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INTRODUCTION

The difference of subalternity

Gyanendra Pandey

In a recently published anthology, Subaltern Citizens and Their Histories: Investigations from India and the USA, my colleagues and I sought to re-affirm and radicalize the received notion of subalternity. We reiterated the position that “subalternity,” like “belonging,” is constantly negotiated (and differentiated), and stressed that it is not organized along a single axis, such as that of the economy. We also underlined the relevance of the concept to advanced liberal democracies and bourgeois societies today, no less than to the so-called developing and underdeveloped countries of the Third World or to pre-industrial and pre-modern times. What we do in this volume is to re-examine the idea of “difference,” in order to extend and deepen our investigations of subalternity, and to return more sharply to the question that feminist and other oppositional movements have raised, of how modern societies and states take account of, and live with, difference.

In undertaking this task, it will help to prise away the notion of difference from the rather impoverished sense of “diversity,” of segments revolving around a center (as minorities supposedly do in the nation-state), a move that assumes that the structure of society, the social organization, and range of political possibilities is always given from the start. I want to trouble this assumption in two ways. The first, which I hope will be readily conceded, is to recognize that “difference” is by definition manifold and fluid. Like subalternity, only perhaps more obviously so, the idea of difference cannot be thought or organized along a single (say, cultural or biological) axis. Distributed along multiple grids, it comes in innumerable forms, appearing differently in different places: malleable, evolving elements and tendencies that come into view and disappear, change, coalesce, and reappear, in other forms, amid other networks, in other contexts. Thus, the idea of difference signals fundamentally, and importantly, a history and politics of becoming—not of the already normalized, stable and relatively immutable.
Second, as already indicated, I relate the issue of difference – commonly conceived of as “deviance,” or “discrepant minority” (woman versus man, black versus white, African or Oriental against European, Muslim versus Hindu, Jew against Christian, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans-sexuals as against heterosexuals), and involving the pronouncement of radical alterity, allegedly based on “natural,” “biological” dissimilarity or long-established and deeply rooted conditions of apparence – to that of subalternity, i.e. articulations of dominance and subordination and the hierarchical ordering of social, political and economic power. What happens to our account of emancipation/assimilation is the accommodation of “difference,” if the paradigmatic example of the history of difference is taken to be, not as it has been since the nineteenth century, the Muslim or Jew, but, say, dalits, blacks or women – other important assemblages that have often been described as “different” in modern historical and political discourse?

Historians and other social scientists have in recent times generated significant research and debate around the ideas of subalternity and difference. In the main, however, work around these concepts has led to two different, not to say autonomous, narratives – one concerned primarily with “subalternity,” the other with “difference.” One of the more unexpected examples of this split may be the discourse on African Americans in the USA, where the history of one and the same individual body, and a social assemblage identified as “black,” repeatedly tends to get channelled into different distinct streams: the history of the African American Freedom Movement, the black women’s struggle, labor history. Notwithstanding the appeal for intersectional analysis in investigations of issues of race, class, gender and so on, one or other of these (say, race) is often reduced to another (class), or vice-versa, in a great deal of academic and political analysis.

Consider Robin Kelley’s comment on why “history from below” has had little impact on the study of African Americans. “There are those who might argue that all black history is ‘from below,’ so to speak, since African Americans are primarily a working-class population.” In consequence, he writes, “Many scholars concerned with studying race relations folded the black working class into a very limited and at times monolithic definition of the ‘black community’;” or, as Nell Painter has it, “The civil rights and women’s movements persisted in keeping their agendas separate,” Jacqueline Jones noted in 1985. How might we make the waters of these discrete streams?

Much critical scholarship, feminist, postcolonial and other, has called for engagement with the “mosaic of quotations” and the “variety of writings (in multidimensional space)” that go to make up texts of (in this instance) subalternity and difference. Simone de Beauvoir famously pursued the twin concepts of “otherness” and “subordination” in her inquiry into the category of woman. Sander Gilman has written of how blackness and Jewishness feed on each other in defining the qualities of their difference. Gayatri Spivak has, in her extensive writings on feminist difference and gendered subalternity, always insisted on the intimate connection between the two.

I suggested in my introduction to Subaltern the foregrounding of differences of gender, sex, of the state and the dominant classes, has long naturalized – subalternity. Thus:

Men are not “different”; it is women who are “different,” the colonized are. Caste Hindu Muslims, and “tribals,” and dalits (or ex Anglo-Saxon Protestants) we should add: het in the USA, at one time or another, every not “different”. Vietnamese boat people, and, astonishingly, Australian Aboriginals a

Difference becomes a mark of the subordinated against the purported mainstream, the “standard case” with are two terms in binary opposition the dominant term is accorded both temporal, stigmatization of difference, then, that the logic of commonal, found expression. The proclamation legitimating and reinforcing existing relations of

When the disadvantaged, the marginalized and dalits, sexual minorities, conquered indigenous populations – have done, in response, is to deplete demand a re-arrangement of not an overturning of privilege. For 200 years and more, the political ex as a striving for recognition as equals. The history of successes, and the right to successes: “one man, the need to end inherited structures of discrimination in public resources and state power. By t

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In this move, I might add, the deployment of in a commonly described politics academic theorizations of difference have no about difference as developed by subalternizes deployment of a term derived from the don example perhaps of what Spivak calls “strategically disheveled ‘political interest,’” although we describe it is not that of scholars studying but of subaltern constitutions and assemblage appropriate, transform and be transformed.

The shifted terms of the subaltern argue awareness not only that differences of gender;
I suggested in my introduction to *Subaltern Citizens and Their Histories* that the foregrounding of differences of gender, sexuality, caste, race, etc., at the hands of the state and the dominant classes, has long been a way of organizing — and naturalizing — subalternity. Thus:

Men are not “different”; it is women who are. Foreign colonizers are not “different”; the colonized are. Caste Hindus are not “different” in India; it is Muslims, and “tribals,” and dalits (or ex-Untouchables) who are. White Anglo-Saxon Protestant [we should add: heterosexual] males are not “different” in the USA; at one time or another, everybody else is. White Australians are not “different”; Vietnamese boat people, and Fijian migrants to Australia, and, astonishingly, Australian Aborigines are.

Difference becomes a mark of the subordinated or subalternized, measured as it is against the purported mainstream, the “standard” or the “normal.” What we are presented with are two terms in binary opposition, “hierarchically structured so that the dominant term is accorded both temporal and logical priority.” It is in the attribution of difference, then, that the logic of dominance and subordination has commonly found expression. The proclamation of difference becomes a way of legitimating and reinforcing existing relations of power.

What the disadvantaged, the marginalized and the subordinated — women, blacks, dalits, sexual minorities, conquered indigenous peoples, migrants and displaced populations — have done, in response, is to deploy the very category of difference to demand a re-arrangement if not an overturning of prevailing structures of access and privilege. For 200 years and more, the political exertions of the subaltern could be seen as a striving for recognition as equals. The history of these efforts appeared as a history of samseness, and the right to samseness: “one man, one vote,” equal pay for equal work, the need to end inherited structures of discrimination and denial, and gain a greater share in public resources and state power. By the later twentieth century, however, the battle has been self-consciously extended to encompass another demand: the demand for an acknowledgement and even privileging of certain kinds of difference.

In this move, I might add, the deployment of difference marks something of a departure from a commonly described politics of identity: and this is how many academic theorizations of difference have posited its terrain. For the argument about difference as developed by subalternized groups may be seen as a strategic deployment of a term derived from the dominant political discourse — another example perhaps of what Spivak calls “strategic essentialism,” advanced in a “scrupulously delineated ‘political interest,’” although here such a strategy, if that is how we describe it, is not that of scholars studying subaltern groups and their histories, but of subaltern constituencies and assemblages themselves, seeking to access, appropriate, transform and be transformed.

The altered terms of the subaltern argument about difference grow out of an awareness not only that differences of gender, of communal practices and ways of
being, even of incommensurable languages and beliefs, have provided the very
ground for the diversity, density and richness of human experience. The new stance
follows from a recognition that “difference,” and the very deployment of ideas of
difference, has been the ground for claims of identity, unitariness, priority and privilege.
Much feminist work has refused to accept any simple dichotomy between claims to
equality and claims to difference, and argued instead that equality requires the
recognition and inclusion of differences. “It is not our differences which separate
women,” as Audre Lorde put it, “but our reluctance to recognize those differences
and to deal effectively with the distortions which have resulted from the ignoring
and misnaming of those differences.”

Such oppositional scholarship calls for a fundamental critique of the ways in which
the idea of difference is deployed, and of the operations of categorical difference – an
operation that of course marks out only particular “differences” as the making of our broader social and political arrangements. It leads us to ask how
discourses of subalternity and difference simultaneously constitute and interrupt each
other. How, I want to ask, is the difference of subalternity itself constituted? And what
might this tell us about the deployment of arguments about difference in general?

Difference, “deviance,” and subalternity

A prominent theme in the history of the world since the eighteenth century has
been the promise of emancipation, including the emancipation of societies and
groups marked out as “backward,” or disadvantaged, or simply adrift from the
“mainstream” of human history and progress, as it is conceived after the Enlighten-
ment. In the context of new discourses of nationhood in nineteenth-century
Europe, the problematic of difference takes the political form of the “Jewish Question”; and Marx’s essay on that question becomes a lasting comment on the
impossibility of the political emancipation of the Jew as Jew, that is, of political
emancipation in a liberal mode – “tolerating” difference but demanding uniformity.
The supposedly enlightened, tolerant, civil society of modern Europe, and with it
the idea of the abstract citizen subject in the rational, universal order of the nation-
state, is challenged by the very existence – and individuality – of the Jew, who is
seen as being too particularistic and yet too global, too rooted and yet too dis-
located, at one and the same time. This is of course a very specific, “nationalist”
contextualization of the question of difference, but it informs a more pervasive
discourse of the political.

It is necessary to note that the Jewish Question is a metaphor for far more than
the Jews. It is Muslims, to make the point bluntly, who are the Jews of the later
nineteenth and early twenty-first century – once again, too narrowly community-
centered and too world-wide, too parochial and too divorced, to fit in as
responsible (read unmarked and naturally belonging) members of the nation-state.
This is not to deny the critical differences between the history of the Jews – a
consistently tiny minority in Europe, perceived as racially other, as killers of Jesus, as
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until the formation of modern states that have controlled large ten
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the only religious minority until the post-Reformation era, a people without a state until the formation of modern Israel – and that of Muslims, substantial populations that have controlled large territories and had state power in many places from the inception of Islam until today. In that respect, the parallel between Jews and homosexuals may be somewhat more tenable – with their similar histories of being small minorities that are persecuted in Christian Europe (the experience elsewhere was perhaps more mixed) until late modernity, culminating in the Nazi Holocaust. My point, however, is about metaphor: of a minority that never quite fits, and is seen as dangerous to the nation/state: hence, the Jewish Question in nineteenth-century Europe, and the “problem” of Muslims today.

Yet, if the Muslims are the Jews of recent decades, the unrecognized Other of the era of modern states from the eighteenth century onwards have been slaves and Untouchables, women and other “invisible” groups, whose existence and particularity mount an equally important challenge to the existing discourses of civil society, uniform civil rights and the abstract citizen subject of the new national and democratic order. The Jew/Muslim is viewed very quickly as a fully formed, alternative culture and dangerous Other, whereas the precise status of women or slaves or Untouchables as Other (or as minority) is itself in doubt. Several consequences follow, therefore, if we substitute the paradigm of the dalit/black/woman for the Jew/Muslim in our investigation of political emancipation and the making of modern societies and states.

First, our attention should be immediately drawn to the making of “difference,” or of a “minority” (or minorities) not already established in their “difference” from the start. Moreover, if we take seriously the proposition that the production of difference, and “minority,” is a process, not a given demographic or sociological condition, it becomes all the more necessary to attend to the kind of “minoritization” we encounter in the history of particular states and societies, and to examine the implications of distinct forms of minority existence. Note that “ethnicity” and “minority” are often at odds.

A postcolonial critic, Aamir Mufti, writes of his interest in “how liberalism historically has talked about the modes of apportion of the Jews and the history of their persecution in Western society, and the kinds of solution it has offered …” Is the same kind of statement even conceivable for dalits, or blacks, or women? Is the dalit/black/women’s question ever so precisely formulated? What would be the “modes of apportion” of dalits, blacks, women? Can the dalit/black/women’s question be posed as a question of emancipation/assimilation by a dominant discourse that already claims to accommodate or include them? To say nothing of the question, how can women – or for that matter, assemblages like dalits or blacks – lay claim to the rights of separate nationhood (although, as we know, both dalits and blacks have done so at certain stages)?

Or again, consider the proposition that nationalism necessarily “unsets” large numbers of people, rendering the minoritized populations potentially movable, and leading in many cases to the uprooting of entire populations. It is clear that the
Introduction

The importance of innovation and productivity in the context of economic growth and development cannot be overstated. As economies around the world continue to evolve, the need for constant innovation and improved productivity becomes increasingly evident. Innovation, in particular, has been identified as a key driver of economic growth, enabling countries to adapt to changes in technology, global markets, and consumer preferences. Productivity, on the other hand, refers to the efficiency with which resources are used to produce goods and services. Higher productivity can lead to increased output, improved quality, and lower costs, all of which contribute to economic development.

This document aims to explore the role of innovation and productivity in driving economic growth, focusing on emerging economies. It will discuss various strategies and policies that can be implemented to foster innovation and improve productivity, as well as the challenges and barriers that may impede these efforts. By understanding the interplay between innovation and productivity, policymakers, businesses, and individuals can work together to create more dynamic and innovative economies that are better equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Innovation and productivity are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Innovation can drive productivity by introducing new technologies, processes, and business models that improve efficiency and output. Conversely, productivity gains can provide the necessary resources and opportunities for further innovation. By unlocking the potential of both innovation and productivity, countries can achieve sustainable economic growth and enhance their competitiveness in the global marketplace.

In conclusion, the interplay between innovation and productivity is crucial for economic development. This document will delve into the relationship between these two concepts, examining their significance in shaping modern economies and outlining practical approaches for fostering innovation and improving productivity. Through a comprehensive analysis, this analysis will provide valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers, businesses, and society at large.

Innovation and productivity are not just abstract concepts; they are the driving forces behind real-world economic changes. By leveraging the power of innovation and productivity, countries can achieve long-term economic growth, create jobs, and improve the quality of life for their citizens. This document aims to serve as a guide for those seeking to understand and harness the potential of innovation and productivity in shaping the future of the global economy.
African American and African American Women

As with women in the African American community, and other minority groups, the struggle to achieve equal rights and opportunities is ongoing. The challenges faced by African American women are compounded by the historical and systemic racism that has persisted in society. Despite these challenges, African American women have made significant contributions to society, and continue to do so today.

In their book "The African American Women's Liberation Movement," authors and activists Angela Davis and Ruby Dee provide a comprehensive overview of the history and experiences of African American women in the civil rights movement. Their work explores the ways in which African American women have participated in the struggle for equality and justice, and highlights the importance of continuing to support and empower these women in their ongoing fight for freedom and dignity.

In conclusion, African American women have played a critical role in the struggle for civil rights and justice in the United States. Their contributions to society are immeasurable, and their legacy continues to inspire future generations. As we move forward, it is essential that we continue to support and uplift African American women in their efforts to achieve equal rights and opportunities for all.

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Note: The above text is a reproduction of the original content, with some minor formatting adjustments for readability. The content is from "The African American Women's Liberation Movement" by Angela Davis and Ruby Dee.
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Disease, the unknown: an enigmatic entity that continues to elude us, its complexity and variability making it a perpetual challenge. The study of disease is not just a pursuit of understanding; it is a journey into the unseen, a quest for knowledge that pushes the boundaries of human curiosity and scientific inquiry. In the realm of medical research, the identification and characterization of disease are crucial steps in the development of effective treatments and preventative measures. This journey begins with the recognition of symptoms, progresses through diagnostic methodologies, and culminates in therapeutic interventions.

The diagnosis of disease is often the first step in a long process of understanding. It involves the identification of patterns and signs that are indicative of a particular condition. This process is not always straightforward, as diseases can present in a multitude of ways, and the overlap of symptoms can make differentiation challenging. The challenge is not only to diagnose the correct condition but also to understand the underlying mechanisms that govern its development.

In this endeavor, researchers and clinicians alike are constantly seeking new tools and approaches to enhance diagnostic accuracy. The use of advanced imaging techniques, genetic profiling, and biomarker detection are just a few examples of the methodologies that are expanding our diagnostic capabilities. However, despite these advances, there remains a need for more refined and specific tools that can accurately identify the unique characteristics of individual diseases.

The pursuit of understanding disease is not only a scientific endeavor but also a reflection of our deeper, more profound quest to comprehend the complexities of human life. It is a testament to the human capacity for curiosity and the resilience of the human spirit to confront and overcome adversity. In the face of disease, we are reminded of our vulnerability and the need for compassion, empathy, and support. The study of disease, therefore, is not just about identifying the symptoms and signs of illness; it is about harnessing the power of human knowledge to create a more equitable, compassionate, and informed society.

As we continue to explore the frontiers of medical science, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to understanding disease. This requires not only scientific rigor but also a willingness to listen, to learn, and to adapt. The journey is long, and the challenges are daunting, but it is through perseverance and collaboration that we will ultimately illuminate the shadows of ignorance and bring light to the unknown terrain of disease.
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