also published in Assamese as El Balsamo Del YTiempo.

In 1979 Mamang Dai was selected for IAS. She belongs to the Adi tribe. She was completed her schooling in Pine Mount school, Shillong, Meghalaya. Dai was the first women from her state to be selected for IAS. But she left that post to pursue her career in journalism and then she also contributed to The Telegraph, Hindustan

Times. Mamang Dai was the former secretary of the Journals. In 2011 Dai was appointed as a member of Arunachal Pradesh state public service commission. She comes from seven sister states of India, Arunachal Pradesh – Itanagar. The other seven sister states are Assam – Dispur, Manipur – Imphal, Nagaland – Kohima, Meghalaya – Shillong, Tripura – Agartala, Mizoram – Aizawl.

Another name for the Seven Sister State is “paradise unexplored.” However, the residents of Seven Sisters endured great suffering. Mamang Dai discusses the voiceless people that reside in the seven sister mountains in this poetry. The inhabitants of Seven Sisters were regarded as a subordinate tribe. Italian Marxist and philosopher Antonio Francesco Gramsci first used the term “subaltern” in his 1947 essay “Notes on Italian History,” which was published in “Prison Notebook.” Other well-known phrases by Gramsci include organic intellectualism, cultural hegemony, and civil society. In 1926, the Italian Fascist regime imprisoned Gramsci, who was writing in his prison notebook at the time. The Latin root *sub* signifies below and from which the word subaltern is derived.

**“I know the towns, the estuary mouth. There, beyond the last bank
Where the colour drains from heaven
I can outline the contours of the world.” (Bhawana6rathi)**

Because she is aware of the true suffering endured by those who dwell atop the mountain, Mamang Dai compares the viewpoints of government officials on the tribes in the first stanza to those of a high mountain or platform. She compares the mountain people to a particular region of the world. Just like a mountain never moves and always stays where it is, so too does respect for people never change. The fish was given to the mountain as a symbol of affection or a thank you from a young man who lived far away. The mountain people have a rich cultural heritage, comparable to the variety of fish in the river. From ancient times to now, the action is replayed. The subalterns are still being treated in this manner.

The mountain claims to be aware of the settlement and river estuaries. His all-perceiving perspective of the surroundings gives him an omniscient appearance. In addition, the mountain points out to sea and claims to be able to see the hues of the sky mirrored in the sea. He describes the world’s chapters in this passage. It could allude to the rivers. Given that the sea is equally as old as the mountain, the metaphor can also allude to earlier incidents that it witnessed. Together, they have witnessed a great deal of historical events.

**“We live in territories forever ancient and new, and as we speak in changing languages.
I, also, leave my spear leaning by the tree and try to make a sign.
I am an old man sipping the breeze that is forever young.
In my life I have lived many lives.” (Bhawana6rathi)**

Mamang Dai describes a youth. Unable to talk, he brought a fish as an offering to the mountain spirit. The person believed that if the mountain spirit felt sorry for him, he would return his voice. The mountain claims that these kinds of deeds that please him are repeated. Furthermore, he claims that there is always a transition because the territories are both eternally new and ancient. But in the end, everything is still fundamentally the same.

The tribes are aware of the connections between mountains and rains because of their traditional knowledge and experience. Mamang Dai explores the language of the mountain and its experiences in the past and today in her poem “The voice of the mountain.” According to Dai, the government receives all of the revenue from the marginalized people living on the mountain, but they have not received assistance from it. The mountain people are still powerless. Despite their best efforts, they have not received assistance since, as subalterns, they were not given a voice. Subaltern people are subjugated, exploited and neglected by the upper class society. Here the upper class society refers to the government and the lower class society refers to the tribes.

The government failed to provide basic provisions for the people who lived in the northeast mountain. They felt their sounds were unheard by the government. She also talks about how ruthless the subaltern people are cornered in the society by the privileged class. GayathriChakravortySpivak is an Indian scholar and feminist critique, she worked in Colombia university as professor. She also speaks about subaltern peoples in her essay "Can the subaltern speak". Spivak explains the lack of an account of sati practice in her essay. She translated Derrida's famous work "Of Grammatology" in 1976. Spivak talk the term subaltern which was coined by Antonio Gramsci in his work "Prison notebook" chapter entitled "Notes on Italian History".

The term "subaltern" has more meaning than simply designating someone who is "oppresses", "the other" or someone who doesn't get a piece of the action. Anything with restricted or no access to cultural imperialism is considered subaltern or a place of difference in postcolonial concepts. Who would now claim that only the oppressed are like that, the oppressors are the working class. It's not beneath you. There are a lot of people that would like to identify as subaltern.

In postcolonial theory the term subaltern tells of the lower social class, here Dai represent tribal people as subaltern in this poem she speaks about young dumb man, whose voice was referred to be unheard. The mountain speaks about its richness and fertility, which includes natural beauty of the location. The tribal people hadn't felt any peace in their life, for them peace is falsity. The people of the mountain have long gap between the reality and the hope of the life as they wish. They had every poor economical stability. The space of the reality and cloud of thoughts are vice versa. The reflection of the stars ahead and they can only have the picture of the star from the sky, even they are larger in number.

The tribal people saw themselves as little more than a child who perished on the edge of the world. They sense the separation between hope and the end of the planet. As a tribe, they constantly look to the government for support and assistance, but they never got any. They speak a language that only those who are members of the Seven Sisters are familiar with. Men experienced hardship in the summer, while women, who are capable of surviving on any account, were lost in transformations. Subaltern studies' primary objective is to declare the rights of the voiceless and have an informed, systemic conversation about them. They are economically and geographical backward people. From an economic standpoint, they won't even own any homes.

Subaltern people have no power to defend the image of their own people who are oppressed and traumatized by the cruel aspects of higher society. Those higherclass people won't respect their feelings even some people don't even treat them as a proper human being. The mountains stands for the lives of the people and it also represent the people who lives there and there way of life way of life. The real struggle of subaltern always remains unnoticed the submissive position of the tribal people. The people who live in mountain was oppressed by the government and economically they were not in a good position so they like a suppressed person, because of their geographical condition they didn't get the chance to educate themselves. Though people keep on try to get out of suppression but still it being fruit not harvested.

Mamang Dai gives the mountain a voice in her poetry "The Voice of the Mountain," and she skillfully captures the beauty of the natural world. Dai discusses the hardships faced by the indigenous population residing on the Seven Sisters Mountain. She provides a voice to the underprivileged. This poetry alludes to the Seven Sisters. She also discusses the oppression of Northeasterners and the voice that goes unheard.

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