

UNHEARD SCREAMS AND SILENT ACCEPTANCE: MODERN INDIAN CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF SUBALTERN WOMEN

RAJIV KANNAN MENON

Abstract: In India, though it is easy to associate subalternity with the lowest socioeconomic classes, social castes, and peasantry, social expectations of women allow for the presence of subalternity in all classes. Theorists of subaltern studies have noted that gendered subalternity is particularly complex, as often, the restraints of gender transcend class, allowing for subalternity to exist outside of the lowest socioeconomic sections of society. Since subaltern historiography has been so influential in modern Indian cultural production, it is no surprise that recent Indian films have actively grappled with the complex nature of gendered subalternity. This paper examines Rajnesh Domalpalli's *Vanaja*, Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Naalu Pennungal*, and Deepa Mehta's *Water* to express the ways that recent cinematic productions have actively demonstrated the social construction of gendered subalternity and the ways in which this social position is enforced through constant oppression and violent humiliation. It explores the way that this recent trend in Indian cinema is derived from Mahasweta Devi's dramatic writing, which established a paradigm for the translation of subaltern historiography into performance. This reading demonstrates that social factors collude across classes to construct the position of the subaltern woman, a pattern that reoccurs throughout these cinematic texts. This social trend demonstrates that subalternity does not exist without the influence of those with social power, and these individuals actively enforce the restrictions associated with this status.

While colonial historiography distanced itself from the experiences of the subaltern classes, postcolonial Indian cultural productions have sought to actively engage with the plight of the subaltern. The Subaltern Studies Group, which is an intellectual movement that draws upon New Marxist sources such as Gramsci and Fanon, has led this effort to provide a radical new approach to Indian historical studies. "Subaltern" is a term applied to those who exist at the bottom of a hierarchical power system without any means of improving their social condition; in India, this often translates to members of the lower economic classes, social castes, and peasantry, as these are often the marginal, illiterate, and dispossessed, though social expectations of women allows for the presence of subaltern women in all classes. Theorists of subaltern studies have also noted that gendered subalternity is particularly complex, as often, the restraints of gender transcend class, allowing for subalternity to be free from pure association with socioeconomics. Since this trend in Indian historical and social studies has been so influential, modern Indian literary, dramatic, and cinematic texts have reflected a strong interest in the suffering of the subaltern classes.

In this paper, I will first examine the translation of subaltern historiography to performance through Mahasweta Devi's *Bayen* and the ways that these themes are carried on to cinematic representations; Rajnesh Domalpalli's *Vanaja*, Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Naalu Pennungal*, and Deepa Mehta's *Water* examine the constant oppression and violent humiliation that women of the subaltern classes face through the characters of *Vanaja*, *Kunjipennu*, *Kamakshi*, and *Kalyani*. This reading demonstrates that social factors collude across classes to construct the position of the

subaltern woman, a pattern that can be viewed in modern cinematic and dramatic representations of such women. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has argued that status of subalternity is related to population as gender is to sex, thus arguing that subalternity has some realistic basis, but is largely socially constructed (Spivak 2004). This social trend demonstrates that subalternity does not exist without the influence of those with social power, and these individuals actively enforce the restrictions associated with this status. These texts demonstrate that those who hold higher social statuses systematically enforce and exploit the status of subaltern women.

Devi's *Bayen*: Finding New Audiences for Subaltern Studies

The immediacy and horror of the plight of subaltern women is present in the works of Mahasweta Devi, and particularly in her play *Bayen*. Devi's dramatic writing largely deals with subaltern characters, and her plays have been performed in rural and tribal areas. Devi's grassroots political theatre is one of the first performance-based movements within the field of subaltern studies, and it is likely that her writing influenced many other forms of performance that deal with subaltern characters. Devi's writing can be characterised as operating "fluidly between fiction, history, ethnography and reportage", as she demonstrates an inherent in addressing the inherent issues dominate South Asian Studies, including gender discrimination and the exploitation of labourers (McCall 2002: 39). Furthermore, Devi examines issues of subalternity that have otherwise been overlooked or misinterpreted. In particular, while many scholars fail to acknowledge the unique way that subalternity affects women, Devi's writing locates specifically female experiences within discourses of subalternity. McCall notes of this aspect of Devi's writing, "Researchers have treated bonded labour, women's work and prostitution as separate discourses, in isolation from one another. Yet Devi's women characters include wives, sisters and daughters of bonded labourers, women who work as bonded labourers, and bonded prostitutes" (McCall 2002:39). Devi's use of drama and performance to convey the oppression faced by subaltern women has clearly paved the way for the translation of the discourses of subaltern studies to film, as the issues in gendered subalternity that her writing explores has clearly been replicated in recent Indian cinema.

Bayen, one of Devi's most popular plays, establishes many of the aspects of gendered subalternity that recent Indian films have also demonstrated. In the play, Chandidasi Gangadasi is separated from her husband and son when she is accused of being a Bayen, a women who breastfeeds dead children and has the ability to curse others. The villagers are afraid to kill a Bayen, and instead imprison her in a small hut by the railroad tracks. The play demonstrates the transformation of a working class woman into a public scapegoat, and ultimately, a subaltern woman with no bodily or social agency. Chandidasi is labeled as a Bayen after several village children die of disease. Since she works in a burial ground and is, at the time, lactating, Chandidasi is singled out as a Bayen by the community. The play demonstrates the way that her subaltern status is constructed by the society around her (Devi 1998: 75-91). The need for a scapegoat combined with inherent gender bias supports the transformation of Chandidasi into a subaltern. She is forced to accept the constraints and restrictions of this condition because of fear of violent reprisal from the community, all of who collectively have control over her life. Her subaltern status denies her access to her child, and thus, her inability to fulfil the role of mother further preserves her position as a subaltern. It is only after her death at the end of the play, when Bhagirath, her son publicly decries her treatment that the villagers are willing to accept that she is not a Bayen. This affirmation of her motherhood posthumously removes her status of Bayen, but of course, at this point it is too late to have any significance. Despite the fact that she is dead, this reaffirms that the denial of Chandidasi's motherhood is fundamental to the construction of her subaltern status.

Chandidasi is forced to stay in this condition because of the surveillance of the village, which is demonstrative of Foucault's discourse on panoptic discipline. Foucault argued that deviation from expectations of social norms is monitored through the understanding that one is constantly subject to the observation of those around them, which he argues mimics the architectural design of a panoptic prison (Foucault 1975). Chandidasi is repeatedly reminded not set her eyes upon anyone in the village, as she supposedly has the "evil eye". Her inability to stare upon the village, as they constantly monitor her exemplifies this idea of punishment. She is constantly subject to the gaze of those who seek to control her, yet she has no means of knowing when she is being monitored and whether any violation of her imprisonment will have any repercussions. Devi writes that Chandidasi turns her back to her ex-husband when he enters the stage, as she has been conditioned to ensure that she does not set her eyes upon him or their child (Devi 1998: 76). This constant concern with visual contact denotes that subalternity is enforced through the village's panoptic discipline, a trend that repeatedly occurs throughout other performance-based discourses on subalternity.

***Vanaja* and "The Prostitute": Subalternity, Feudalism, and Landlessness**

Devi's examination of gendered subalternity through performance can be clearly seen through recent Indian films, as they have dealt with the same issues in labor exploitation, landless, and familial relations. For many those who are familiar with Devi's work, it is not difficult to imagine that the plots of these films could just as easily have been one of Devi's plays. Rajenesh Domalpali's film *Vanaja* portrays a working class girl who is employed as a servant in the home of a wealthy landowner, Rama Devi. Vanaja wishes for Rama Devi, who was once a famous Kuchipudi dancer, to teach her dance, and she slowly gains notoriety in the village for her performances. This idyllic quest for fame is shattered upon the arrival of Rama Devi's son, Shekhar, who destroys Vanaja's attempt to transcend her low social role. When money is being distributed to the servants of the house, Vanaja publicly corrects Shekhar's calculations, humiliating him in front of the house staff. From this point on, Shekhar torments her and threatens to have her expelled from the house. This culminates in Shekhar raping Vanaja in a fit of rage (Domalpalli 2006). Until this point, she has rejected his attempts to socially dominate her, and finally, he physically forces these expectations upon her body. In this case, not only is sexual violence a horrific act of cruelty, but also it enforces Shekhar's dominant social position, and thus reinforces Vanaja's position as a subaltern. Since her behavior was seen as transcending her social class, she is forcibly subordinated through violence against her body. After the rape, Radhamma, an elderly servant in the house helps her recover physically, and implies that she has faced similar abuses, which demonstrates that sexual violence is regularly applied against women of their social class. Sexual violence becomes a means of enforcing social expectations of class upon the female body, and both Vanaja and Radhamma are subject to these actions in response to their supposed transgressions of class.

Vanaja's rape is only the first event in a series of actions that reaffirm her status as a subaltern. After some time, she discovers that she has become pregnant due to the rape. Rama Devi attempts to force Vanaja into getting an abortion, but instead, she flees to her home and has the child in secret. When she presents the child to Rama Devi and Shekhar with hopes that they will support him financially, they callously discuss how much money they should give for the child and warn Vanaja that she will have no more rights to the child. The child is a physical testament to Shekhar's transgression against Vanaja, and their ability to pay her for her rights to the child demonstrates her inability to act against those who are more socially empowered. Not only do they rob her of any claim to their social class through the child, they also remove her rights as a mother. Their wealth gives them the agency over Vanaja's life

that she lacks due to her overwhelming poverty. As a result, Vanaja's role as a subaltern is reinforced and the crime of rape against her is compounded with her separation from her child.

Eventually, Vanaja decides to take action against Rama Devi and Shekhar, who is running for political office. She decides to tell Ram Reddy, Shekhar's political opponent of her rape and pregnancy with hope that he will be able to use his position in the government to help her. Reddy uses this information to coerce Shekhar into stepping down from the election, as he claims that such an individual has no place in the local government. After this, when Vanaja goes to his home for additional help, he states that it's not his business to further agitate the local landowners, and when she persists, he calls her a whore and forces her out of his home. This issue of failed representation is reminiscent of Spivak's influential essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak argues that discursive attempts to speak for the subaltern often benefit the causes and interests of the supposed advocate, while reinforcing the subjectivity of the subaltern figure (Spivak 1985: 120-130). Though Reddy claims to speak for Vanaja, it is not out of concern for her own interest, but instead out of the desire to advance his political career. Furthermore, his reluctance to antagonise the wealthy landowning class demonstrates the ways that governmental agencies fail to address the needs of the subaltern, and thus further strengthen the institution of subalternity. Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that the local government is often so entrenched in the interests of the wealthy class that they are an unreliable source of change for the subaltern classes. By refusing to take action against the injustices against the subaltern, the government tacitly accepts their status and ensures that these discrepancies in power relations continue (Chakrabarty 1988: 297). Ram Reddy demonstrates that governmental figures both exploit the subalterns' plight, while colluding with the forces that create their social standing.

The ways in which members of higher social classes reinforce Vanaja's subalternity can also be viewed in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's film *Naalu Pennungal*. The film, which is split into four segments focuses on the plight of women in the mid-twentieth century in Kerala's Allepey district. One of these segments, "The Prostitute", concerns Kunjipennu, a prostitute who receives a marriage proposal from a fellow pavement dweller, Pappukutty. She agrees, and abandons her lifestyle for work as a road laborer, which she finds fulfilling. The happy marriage is ruined when one of her former clients confronts her husband, who attacks him in response. The next night, the police, presumably informed by the former client, find Kunjipennu and Pappukutty asleep and accuse them of indecency. The couple has no documents to confirm that they are married, and they are thus imprisoned. Though the couple attempts to improve their status, the social forces around them intervene to prevent this from happening. The film demonstrates the link that exists between landlessness and subalternity, as the couple's homeless status allows for their marginalisation from the legal system (Gopalakrishnan 2007). The court invokes the Malayalee concept of *Tharavadu*, which equates an individual's house and property with their familial identity. The court uses *Tharavadu* as a basis for evaluating the legitimacy of the marriage, and since the couple is homeless, they have no legal status in the eyes of the local government. Robert J.C. Young argues that landlessness works to preserve conditions of subalternity, as access to property is often inseparable from access to political and social power (Young 2003: 49-51). The court's reliance on this concept, which dehumanises those without property, exemplifies this principal. Furthermore, the film ends with the assumption that Kunjipennu will return to prostitution after her imprisonment. The legal system preserves her subalternity by denying her access to the institution of marriage due to her landlessness, and also reaffirms her body as a site of exploitation. Since, as a landless subaltern, she has no access to marriage, she is further forced into a career that ensures her abuse at the hands of powerful men.

Rajeswari Sunder Rajan notes that patriarchal legal systems simultaneously punishes systems of sexual freedom, but also tacitly works to preserve these practices when they benefit their own desires, like they do in the case of prostitution (Sunder Rajan 2003: 119). Kunjipennu's status as a subaltern is sanctioned and reinforced by the local political system, which demonstrates that her subalternity is not inherent, but enforced by those around her.

“The Spinster” and *Water*: The Absence of a Husband as a Social Condition

While Bayen, Vanaja, and “The Prostitute” rely upon localised notions of feudalism, identity, and superstition to demonstrate the construction of gendered subalternity, *Naalu Pennungal*'s segment, “The Spinster”, and Deepa Mehta's *Water* present depict forms of subalternity that have become almost archetypal in South Asian cultural production. The use of such characters can be easily labelled as problematic, especially when considering the global commodification of such cultural representations, and though Mehta's *Water* does produce some troubling generalisations about subalternity and Hinduism, both films effectively demonstrate the ways in which subalternity are constructed and enforced across social contexts. Both films demonstrate how the assumption that a woman's social worth is derived from her husband allows for the justification of her subjectification. Following the precedent set by Devi's writing, these films examine the ways in which gendered subalternity is enforced through social ridicule and panoptic discipline.

Kamakshi, the protagonist of “The Spinster” segment of *Naalu Pennungal*, is rejected for marriage in favor of her younger sister, which then brands her as unsuitable for marriage, as suitors assume that she must have some notable flaw if her younger sister has married before her. After her sister's marriage and her mother's death, Kamakshi is taken to live in her sister's home, and fulfils the role of a secondary caregiver for her two nieces. Throughout her stay, Kamakshi is viewed as a burden upon the family. Though she is aware that she is being viewed negatively, Kamakshi remains in the house because of her affection for her nieces, and she constantly states that she feels like they are her daughters. Eventually, as gossip spreads that Kamakshi's brother-in-law is keeping her as a second wife, Kamakshi's sister demands that he send her back to their ancestral home, where she will be forced to live alone. The film ends with Kamakshi solemnly accepting her fate, stating that she enjoys living alone (Gopalakrishnan 2007). Though this segment is contextualised within Kerala, the film presents a critique of the societal reliance on the association between a woman's wifeliness and her social worth. Kamakshi's suitors automatically disregard her after she is passed over for marriage in favour of her sister, assuming that the fact that she is unmarried is linked to some inherent flaw. As Kamakshi remains unmarried, she is dehumanised and transformed into an object of social scorn. Her own sister rejects her after rumours spread about her, suggesting that the label of “spinster” transforms her into a burden and denies her the right to any familial connection. Even more troublesome is the assumption that an unmarried woman in her in-laws' home cannot fulfil any legitimate social role; Kamakshi's role as a caregiver to her nieces is ignored, in favor of the notion that she is acting as a concubine to her brother-in-law. Ultimately, Kamakshi's banishment to her ancestral home, where she will presumably carry out the rest of her life in solitude, is reminiscent of Devi's *Bayen*, as her subaltern status denies the right to social and familial interactions. Furthermore, the fact that the contemptuous gaze of her community spurred her banishment is suggestive of the panoptic enforcement of subalternity that Chandidasi is subject to. Kamakshi is denied any personal agency because she is not married, and she is thus restricted to an existence similar to that of a prisoner.

The construction of the “spinster” as a subaltern figure is derived from the need to associate a woman’s social status with the presence of her husband. The social scorn for Kamakshi is as equally subjectifying to her as it is to all women, as it collectively perpetuates the notion that a woman cannot have social status without being married. Thus, this construction of subalternity disempowers all women, as it denies them the agency to choose their marital status or assert their independence to shun marriage. By constructing the subaltern spinster, all women are equally disadvantaged, which works to the advantage of the prevalent social patriarchy.

Kamakshi’s relegation to a life of physical confinement, solitude, and communal disdain demonstrates a form of subalternity that is not restricted to the working class. Kamakshi does not suffer from landlessness like Kunjipennu or Vanaja, nor is she the victim of local superstition and scapegoating. Kamakshi is instead punished for her lack of marital commitment, a trend that cannot be as neatly contextualised as the other constructions of subalternity. Much like “The Spinster” segment of *Naalu Pennungal*, Deepa Mehta’s *Water* depicts the construction of subalternity through the subjectification of husbandless women. Kalyani, a widow restricted to life in an ashram in Varanasi, is punished for being without a husband. Mehta’s portrayal of widowhood through the film is at times extremely problematic. She opens the film with a quote from *The Manusmriti*, which outlines the expected behaviour of widows (Mehta 2005). The immediate juxtaposition of this important Hindu scripture with the horrific treatment of widows in the films suggests that such treatment is not only tolerated, but also demanded through Hinduism. This ignores the fact that many Hindus reject these aspects of the religion and that treatment of widows cannot be universalised in India, as the practice varies drastically by region. This is further problematised by the fact that the film was made through Western production companies and was largely screened to a North American audience, suggesting that Mehta was marketing the plight of Indian widows for the consumption of western audiences eager to condemn supposedly backwards Eastern cultures. Yet despite these clear flaws, the film’s depiction of gendered subalternity again addresses the ways in which a woman’s worth is determined through her association with her husband. Though the film should not be viewed to derive a universal concept of Indian widowhood, the film still presents an accurate depiction of the way that a woman’s agency is often only granted through the institution of marriage.

Kalyani’s widowhood indicates the ways in which a woman’s dependence on her husband and marriage is enforced. The head widow of the ashram, Madhumati, prostitutes Kalyani to the local wealthy class in order to pay for rent. Kalyani accepts her fate, as she believes her exploitation to be a natural part of being a widow. The commodification of Kalyani’s body is used to further advance the institution of widowhood and preserves the ashram. As a result, Kalyani’s physical abuse only preserves her subaltern status, and pays for home that serves as a physical confinement. When a young Gandhian idealist approaches Kalyani for marriage, she accepts and plans to leave the ashram. Madhumati learns of Kalyani’s plans and confronts her, and when she refuses to abandon her plans, Madhumati physically restrains Kalyani and shears her hair (Mehta 2005). As Courtney notes, this scene almost invokes a sense of female castration, as Kalyani is forced into compliance through the violent modification of her body (Courtney 2007: 119). Just as masculinity is socially enforced through the castration complex, Madhumati punishes Kalyani’s violation of this socially prescribed form of femininity by similarly denying her a symbol of womanhood: her unshorn hair. The docile nature of Kalyani’s body is completed through this act, as the social expectations of widowhood are fully enforced upon her body. Madhumati locks Kalyani in her room, thus completely limiting her mobility, which, like her hair, was a privilege given to her in exchange with her compliance. After this event, Kalyani is fully transformed into a docile

subject that is at the will of the society around her. Though a fellow widow eventually frees Kalyani, she soon discovers that her fiancé's father has sexually exploited her in the past, thus demonstrating that she can never escape the legacy of her subalternity.

Towards the end of the film, Kalyani drowns herself in the Ganga, a violent act that turns her body into a physical testament to her plight. The suicide demonstrates the transformation of Kalyani's body into a text that can be read and viewed as an example of the social burdens that the subaltern woman is forced to face. Tragically, death becomes one of the ways in which the subaltern can attempt to speak, though the action can often be misread and used to further perpetuate the state of subalternity. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak gives the example of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, a woman who committed suicide for her failure to commit an act of anti-colonial violence. She waited until she was menstruating to end her life, to demonstrate that the suicide was not the result of a doomed love affair. Despite her intentions, this is the way her suicide was read (Spivak 1985: 120-130). The body of the subaltern is often misread and misunderstood by those around her, and thus, Kalyani's suicide is not read as an act of resistance to her subalternity, but instead, as an indication of the consequences for her resisting her subaltern status. Though Kalyani's body is imbued with meaning that demonstrates her plight, the other widows are unable to see this. In the film, Madhumati claims that Kalyani's suicide should be a lesson to the other widows, as it demonstrates that no good can come of attempting to abandon the fate that they have been given. For the film's audience, however, it becomes clear that Kalyani's suicide is her form of resistance, and is her only way of speaking against the systematic oppression she faces as a widow. Unfortunately, the action does not change her fate or reduce the burden of her status, demonstrating that the subaltern lack the ability to actively change their fate. For the audience, it appears as if Mehta intends to unleash a sense of collective shame for the plight of these subaltern women (Courtney 2007: 119).. Filming the status of these subaltern women demonstrates their inability to change their status, but provides the possibility that the audience might be shamed into acknowledging their plight.

Final Thoughts

These representations of subalternity all demonstrate that this condition is not limited to one social class or group of women. Though the women in the films and the play come from different backgrounds, social forces restrict them to conditions of subjectivity. The commonalities they share is that those with political hegemony all gain from the preservation of their subalternity and that they have no means to fight this process. Interestingly, Chandidasi, Vanaja, and Kunjipennu do not docilely accept their condition, and their texts all feature scenes in which the characters passionately decry their oppressors. Devi parenthetically notes that Chandidasi pleads for mercy as she fervently denies that she is a Bayen and she is met with violent drumbeats from the other characters on stage (Devi 1998: 87). Though Vanaja is at first silent about the rape, after the birth of her child, she tearfully begs Rama Devi for access to her child, and though she agrees, the audience is privy to a conversation between Shekhar and her that reveals that this is not true (Domalpalli 2006). When in court, Kunjipennu repeatedly screams that she and Pappukutty are husband and wife, but when she cannot produce a house name, she is met with callous laughter (Gopalakrishnan 2007). The voices of these women are disregarded, as those around them seek to preserve their subalternity. The fact that Devi, Domalpalli, and Gopalakrishnan all have such similar scenes of failed resistance indicates that the inability to resist subalternity is inherent to the condition. The repetition of this trope of the failure of a verbal resistance to produce any change is again reminiscent of Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?", which posits that though subaltern women might be able to physically speak against their condition, they lack the ability to actively speak through

any means that might produce any considerable change to their situation (Spivak 1985: 120-130). Spivak notes that in order for the subaltern to speak they must be heard, which these women are not, thus, rendering them without any voice to express their grievances (Landry and Mclean 1996: 293). These three writers depict the efforts of these women's resistances as futile, which demonstrate the cruel inescapability of subalternity. In contrast to these three women, Kamakshi and Kalyani both accept their fate with little protest, suggesting that since their subalternity is more universally recognised and enforced through universal expectations of wifhood and marriage. Ultimately, however, all five women face the same result, with or without their protest, suggesting that the status of subaltern women is inescapable.

These depictions of subaltern women reveal that those with hegemonic power gain from the preservation of the status of subaltern women. These women come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, yet those who seek to exploit them have stripped them of their social and bodily agency. *Bayen*, *Vanaja*, *Naalu Pennungal*, and *Water* all demonstrate that subalternity is strictly constructed by society, and that the plight of these individuals advantageously serves those with hegemonic power. By presenting the plight of subalternity through an active engagement with an audience, there is hope that the plight of these women will create considerable drive for social change, as often, those who view these texts are complicit in the subalternity of these women. These cinematic and dramatic sources all convey the exploitation and cruel disciplines associated with subalternity, and are thus essential for any understanding of the plight of these disempowered individuals.

About Author: Rajiv Menon is a Third Year Student in the English and International Affairs departments at the George Washington University. His research interests include South Asian Literature and Culture, Asian American Studies, and Postcolonial Theory. Email: rmenon@gwu.edu

REFERENCES

- Chakrabarty, D. (1988) "Conditions for Knowledge of Working-Class Conditions: Employers, Government and the Jute Workers of Calcutta, 1890-1940, in R. Guha and G. Chaktavorty Spivak (ed.) *Selected Subaltern Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Courtney, S. (2007) "The Storm of Deepa's Water: From Violent Tempest in Varanasi to Glacial Account of Hindu Widowhood,"; *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 18: 115-120.
- Devi, M. (1998) *Five Plays*, Calcutta: Seagull.
- Domalpalli, R., director (2006) *Vanaja*, Bangarammapalem, India: Varija Films.
- Foucault, M. (1975) *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, New York: Random House.
- Gopalakrishnan, A., director (2007) *Naalu Pennungal*, Alapuzha, India: No Distributor.
- Landry, D. and Maclean, G. (1996), *The Spivak Reader*, Routledge: New York.
- McCall, S. (2002) "Mahasweta Devi's Documentary/Fiction as Critical Antidote: Rethinking Bonded Labour, 'Women and Development' and the Sex Trade in India"; *Resources for Feminist Research*. 29; 39
- Mehta, D., director (2005) *Water*, Colombo, Sri Lanka: Mongrel Media.
- Sunder Rajan, R. (2003), *Scandal of the State: Women, Law, and Citizenship in Postcolonial India*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Spivak, G. (1985) "Can the Subaltern Speak?"; *Wedge* 7/8: 120-130.
- Spivak, G. (2004, September). "The Trajectory of the Subaltern in My Work". Speech presented at University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, United States.

Young, R. (2003), *Postcolonialism: a Very Short Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press.