



RESEARCH PAPER

People are Without Face: Physiognomies of Hegemonic Powers and Issues of Transformation in Henning Mankell's Selected Literary Fiction

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ABSTRACT

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This research explores the representation of the subaltern characters in Henning Mankell's *The Shadow Girls*. Mankell foregrounds the peripheral characters whose voice has been silenced due to the lack of agency. The main characters like Tea-Bag, Tania, and Leila are submissive and inferior who live a life of absurdity. They are wretched and stifled because of the suppressive hegemonic power, poor economic background, and their inferior rank in terms of class, gender, inability, refugee status, and lack of agency. By bringing subaltern characters into the forefront, the novel shows that subalternity is not only limited to the South Asian context but could bring all the marginal voices of the world. On the surface, Mankell pretends to provide a platform for the minority group but the true voices of the subaltern characters remain unheard. This research is qualitative in nature. Theories presented by Antonio Gramsci, David Ludden, Sarah Crompton, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak help to find the answers to the research questions for this research. As the concern of the revolution from lower people, this novel does not provide the platform openly but desires to transform Leila as an actress, Tea-Bag neglects authoritarian power and some other characters somehow try to evoke the revolution from the lower in the novel.

Introduction

The present research based on Henning Mankell's novel, *The Shadow Girls*, is an attempt to assert that Mankell's narrative flows directly into the social phenomena, the celebrated sensibility of the tour, abhorring the postcolonial world for its lies, its

mediocrity, cruelty, violence, and self-indulgence. This intends to study those subaltern people who are rendered marginal and employing the perspective of Subaltern Studies through the analysis of submissive characters that are marginalized due to their inability, migrants, race, class, and gender. Set against the historical back of depression, it seems Mankell stands for the minority of the society such as people with disabilities, Afro-Americans, working-class people, and women. While providing the platform for minorities, Mankell's novel hardly lends voice to subaltern people who remain unheard. Originally, *Tea-Bag* (2001) was published in Sweden to show the problems and criminal activities in Gothenburg. Eleven years later its English translation by Ebba Segerberg *The Shadow Girls* (2012) gets publicity worldwide.

Henning Mankell recognizes crime writer as a worldwide phenomenon with his crime writing, gripping thrillers, and atmospheric novels set in Africa. The novel starts with an unnamed African girl, Tea-Bag, who has been imprisoned in a Spanish refugee camp. She escapes from the camp and lives in Sweden hiding from the government officers and involves herself in criminal activities to survive in Gothenburg. In Gothenburg, she meets with a man, Jesper Humlin, who is not getting the publicity from his poems so that he is searching for a crime story to help his new novel. Tea-Bag tells him everything from her early childhood where she has lost her family in the era of colonial activity by the British Government. She escapes from there and lives in Gothenburg where she also meets with two girls Tania and Leila who are also facing many problems in a foreign country. Tania is a girl from Russia who has made a long and dangerous journey to escape the misery of life in a brothel and lives in Sweden involving in prostitution and hiding from the government officers. Similarly, Leila has come to Sweden with her family and she becomes the scapegoat of patriarchal society so that she also involves in criminal acts to live in Gothenburg. These three girls tell their story to Jesper Humlin. At the end of the novel, these three girls left Jesper Humlin because they understand his selfish treat towards them and remain in the same life in which they were.

With the analysis of *The Shadow Girls*, readers will be able to know that subaltern theory is equally applicable to the text of western countries. Subaltern, according to *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, a British word for someone of inferior rank, combines the Latin term for "under" (sub) and "other" (alter). The term 'subaltern' stands for those people who are devoid of proper voice, an agency of their own to speak for themselves in state apparatus. It is a catchall designation for members of subordinated populations - the colonized, women, blacks, and the working class - although it is most often used to describe those oppressed by British colonialism and the political and economic upheavals of the post-colonial period. Though there were some attempts to study history from the below, it gets only noticed after the emergence of Subaltern Studies Group in 1982 to write the historiography of the people ignored by colonialist as well as bourgeois nationalist historiographies.

Literature Review

The origin of the term "subaltern" can be traced back to the medieval age, where this term applied to vassals and peasants. By the eighteenth century, it, however, came to denote lower ranks in the military suggesting peasant origin, from nineteenth-century in India and America, historians and writers began writing about the military campaign from the subaltern point of view. When Antonio Gramsci adopted it finally this term got rather an authentic voice to refer to those groups in the society, who are subject to the ruling classes. He used the term subaltern to refer to Italy's rural peasant classes. He used the term interchangeably with "subordinate" or sometimes instrumental to denote "[n]on hegemonic groups or classes" (Gramsci 1991, p.214). For him, Subalterns are "the unorganized group of ruling peasants [...] who had no social or political consciousness as a group and therefore susceptible to ruling ideas, culture and leadership of the state" (Gramsci 1991, p.216). As a Marxist, Gramsci was very much concerned with the proletarians whose voice remains suppressed in history. When the history of the state was revealed in the state, history being the history of ruling groups, he was interested in the historiography of the subaltern classes. His chief concern was with the proletariat whose voice remains unheard in the elite historiography. The hitherto history is realized as the history of the state and dominant group, he found an urgent need to write historiography of the subaltern class who are denied access to hegemonic power. He found the history of the subaltern group is "necessarily fragmented and episodic" because they are always subject to the activity of ruling groups" (Gramsci 1991, p.214). They have "less access to the means to control their own representations" and "less access to cultural and social institutions" (Gramsci 1991, p.214). However, Gramsci did not come into the limelight until Raymond Williams promoted his theory in 1997, well after the translations of *The Modern Prince* (1957) and *Prison Notebooks* (1966). Gramsci's account of the subaltern has been further developed by a group of historians known as the Subaltern Studies collective. Extending the terms of Gramsci's original definition these historians define subaltern as "the general attribution of subordinate in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, gender, caste, age, and office or in another way" (Gramsci 1991, p.216).

Material and Methods

This research is qualitative in nature. There has been a wide and pervasive influence on Subaltern Studies historians that come from the theoretical approaches like deconstruction, feminism which write against the grain. State center historical research came under erasure and the history from the below became flourished. The major contribution to study unheard voices of history is regarded as E.P. Thompson's book *The Making of Working-Class* in 1963. At the same time, women's history in the US became an apt subject for research. In 1982 Eric Wolf contributed to this awakening with her seminal book *Europe and the People without History*, which is regarded as the first-ever history from the below. Consequently, from all these influences, intellectuals in India started a new school in 1982 with the establishment of the Subaltern Studies

Group. "Subaltern studies started as a group of historians, who shared certain dissatisfaction with existing historiography of South Asia" (Guha 1982, p.273). The group formed by Ranjit Guha and initially including Sahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman, and Gyan Pandey has produced twelve volumes of Subaltern Studies essays relating to the history, politics, economics, and sociology of Subalternity as well as attitudes, ideologies, and beliefs system. "In a multivolume of collected essays entitled Subaltern Studies," in Reading Subaltern Studies David Ludden says, "these historians have consistently attempted to recover a history of Subaltern Agency and resistance from the perspective of the people rather than that of the state" (Ludden 2011, p.49). In this sense, a subaltern study has become a global concern. It has gone as Dipesh Chakraborty Says "beyond or India or South Asia as an area of Academic specialization" (Chakraborty 1986, p.9).

In the same manner, Subaltern Studies attempted to establish the subaltern as an autonomous realm. At the same time, Poststructuralism and Postmodernism had a great impact on the academic world and Cultural Studies were becoming more influential in all domains. This academic milieu paved a new path for Subaltern Studies. Along with the publication of *Subaltern Studies IV* that included the writing of Gayatri Spivak brought a feminist bend in Subaltern Studies. With her essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" she raises the feminist issues slowly and gradually, Subaltern Studies were moving towards representation, critical theory, cultural studies from subaltern politics. Spivak, in her essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, says: "The Subaltern Studies Collective generally perceive their task as making as a theory of consciousness or culture rather than especially a theory of change" (Spivak 1994, p.330). It was the first major shift that emerged in the history of Subaltern Studies.

Meanwhile, socialist, communist, and Marxist systems were deteriorating throughout the world. And, the academic world was moving towards post-Marxist studies. In such a context, postcolonial studies remained the only domain that could provide a platform to the third-world voices. In such critical moments, Edward Said, in his foreword to selected Subaltern Studies (1988), writes that Subaltern Studies consisted of the pieces of post-colonial historians. Moreover, he also pointed out the need to include the texts of the writers like Salman Rushdie and Marquez in Subaltern Studies. Spivak repeated her previous claim that Subaltern Studies is a theory of subaltern consciousness or cultural study of the subaltern people rather than a theory of change in her introduction to the same Subaltern Studies. She focused on the colonial subject as the major concern of theorization. Now it somehow drifted towards representation from subaltern politics from Gramsci to Derrida and Foucault. "Post-colonial cultural criticism and literary theory", in Lewis, Bernard's words, "had embraced subaltern studies" (Bernard 1992, p.18).

Textual Analysis

Henning Mankell's *The Shadow Girls* is set in Gothenburg, the second-largest city in Sweden. This novel has been lauded for its sharp insights into the awkwardness and frustration associated with adolescence; unrealized love, spiritual isolation, and failure of interpersonal communication. Not only that, exposing the deformity of human identity and freedom. It emphasizes the problems of individuals trying to escape from the reality of disillusioned life substituting the dream of glory for achievement, endurance, dignity, and compassion. Isolated characters in the Gothenburg society are the outcome of British colonialism in which Henning Mankell intelligently draws the imagination map exposing the cruel, frustrated, and irrational, and inconsistent characters in Gothenburg. All the characters are in search of hopeful identity and freedom but they live in the shadow of actual life in Gothenburg.

The novel presents a series of separate episodes of the characters. Tea-Bag, a young African girl, has come to Sweden fleeing a refugee camp in Spain, wanting a better life. Tania has made a long and dangerous journey from Eastern Europe to escape the horrors of human trafficking. Leila has come with her family from Iran to Sweden for a better life and a good income. These all main characters meet in Gothenburg and share all their bygone days' difficulties with the narrator Humlin. Therefore, the narrator manages to escape to an educated community in search of true freedom, and identity. The novel was published in 2001, Henning Mankell sets his novel during colonial with the aftermath of depression to show the awful impacts of depression on working-class people living in Gothenburg. Most of the writer of that time has acutely attuned to political history and so its characteristics modern themes; colonization, depression and unemployment, the implication of money, class and especially the individual sentiments and sensibilities that grow out of such history.

Henning Mankell's *The Shadow Girls* (2001) is diversely interpreted by various critics from the very outset of its publication. Many critics focus on child psychology, thriller, detective, representation of masculinity and femininity, representation of humor and ruin. Sarah Crompton views the novel through the eyes of representation relating to humor and ruin. She further writes "Mankell writes with both a social conscience and great humor...it is both passionate and entertaining" (Crompton 2012, p.3). This extract shows Crompton's analysis of humor and ruin in Gothenburg in which the main characters are creating different criminal activities to make fun of and to survive in this competitive world. The characters face many problems so that they involve in phone sex, sex, and steal money from locals by showing their bodily activities. However, these critics analyze this novel from a different viewpoint; none of them hitherto acknowledge the representation of marginal voices in the text. It seems urgent to study the novel from a subaltern's perspective.

Generally, it is believed that subaltern theory is associated with postcolonialism, particularly with Indian historiography. It is obvious too as subaltern theory came into the limelight in 1982 when Indian historians established the

Subaltern Studies group to write the historiography of the people ignored by colonialists as well as bourgeois nationalist historiography. They intervene in those ideological discourses of traditional historiography that attempt to give a hegemonic "normality" to uneven development and the differential often disadvantages histories of races, communities, and peoples. They formulate their critics' revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination. In short, they resist the attempts at holistic forms of social explanation. These historians have repeatedly intended to recover subaltern agency and resistance from the point of view of people rather than the state. However, it does not mean the subaltern theory is only the property of south Asian historiography. There are marginalized people in every society who are deprived of power and agency and are always under the domination of elitists whether it is underdeveloped colonized countries or highly developed western capitalist countries. For that reason, the subaltern theory applies to any society to study the unheard voices because it unravels hitherto silenced voices of margins. Hence, the present study will explore the key issues of the text to provide the characters of the novel who are more subalterns rather than criminals and it will examine whether the writer has sufficient agency to the characters or not and see how he has presented the characters.

The Shadow Girls demonstrates the deformity caused by authoritative power through different dysfunctional characters that are in search of dignity and freedom. The entire novel rests on the inherent contradiction of subaltern speech because an African girl narrates the entire story. The novel revolves around the concept of isolation from which characters suffer from different problems throughout their life. They are in search of their identity and security but their voices are unheard. Being poor they just try to imitate the superiority and involve themselves in criminal acts to survive in a foreign country but are always behave with inferior eyes. They are marginalized in terms of race, region, position, class, gender, and inability, and being a foreigner. The characters fail to grasp the modernity and security in Gothenburg so that characters are marginalized. Subalterns are the people of inferior rank who are always subject to domination by elites. Subaltern classes may include the peasants, workers, women, indigenous, marginalized, black, foreigner, and another group who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling class. In this novel too, they are subaltern characters like Tea- Bag, an African girl who becomes a prophet and scapegoat of the contemporary ruling class and Swedish, Tania, a Russian girl who devotes her life to prostitution to survive, Leila, an Iranian girl who faces the patriarchy domination. Many other characters are marginalized because of their inability to do something. The title of the novel itself suggests the main characters are from the minority.

The very title *The Shadow Girls* itself designates they are away from the mainstream. The word 'shadow' represents the subaltern and 'girls' represents the characters that are under the hegemony of the ruling class or elite society. The characters are being shadows and they are not recognized in society. The main characters of the novel Tea-Bag, Tania, and Leila are being shadows in the society of Gothenburg. These characters are from different countries in Sweden and making

criminal lives to survive in Gothenburg's street. It is the place where people of very low economic status, migrated and working groups live under the rich and ruling class so that these immigrants face different problems and make compelling to do criminal acts. Taking the clue of the novel *Lingens* further writes:

“Three immigrants to Sweden, who have come to what they think is the Promised Land, discover that they have no face in this country. Further, because they are illegal, they must continually run and hide to prevent discovery. Their stories are told in abrupt episodic fashion, but they are riveting.” (Lingens 2013, p.12)

This extract shows that three girls live in Sweden without their identity and their suffering neglect by the Swedish government and locals. They live in this place illegally and hiding from the government officers and involve themselves in criminal activities for their livelihood. The shadows of girls are pictured from their backward in the novel and neglecting their real faces so that these characters are representative subaltern characters in Gothenburg's society.

The main characters in this novel are female and they become the subaltern character in the patriarchal society. In every sector of society, females become victims of difficulties and they are hegemonies with patriarchal ideologies. *The Shadow Girls* visualizes the gendered subalternity. The concept of subalternity and feminity has been used throughout the novel. Women are exploited, dominated, and marginalized. They are subalternized often in our society. Our society defines masculinity as having qualities regarded as characteristics of men and boys as strength, vigor, boldness, etc. while feminity is defined as having qualities regarded as characteristics of women and girls as gentleness, weakness, delicacy, modesty, etc. Outside and social activities are free for the male but females are deprived of all these activities and they have to live at home without their wishes. Three girls in the novel are pictured as weak and cowardly and there are numerous examples where females are being scapegoats of patriarchal domination. Tea-Bag, Tania, and Leila are some characters who are factual examples of domination in Gothenburg. Needless to say,, in other societies, it is often the result of an unsatisfactory social and economic situation. Three girls' conditions are best portrayed in Doug Johnston's review as:

“The main problems with *The Shadow Girls* are to do with tone and a lack of suspense. Tonally, this novel is all over the place; as if Mankell could not decide what kind of book to write. The novel opens with a moving account from an African girl called Tea-Bag of her escape from a Spanish refugee camp and her journey towards Sweden. Much later on, we get two more touching and harrowing stories from Tanya, a Russian girl sold into prostitution, and Leyla, a young Iranian woman oppressed to the point of suffocation by her overbearing male relatives.” (Johnston 2015, p.5)

In this extract, Doug Johnston investigates the female characters and their domination of being a female. Mankell's characters Leila and Tania are oppressed by

the male-dominated society. Leila has been compelled to sell her body to males in this so-called society and Tania has also suffered from her father and brother's domination.

Leila is a good example of the gendered subaltern in a so-called patriarchal society. She is always undervalued by her father and runs from his shadow. Her father shows the real patriarchal domination throughout the novel and she has deprived to do important activities with her friends. Her father always keeps her under his superstition and does not let her go outside to speak with a male. Her brother works in a boxing club but she has not allowed entering and she only helps him.

“Leila stopped reading abruptly. A man had just entered the room and Humlin recognized him. It was Leila's father.

'I haven't told you any of this,' she hissed. 'I haven't said anything. Nothing about Nana, nothing about the underpass.'

'What happened after that?' Tania asked.

'I can't tell you now. Don't you get what I'm saying?'

'I am not simply a relative; I am Leila's father.'

He turned to his daughter and grabbed her arm roughly...

Her father turned and shouted at her, a tirade of smattering sounds of which Humlin understood nothing. Leila bowed her head submissively, but Humlin thought he could still see the streak of rebellion in her bearing.” (TSG 256)

Females remain under the control of males and they become victims directly or indirectly of a male-dominated society. Leila is a rebellious type of girl but she also has to face patriarchal domination despite being educated. In this male-dominated society, males keep females under their desires by using their force. She wants to go against patriarchy domination but patriarchy ideology makes her subaltern.

Mankell shows the females are more subaltern characters and they have to face domination in a patriarchal society. Patriarchy society hegemonies the female characters in the society by imposing different rules and regulations by assuming what to do or what not to do. The ruling class also represents the patriarchal society and who do not care about their pain and suffering rather they tortured them without any reason. The narrator visualizes the suffering of female characters in a refugee camp.

“The woman from Iran was pregnant when she first arrived. She had cried all night long because her husband had disappeared somewhere along the way during their long journey. When her contractions started the Swedish guards put her on a stretcher and Tea-Bag never saw her again after that. The girl from Ghana was an

impatient type, someone who could not see a fence without immediately plotting to climb over it. One night she and a couple of boys from Togo, who had sailed to Europe on a raft made of empty oil barrels that they had stolen from a Shell depot, had tried to climb the fence. But the dogs and the spotlights caught her and she never returned to the tent. Tea-Bag assumed she was now in the part of the camp where those labeled 'difficult' held under stricter supervision." (TSG 8)

This extract shows how the immigrant people from a foreign country are behaved by the ruling society. People treat to the foreigner as animals and the ruling society is careless and does not show any mercy towards their problems. The more subaltern groups include females because the ruling class does not show any sympathy to the pregnant women. The ruling class is careless in the life of subaltern characters and they give torture them without any crime. Therefore, the people who are in power produce subaltern characters in society.

Tea-Bag, the main character, becomes a victim of colonialism. She remembers her family and her childhood period in Nigeria. Hickey's Trauma-Control Model suggests that "childhood trauma for serial murders may serve as a triggering mechanism resulting in an individual's inability to cope with the stress of certain events" (Hickey 2010, p.13). She suffers from Psychological trauma so that events occur as a result of a severely distressing event in her life. She wants to forget her all childhood experience but her loneliness always creates the situation to remember her childhood. Tea-Bag expresses her traumatic feelings with her friends as:

"Perhaps it was your breath that woke me up, Alemwa, that night when the soldiers came to take away my father. I remember how my mother screamed like an animal with its leg caught in a trap trying to gnaw it off. I think that is what she was trying to do; trying to gnaw off her arms, legs, ears, eyes, when they come for my father. They hit him until he was covered in blood but he was still alive when they dragged him away in the night. (TSG 271)

Mankell visualizes the true subaltern characters at the time of colonialism. Colonialism is the time used to create psychological traumatic feelings to people; similarly, Tea-Bag is a character who has become the victim of colonialism. This extract shows actual subaltern people are colonized people because they face the ideological power of the ruling class or elite society.

Jesper Humlin, a Swedish, middle-class person, also faces the problem of family crisis. His psychological traumatic feeling stretches him towards his family and he remembers all incidents which were happened in his childhood.

"Humlin Sighed took off his coat and followed her into the rest of the apartment, which reminded him of an overstocked antique store. Here his mother had squirreled away everything that she had ever come across. Humlin could still remember fights his parents had had about things Marta had refused to get rid

of...Humlin could not remember a single occasion when his mother had been silent. She was possessed by a deep-seated need to always make herself heard. If she was in the kitchen she banged her pots, if she was on the balcony cleaning the rugs she beat them so the blows echoed in the courtyard." (TSG 31-32)

Family problems often seem in a poor family and people feel distressed from family. A family crisis is the main problem which is shown in the above extract.

Subaltern people do not get proper agency and they could not be able to raise their economic status which creates a family crisis so that directly or indirectly its impact seems on their children. The psychological traumatic feelings of Humlin hurt him when he comes to his birthplace. This extract visualizes how subaltern people become victims of their traumatic psychology and history. Without the proper agency, a poor refugee cannot do anything according to their wishes so the narrator writes: "people are without a face" (TSG 45). This indicates without the elite or ruling class subaltern cannot rise in the society. A refugee cannot think more than their freedom that's why the narrator depicts the condition of the character Tea- Bag as:

"It started raining again in the afternoon. That evening Tea-Bag sat on her bed and pressed her feet against the cold floor for a long time. Sweden, she thought. That's where I'm going. That's where I have to go. That's my goal." (TSG 19)

Tea-Bag thinks to escape from the refugee camp live freely in a foreign country. Refugees are a compulsion to live in poor conditions under the ruling class hegemony so refugees are subaltern people because they have no proper agency in the foreign country to listen to their rights. Being illegal in Sweden, Tea-Bag and Tania hide in Gothenburg to escape from the Swedish law and government officers. They suffer from alienation and they do have not to roof to hide their suffering and loneliness. They are psychologically traumatized and show fear acts to go near government officers. Through the medium of Tea-Bag, the narrator shows how these subaltern characters show fearful activities.

"I got out my Sudanese passport, then changed my mind and ran away. I heard the policeman shouting behind me but was not able to catch me. At that moment I understood that I had been given magic powers. When I was pursued by the policeman I moved as fast as one of the birds." (TSG 119)

The Shadow Girls visualizes the racial subalternity. The intention of racism has been used throughout the novel. Generally, blacks are victimized, dominated, and marginalized and they are subalternized often in the white society. Racism has existed throughout human history. It may be defined as the hatred of one person by another or the belief that another person is less than human because of skin. An Irish Examiner observes the novel as:

"As we are drawn into the shadow world of immigrant life in Sweden, Mankell's blend of comedy and moving drama provides a voice for those who lose

theirs on their journey from oppression to imagined freedom; a freedom which is often transient and blighted with prejudice and racism." (Examiner 2012, p.9)

This extract shows the injustice of Mankell towards racism. Mankell's blend of comedy and moving drama is making bias toward the main character Tea-Bag. Tea-Bag is a black girl and who has come from Nigeria in Sweden where she faces much domination being a black in a refugee camp as well as in Gothenburg's street. The terms 'oppression' and 'racism' clearly show the main character is facing different difficulties being black.

The main character of the novel, Tea-Bag, is a Nigerian girl and geographically she is a subaltern character. Abrams mentioned as "Beyond to the south there is no civilization in the proper sense...they cannot be considered as human being...similar to those of dumb animals" (Abrams 1999, p.108). Blacks are inferior not only by their skin but also by their country. They treat like animals and compel to be a slave in white-dominated society and the ruling class or elite groups observe them as they are from another world. Karen Mulvahill writes in his review as:

"Interspersed with the real-time narrative are sections in which each girl tells her story. Tea-Bag: "Countries can be like hungry animals with a thousand mouths. They eat us up when their need is great and they spit us out when they are done." The writing here poetically and credibly conveys the character and background of each girl and the suffering she has endured. (Mulvahill 2012, p.5)

The narrator gives the symbolic meaning of subalternity that existed in Sweden. He clarifies the concept of the center and margin when he compares the ruling class and subaltern by representing social status. A narrator describes the status of Gothenburg by taking the destination of Jesper Humlin as: 'Humlin gave the driver an address in Ostermalm, the upper-class part of town, then leaned back and closed his eyes..' (TSG 29). Elite and Ruling classes are near in Gothenburg but they separate themselves from the low class.

Sweden has given birth to many subaltern characters. Immigrant people of Sweden have become the subject of domination and the playground for the elite class people. Mankell presents the existing hierarchy through the different characters: "he also noticed a group of a dark-skinned woman sitting together" (TSG 165). This shows how the subaltern people are behaving and observing as criminals or aliens in Sweden. The subaltern people are being spectators and trivial and how the mode of corruption of elite class has affected the lifestyle of subaltern class and how they are victimized.

"The most important thing is that you do something. In this country, immigrants are still treated like victims. Because of their circumstances, their poor language skills, for almost any other reason you can think of. Sometimes they think of

themselves as victims. But most of them simply want to be treated like normal people." (TSG 105)

This extract clarifies how the subaltern people behave. The word 'victims' denotes the subaltern characteristic. The victim people are tortured without any reason. They are being subalterns in their circumstances in a foreign land. The elite group takes advantage of being normal in front of the subaltern characters and they create problems for the immigrant. This shows the miserable condition of immigrants' people in Gothenburg. Marta Humlin, a sixty years old woman, makes sexy phone calls to survive in Gothenburg. Being poor she involves herself in negative and criminal acts to make her daily life easy. The narrator clearly shows the criminal act of Marta in the conversation between Humlin and Marta.

"That's your business, but what I do know is you spend your time on revolting and most probably highly illegal phone sex conversation.' She looked at him with surprise mingled with amusement... 'There's no need to get worked up over it. The old men who call are very nice. Many are interesting people. A famous author is one of my most faithful customers.'... 'Between fifty and sixty thousand kronor a month. Of course, there are no taxes to pay in this line of work.'" (TSG 205)

Being a Swedish woman, Marta Humlin involves in criminal acts for her poor family background. She makes sexy phone calls with a different types of people in society and earns money for livelihood. She becomes compel to do these sexy phone calls because she cannot do that.

The main female figure of this story is Tea-Bag. She is an extraordinary woman who managed to survive and engaged in prostitution in an unknown place. This situation creates due to her poverty and vulture eye of a male by a so-called male-dominated society. Similarly, Tania is also another female character who faces many difficulties in a male-dominated society. She becomes a scapegoat of human trafficking and a victim of brothel life when she was an adult. Both of the characters are involved in prostitution for their daily life. Through the medium of Tania, the narrator shows their prostitution life in Gothenburg.

"Yesterday, when Tea-Bag and I were lying on the police chief's bed, she told me that I haven't had it any worse than anyone else. Then she fell asleep. Is she right? I don't know. But I don't understand how I'm supposed to be able to laugh after all the humiliation I've been through. And I'm someone who thinks people must be able to feel an uncomplicated, simple joy in their lives since we are going to be dead for such a long time. Death is not what is frightening to me not the fact that the flame goes out, but this fact that we are going to be dead so very long." (TSG 306)

These characters involve in prostitution, not for their joy and they commit crimes to survive in so-called society. The word 'death' covers the whole theme of this sexual crime because of their pathetic condition. From her view, the narrator shows

the inner feeling of these characters. They involve in prostitution for their livelihood so that they represent true subaltern characters in society.

An African girl, Tea-Bag, adopts the criminal acts in the period of migration. She steals goods and money from different passerby and improves her daily life. She steals because she has nothing to eat and nothing to survive. In this regard, the narrator visualizes the act in a conversational style.

"'She tried to steal a monkey,' Leila said. 'A monkey?'

'A Chinese monkey. Made of china. It was in an antique store. It broke. It was pretty expensive.'

'How much was it?' 'Eighty thousand.'

'How could it be so much?'

'It's from some ancient dynasty. Three thousand years old or something. It said something about it on the price tag.'" (TSG 198)

This extract shows the criminal act of Tea-Bag and she attempts to steal the most expensive Chinese monkey which belongs to antique. She commits a crime, not for a joyful act but to continue her daily life. Being a subaltern and abandoned character she includes herself in stealing.

Results and Discussion

According to the subaltern theory, there is a revolution from the underprivileged, colonize, or proletarian group against ruler, elitist colonialist, and dominant group. Revolution in the novel is certain and limited but this novel tries to evoke the revolution from the readers as well. Regarding all this, we can say that Mankell's *The Shadow Girls* tries to show the inferior complex from the submissive and inferior characters. Major characters are females, from a poor background and some other characters are aged and they also form poor backgrounds, which makes them inferior. They are directly or indirectly dominated by wealthy backgrounds, politically powerful people, and upper-rank people in society. Those dominated are subaltern groups, they are subordinated, and their voice is heard, underprivileged in the society. Henning Mankell's *The Shadow Girls* depicts the life of the subaltern people living in Gothenburg during the time of colonialism and its periphery. All the characters come from different walks of life. They represent the inferiority status in Gothenburg created by hegemonic power. The main characters of the novel are taken from the periphery in terms of race, class, gender, refugee status, etc. Although Henning Mankell represents the subaltern people, they lack agency because of the ambivalent attitude of the elite class towards subaltern society. They struggle in their life to achieve destiny but all the characters fail to have access to the mainstream and finally live life in misery and absurdity.

The present scenario of post-colonial studies has been raising the issues of marginalized, suppressed groups and their culture. Many writers from the post-colonial arena concern to present voices to the marginalized groups, with an agreement that refers to the subaltern people who cannot be heard; the voices of people living in Gothenburg are unheard. Concerning the issue of subalternity, many researchers have applied a subaltern perspective while analyzing literary texts. The novel *The Shadow Girls* also has the concern of subalternity; it evokes the voice of the marginalized groups. It talks about the subaltern groups, but many researchers have no access to the underlying theme of hegemonic structure hidden in the novel. Therefore, this research tried to cull out the subaltern theme and evoke the poor, refugee, and lower-class people's pathetic situation in Gothenburg. The novel represents submission which is through the inferiority complex inherent within characters.

Mankell is obsessed with the changes that took place during the colonial period and its periphery. The novelist shows the grappling effects of depression and the plight of the people living in Gothenburg. Inwardly, the characters try their hard to do action in their way but because of the social rank, their age, being a refugee to remain silent, conceal their instinct and obedient to all. Females are undervalued by males and they involve in prostitution. Tea-Bag, Tania, and Leila are representative of subaltern female characters living in orthodox Gothenburg during the time of colonialism. The patriarchal values and economic condition discard all their desires before blossoming. According to Spivak, women are deeply in shadow because the ideological construction keeps males dominant. These three characters have the desire to become a writer but they fail as they feel lack of proper agency. Tea-Bag and Tania involve in prostitution to survive in the so-called patriarchal society.

Leila, an Iranian girl, becomes the scapegoat of patriarchal hegemony and she wanted to escape from patriarchal domination but she has compelled to live under his father's commanding voice in an unknown place. She feels alienated within her family and suffers from hegemonic patriarchal ideology. In the same manner, Mankell attempts to depict the life of subaltern people living in Gothenburg through the portrayal of characters like Tea-Bag, Tania, and Leila, and other marginalized people. Most of the characters are marginalized because of their region, class, and race to do something in their life due to the lack of agency to put their voices and creativity forward. These main characters commit crimes in Gothenburg's street to make their daily life easier. This situation creates due to their poor, frustration, alienation, and victims of patriarchal ideology in the Swedish society. Tea-Bag and Tania involve in sexual intercourse many times with alien people because of their poor economic condition. This poor economic condition made them involved in these acts so that they are subaltern rather than criminal.

Conclusion

The analysis of multiple characters in the novel demonstrates that they all are subalterns because of their position like a refugee, gender identity, poor condition,

geography, and history. The narrator's experience and the title of the novel are also evidence of the claim. This present research also proves that the subaltern perspective is not confined to South Asian historiography. It, even, highlights all the sidelines of history in any geographical location. Major characters involve in prostitution and pickpocket to survive and they are unable to gain their destination, they are compelled to do things that happened to them, ordered to them, obedient to others. They even cannot share their problems openly towards other people because of class, age, poor condition, being a refugee and also there is no sign of direct revolution against the dominant class but the characters are trying to follow the elite class to make their life easier and comfortable in subaltern society. This imitation works as a symbolic revolution towards the dominant class. This novel tries to win the readers' sympathy towards lower, poor, refugee, and female, race, oppressed and marginalized. Thus, Mankell's *The Shadow Girls* shows a representation of subaltern people in the society.

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