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DALIT THEOLOGY AFTER CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Y.T. Vinayaraj

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Y.T. Vinayaraj

Dalit Theology after Continental Philosophy

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The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan who encouraged me to do research on Dalit theology

Foreword

Yahu Vinayaraj's work brings the deepest concerns of Dalit theology into creative, constructive, and critical engagement with recent developments in hermeneutical, poststructural, ecofeminist, and postcolonial theory. With rare erudition and lived pathos, he engages in critically interactive dialog and interrogation with a variety of disciplines. Rooted in the pathos of Dalit experience and passionate about the transformation that Dalit theology can effect in the lives of those who for millennia have been treated as 'untouchables,' lacking in human dignity, this work breaks new conceptual and theoretical ground in moving the field of Dalit studies forward, never forgetting the context from which this call to liberative praxis emerges. This is undoubtedly one of the most creative pieces of writing I have seen in the last several years on Dalit issues and beyond. It has the potential to be *the* standard work when it comes to the question of the marginalized in contemporary discourse. It displays a superb level of familiarity with complex thinking, and functions to mediate this with both a sharp critique and attentive interaction. Thus, it constitutes a very significant contribution to the field of postcolonialism and religions, and related disciplines.

For me, personally, going through Vinayaraj's work and being part of the process that has led to this publication has been extremely gratifying. Before leaving my position as Professor in the Department of Theology and Ethics at the United Theological College in Bangalore, India, and coming to Philadelphia, I was part of a team that organized a consultation 'Revisiting and Resignifying the Methodology of Dalit Theology,' which was a project jointly organized by the Department of Theology

and Ethics, United Theological College, Bangalore, the Centre for Dalit/Subaltern Studies, New Delhi, and the Christian Institute for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore, at the United Theological College on the 13th and 14th of July 2007. This conference provided an opportunity to take stock of, and talk about, possible directions for the enterprise of Dalit theology, and the substantial papers coming from this were collected and published in James Massey and Indukur John Mohan Razu, eds., *Revisiting and Resignifying Methodology for Dalit Theology* (New Delhi: Centre for Dalit/Subaltern Studies and Bangalore: United Theological College, 2008). My contribution was entitled: "'Can We Now Bypass That Truth?' –'Interrogating the Methodology of Dalit Theology,'" and this has now been published in multiple venues.[1] The question that all researchers, writers, and teachers have asked themselves at some time or another weighed on me: 'Where is all this going?' 'Is anyone out there listening?' This may be an egotistical way of looking at things, but I'm sure that many of those reading this will echo my sentiments. Basically, in looking over the field of Dalit studies and Dalit theology, I offered four theses and I continue to use them in my subsequent writings and ongoing interaction with the field:

1. *Insofar as Dalit theology has systematically questioned all attempts at theological reductionism, the ongoing challenge is that of continuing to fearlessly speak the 'truth' to power, without succumbing to the dictates of mere fashion, without simplistic mimesis, without pandering to the desires of the dominant, and without overlooking the intra-Dalit dynamics. Apart from this via negativa, Dalit theology should affirm what it has always been—a way of living, of praying, of relating, of questioning, a way that is not a bypass, but a way that is itself the way of truth.*
2. *Dalit theology, which at one stage was accused of being a narrow theological 'ism', of relevance only to those who had the 'pathos' experience, or were in empathetic or sympathetic agreement with it, draws its strength from the rich and complex inter-connections with the methodological possibilities thrown up by epistemological inquiry in the spectrum of fields of knowledge. In other words, the strength of Dalit theology lies precisely in the possibility of its inter-disciplinarity, something that needs to be acknowledged and fostered.*
3. *Dalit theology is a theology that is in constant quest of defining, refining, interrogating, forming, and re-forming/reforming the identity question. Rather than merely affirming simplistic and essentialist*

myths of origin, Dalit theology constantly searches for that existential yet elusive element, identity, which offers a fertile possibility of understanding the self, leading, in turn, to the interrogation of those forms of self-understanding that, very often, have been constructed or imposed.

4. *the traditional understanding/s of religion, religious practices, the 'why' of conversion, religious 'objects,' the instrumentality of worship and the liturgy, the importance given to the mediation of priests and those believed to have access to the numinous, have to be investigated using methodological tools that recognize that so-called academic 'respectable' modes of inquiry not only have serious in-built shortcomings and overt and covert 'prejudices,' but that such modes of inquiry are deliberately skewed against the knowledge-praxis of the modes of inquiry of those marginalized communities whose very marginalization was actively promoted by such 'scholarship.'*

Among his multifarious accomplishments that we celebrate, Vinayaraj's work has succeeded in lifting the weight of wondering where all this went from my shoulders, since it's clear that these, and related questions, have indeed been taken up in ways that I never imagined or dreamt of, and opened to a wider conversation, frank discussion, open debate, and knowledgeable questioning, something that will lead to the ongoing flourishing of Dalit theory and theology in the world of subalternity, religious inquiry and public life, and for this, we all must be truly grateful.

J. Jayakiran Sebastian
Dean of the Seminary
Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia
October 2015

Note

1. J. Jayakiran Sebastian, "'Can We Now Bypass That Truth?'—Interrogating the Methodology of Dalit Theology," in James Massey and Indukur John Mohan Razu, eds., *Revisiting and Resignifying Methodology for Dalit Theology* (New Delhi: Centre for Dalit/Subaltern Studies and Bangalore: United Theological College, 2008), pp. 93–115. [Also published in *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, issue on 'Methodologies,' Vol. 25, No. 2–3 (April/July 2008), pp. 80–91; *Dharma Deepika: A South Asian Journal of Missiological Research*, Issue 29, Vol. 13,

No. 1 (Jan.–June 2009), pp. 75–83; David Emmanuel Singh and Bernard C. Farr, eds., *Christianity and Education: Shaping Christian Thinking in Context*, Regnum Studies in Global Christianity (Oxford: Regnum International, 2011), pp. 263–275; and in *Archivio Teologico Torinese*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2012), pp. 225–239]

Preface

> Each of my writings is a part of my biography.
>
> Michael Foucault (1988:16)

The question of 'othering' is part of my biography. I was born in a Dalit family and thus experienced the pain of 'othering' as part of the caste practice. The 'distant space,' whether it was to state the sense of distancing, or to affirm the otherness, created a theological crisis in me. I always had a problem with Christian theology in its liturgical discourses that offer sanctification of Dalit bodies and an ethics of love for the other. I found it problematic since it conceived of Dalit bodies (or any other body) as inherently sinful, as the casteist knowledges had been believed and propagated while offering Dalit bodies the possibility of 'salvation' through its incarnation theology. Dalit bodies, for Christian theology were a 'theological possibility' through which its theology of redemption could be offered and legitimized. I perceived it as a functional issue of theology and the church at an earlier phase. Later, I have come to understand that it is a foundational issue of Christian philosophy and theology in terms of its understanding of the dialectics between the divine flesh and human flesh. I tried to address this theological dilemma in connection with Dalit theology in my first book, *Theology of Dalit Experiences* (Thiruvalla: CSS 2000).

During my student days, I was fascinated by the Left party politics in Kerala. I soon realized that even the Left parties represent the middle class and Dalits are rendered as just ingredients of their power politics. Liberation theology became prominent in the early 1980s in connection

with the emergence of ecumenical theology in India. Liberation theology, on the other hand, proclaimed its solidarity with Dalit bodies. Dalit bodies found their locations in the liberation struggles within, and outside of, the churches. Liberation struggles envisaged progressive movements for Dalits and visualized separate reserved spaces for Dalits within the church and society. Those identitarian spaces reversely legitimized the 'othered space' of Dalits. Thus the process of challenging the 'othering' later became affirmed spaces of otherness. In liberation activities, every assertion of identity, in turn, becomes affirmation of caste. The basic question before me was how to reject the notion of 'othering' embedded in caste knowledge and practice within and outside of the church? It was out of this question that I wrote my last book *Re-visiting the Other: Discourses on Postmodern Theology* (Thiruvalla: CSS 2011).

My interrogations continue. What does God have to do with the question of othering? God has been used in Christian philosophy and theology to reimagine the other. God as the 'transcendent Other' envisaged a qualitative distance between God and the creation in the classical period. In the modern period, this qualitative difference is addressed in terms of a dialectical process. Liberation methodologies positioned the poor in the place of the 'marginalized other' through whom the 'transcendent God' is revealed or unveiled. For liberation models, the margin is eschatological. Postmodern theology, as a critique of humanisms and immanentist philosophies, positioned itself in a radical otherness of God who comes to us as the face of the other as a 'Gift' or 'bedazzlement.' Lucky other! The other has been elevated to divine, or the divine has been brought to the dirt of the world. Will this 'rhetoric of ascent or descent' be a sufficient answer for the immediate context of *necropolitics* (Achille Mbembe defines it as 'the neo-capitalist political process of the material destruction of human bodies and populations') in the 'Third World'? What does it have to offer to the *agonistic politics* (Mark Lewis Taylor defines it as 'socially imposed sufferings on the marginalized') of Dalits in India who still endure the crucial experience of 'othering' and banishment in the name of their 'derogatory origin'?

In Dalit knowledges, God or divine, is not a 'transcendent Other'; rather, it is an embodied, enmattered, and multiple experience. Questioning the elitist Indian philosophical traditions of both monism and dualism, Dalit knowledges emerged as a materialist philosophy that deny God as a 'transcendent Other.' Indian materialist philosophies like *Lokayata/Carvaka* spoke about life which is materially contended and

internally transformative. Indian Christian Theology desperately needs an 'immanent turn' in order to address the 'poetics of the thingness of the tortured bodies' (Achille Mbembe) and the 'theopolitic' (Catherine Keller) of their 'revivifying practices' (Judith Butler) in the Indian social body. Is it possible for Dalit theology to erupt into that 'theopolitical turn' in Indian Christian Theology and the Christian philosophy at large based on the early Indian 'indigenous' materialist philosophies like *Lokayata* which have no perceptions of transcendence?

Arvind P. Nirmal, the pioneer of Dalit theology, envisioned this even in the early 1990s. According to Nirmal, Indian Christian theology has to look into the forgotten materialist philosophy of *Lokayata* in order to envisage its future and relevance in the changing socio-political and religious Indian context (Nirmal 1991:106). This study is a humble effort to listen to this particular vision and to envisage a radical turn in Indian Christian theology—a turn towards immanence. The turn towards immanence enables Christian theology to become political and polydoxical (Keller and Schneider 2010), as it accepts the embodied divinity of the tortured bodies in the post-colonial world. Focusing on the question of the political becoming of the Dalit body, this volume tries to re-locate Dalit theology as an immanent theology and to re-position Indian Christian theology in a postcolonial epistemological context.

Acknowledgements

This book is formed out of my doctoral dissertation, which I wrote and defended at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) in March 2014. I am deeply indebted to my research committee consisting of Catherine Keller, John J. Thatamanil, Linda Thomas, Lea Schweitz, and my advisor Vitor Westhelle for their valuable reflections and comments. It was Vitor Westhelle who played a creative role in making my work more relevant and significant. I must offer a special word of thanks to Catherine Keller for her encouragement through personal interactions and writings. I thank the LSTC community, President James Niemen, Dean of Studies Esther Menn, the Director of Advanced Studies Jose Rodrigues, professors Michel Shelly, Peter Vedanayagamony, Mark Swanson, and Barbara Rossing who helped me immensely to complete the research program within the stipulated time. The library staff at LSTC and the University of Chicago also deserve appreciations for their support.

I am grateful to Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan who continuously reminded me that Dalit theology was the focus of my research and who encouraged me to actualize a doctoral study on Dalit theology in an appropriate research center. I dedicate this book to Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma without whom my research would never have been possible. I acknowledge the support given by the friends, well-wishers, the Mar Thoma bishops and my church members in North America to complete my program on time. Several friends and well-wishers read my manuscript and offered helpful critical comments. They include: George Zachariah, Sarosh Koshy, Jonathan Pimental, Adam Brown, Rob Worley. I am indebted to my gurus, Jacob Thomas T, K. G. Pothen, and Sunny George, who instilled in me

the passion to study theology. I thank my colleagues and student friends at Dharma Jyoti Vidya Peeth, Faridabad who encouraged me to publish it. I am grateful to Kiran Sebastian and Joseph Duggan, the series editors for recommending this work to be published by Palgrave Macmillan. Last but not least, I thank my parents A. R. Yehu and Thabeetha, my life partner Smitha and my children Emil and Alen, who have always been with me in my studies, upholding me with their constant love, care, and prayer.

Contents

1 Introduction 1
The Problem of God and the Other in Continental Philosophy 3
Spivak and the 'Third World Turn' in Continental Philosophy 5
De-othering God: Dalit Theology After Continental Philosophy 7
Outline of this Volume 9

2 God as the 'Transcendent Other': A Critical Engagement with 'The Theological Turn' 13
Levinas and the 'Transcendent Other' 15
Derrida and le tout autre 19
Jean Luc-Marion and the 'Saturated Other' 24
Conclusion 29

3 Spivak and the 'Subordinated Other': The "Third World Turn" in Continental Philosophy 37
The Spivakian Epistemological Itinerary 39
Subalternity 43
Marginality 46
Planetarity 48
'Subordinated Other' as the Teacher 50
Religion after Spivak 52
Subalternity and Indegeneity: A Critical Engagement with Spivak 53
Conclusion 55

4 God, Human, and Creation: Spivak and Postcolonial Theologies 63
Spivak, Theology and Theopolitics 64
Spivak and Postcolonial Theologies 66
Postcolonial Theologies of God 69
Postcolonial Theological Anthropologies 73
Postcolonial Theologies of Creation 77
Conclusion 81

5 De-othering God: Dalit Theology After Continental Philosophy 87
Defining Dalit as a Materialist Category 89
'Denied Transcendence': The Dalit Body and the Caste Epistemology 91
'Offered Transcendence': The Dalit Body and the Christian Theology 92
Dalit Theology and Liberation Theology: M. M. Thomas and Sathianathan Clarke 93
Absence of Transcendence: Dalit Epistemology After Continental Philosophy 99
Lokayata/Carvaka*: Grounding Dalit Epistemology in the Materialist Philosophical Tradition* 103
Toward a Dalit Theology of De-othering God 106
Dalit Theology as a Radical Political Theology of Immanence 110
Conclusion 112

6 Conclusion 121

Bibliography 127

Index 137

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Abstract The introduction explains the hypothesis of the study. The hypothesis of this study stems from three specific questions: (1) Do the Continental philosophies of the 'transcendent Other' attend to the *agonistic politics* of the 'other others' in the 'Third World'? (2) How do the Spivakian notions of 'detranscendentalized sacred' and the 'subordinated other' (subaltern) initiate a 'postcolonial turn' in the Continental philosophies of God and the other and how does Spivak address the question of the postcoloniality of subaltern bodies? (3) What would be a Dalit theology of God and body in this post-Continental context of 'turning towards the political and the plane of immanence'?

Keywords Continental philosophy • Post-metaphysical God • Hypertranscendence • Detranscendentalized sacred • Lokayata • Necropolitics • Agonistic politics • Subordinated other • Embodied transcendence • Materialist epistemologies • Enmattered transcendence

> If God is immaterial, God doesn't matter.
>
> Catherine Keller[1]

A discussion about God and the other elucidates the inherent dialecticality of transcendence and immanence in Christian Theology. Christian Theology, as it signifies Western philosophical heritage, has always had

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a 'transcendentalist' theological sense from Plato to Kant and Hegel. Modern metaphysics and ontology substantiated a totalitarian Being/God. The other in modern Western philosophy was considered as a derivative of the Being/God and the alterity of the other was denied. Continental philosophy, as reflecting post-Enlightenment Western thought, offered a critique of modern metaphysics and ontology and initiated the 'postmodern turn'. However, even the post-metaphysical God in the postmodern era—the 'God after the death of God'—was not able to deny the inherent 'transcendentalism' of the Western imaginary.

The post-Continental philosophers like Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Luc Nancy, Judith Butler, and so on envisage a 'radical turn' towards the 'political' and 'immanence' and interrogate the contemporary Continental philosophies of 'hypertranscendence' (Caputo and Scanlon, 2010) for being inadequate and impotent to attend to the question of *bare life*—people live outside of the territory of laws of immigration, nationality and citizenship, which reconfigures the notions of state, law and justice.[2] Locating myself in this post-Continental philosophical turn towards the immanence and political, and critically engaging with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who initiates a 'postcolonial turn' in the Continental philosophy through her notions of 'detranscendentalized sacred' and the 'subordinated other' (subaltern), this book explores the possibility of reformulating the Dalit theology of God based on the Indian materialistic philosophical tradition—*Lokayata* as it takes on the 'transcendentalism' of Christian philosophy and theology.

The hypothesis of this study stems from three specific questions: (1) Do the Continental philosophies of the 'transcendent Other' attend to the *necropolitics*(Achille Mbembe defines it the material destruction of human bodies and populations in the postcolonial context) and the *agonistic politics* (Mark Lewis Taylor refers to the struggles that entail human pain and suffering in the postcolonial context) of the 'other others' in the 'Third World'?[3] (2) How do the Spivakian notions of 'detranscendentalized sacred' and the 'subordinated other' (subaltern) initiate a 'postcolonial turn' in the Continental philosophies of God and the other, and how does she address the question of the postcoloniality of subaltern bodies? (3) What would be a Dalit theology of God and body in this post-Continental context of 'turning towards the political and the plane of immanence'?

The Problem of God and the Other in Continental Philosophy

The term 'Continental philosophy' is often used to a describe philosophy that emerged in post-World War II European thought. It is generally defined as the outcome of a series of critical responses to the dominant currents of modern European philosophy, and in particular, the Enlightenment, which includes Hegelian idealism, Marxism, the 'critical theory' of the Frankfurt School, existentialism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, 'post'-postmodernism, and some forms of feminisms.[4] As David West and Simon Critchely discuss, the term Continental philosophy is not a monolithic or fixed category that de-limits itself in any particular philosophical thought or a specific continent in a geographical sense. For Critchely, 'it is a highly eclectic and disparate series of intellectual currents that could hardly be said to amount to a unified tradition.'[5] Critchely distinguishes Continental philosophy from Analytic philosophy even though they share a common central European ancestry. However, following a series of studies on contemporary Western philosophical thought like J. Aaron Simmons' *God and the Other: Ethics and Politics after the Theological Turn* (2011), this volume uses this term Continental philosophy to denote the 'postmodern turn' in Western philosophical thought both in deconstructive and phenomenological veins.[6]

The 'postmodern turn' in the Western philosophical tradition emerged out of the contentions with modern metaphysics and ontology. In modern metaphysics, Descartes held the view that God exists as an innate 'infinitist thought' available to human mind and reason. Kant, on the other hand, offered a revision to the Cartesian philosophy and rehabilitated God as the universal moral idea that regulates all human experiences within the extension of phenomenon. Whereas Hegel held the view that God exists as an absolute self-conscious spirit (*Geist*) within the dialecticality of human consciousness. Frederic Nietzsche denied this notion of God who stands as the ground of all totalitarian claims of truth. By arguing for the 'death of God,' he rejected the modern idea of God as the universal center of all human values and life. In Nietzscheism, God as 'the super Being,' 'the absolute Truth,' and the 'absolute Goodness' came to an end. It was a clear rejection of the monotheistic, monadic, and unifying modern Western notion of God beginning from Descartes, through Kant to Hegel.

Correlated to the notion of Being/God in modern metaphysics, 'the other' is also integrated within the totality. For Descartes 'the other' is nothing but an object of his thinking. 'The other' is denied its difference in the totalitarian philosophies of Kant and Hegel. In the universalizing and unifying Kantian approach, 'the other' is only taken into consideration in a negative way. Gabrielle Hiltmann calls the Kantian approach a monistic and universal rationalist logic, which excludes the positive recognition of the other's individuality.[7] In the Hegelian thesis of negation, which ultimately leads to wholeness, the many belong to the One. Taking a cue from Hegelian negative dialectics, the Frankfurt School held the view that it is in this negative dialectics—that the binarism between sacred and secular, theory and theology, thinking and doing are reimagined and reconciled.[8]

On the other hand, Nietzsche's critique of Oneness opened the ground for multiplicity and difference. The Heideggerian philosophy of ontological difference accentuated the process of dismantling the Western idea of totality. Heidegger's de-ontological God and the other were brought to the ethico-political realm by the philosophers of the 'new phenomenology' or 'the theological turn': Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Marion and so on, who offered the irreducible singularity of God/Other in contrast to the modern Western theistic, monistic, totalitarian philosophy of God. God as the 'transcendent Other' shifts radically from the Western onto-theology and attends to the postmodern question of the Other as a parallel to it. Of course, the Other in the postmodern context denies any kind of othering and locates itself in a 'location' of alterity and irreducible singularity.

However, following some of the critical engagements with the Continental philosophies of God and the other, this volume explores whether these postmodern philosophies are just repetitions or re-locations within the Western imaginaries of God, being, and the other.[9] It further tries to ask whether these philosophies of the constitutive otherness of God and the other can account for the 'lived experiences' of the 'othered selves,' or the 'concrete others' in the 'other worlds'? I argue here that the postmodern apologetics of God and the other are still tied to the Western epistemological trajectories of being, other, and God, and thus they become inadequate in the context of the *agonistic politics* and the *necropolitics* of the 'other others' who hesitate to be accommodated within the category—'the transcendent Other.'

Spivak and the 'Third World Turn' in Continental Philosophy

The indeterminacy and contingency of God and the other in Continental philosophy has evoked varieties of epistemological, philosophical, and theological responses within and outside of the Continental tradition. 'Post-Continental philosophy,' otherwise known as the 'turn towards immanence,' offers a sharp criticism against the 'hypertranscendence' of the postmodern Continental philosophy. Thinkers like Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou, Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Ranciere, Judith Butler, Michel Henry, Isabelle Stengers, Jean Luc-Nancy, and Slavoj Zizek take a critical philosophical stand within the contemporary Continental philosophy and try to interrogate the inadequacy of the transcendentalism of Western philosophy to account for the political oppression against the 'repressed others' in the 'other worlds'. For Alain Badiou, 'the impossibility' of the philosophy as it is proposed by Derrida is nothing but a 'conceit' and a 'dangerous deficiency' with regard to the politically repressed others.[10] Deleuze connects the notion of 'transcendent' with its political correlate—Sovereign: the absolute legislator. Thus, Deleuze constantly calls to 'hunt down transcendence.'[11] Because of this radical political inclination, David West calls post-Continental philosophy 'the return towards of the political.'[12]

On the other hand, Julia Kristeva, Luis Irigaray, Judith Butler, and Le Doeuff criticize the postmodern thinking of God, being, and other in which the question of gender is silenced. These feminist thinkers offer a new philosophical engagement with the forgotten, repressed, and silenced within Continental philosophical traditions. Irigaray argues that the Continental philosophical God is a 'radically estranged God' and he is 'an unknowable entity of the beyond.'[13] Irigaray proposes a 'transcendence between us' through which she offers an intersubjective, interpersonal, and embodied relationality.[14] Judith Butler argues that the 'transcendentalism' of Continental philosophy is apolitical in concrete situations of violence, violation, and discrimination in the 'other worlds'.[15] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, on the other hand, critically engages both Continental and post-Continental philosophies of transcendence and immanence based on a postcolonial deconstructive feminist theoretical framework, and she discloses a 'Third World turn' in the post-Continental philosophical tradition.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak addresses the question of God and the other, or the transcendence and immanence, by interacting with the

theory of postcoloniality in the post-Continental philosophical tradition. Engaging critically with Edward Said, she offers a postcolonial deconstructive feminist theory in order to problematize the location of the 'colonized other.' Spivak raises ethical concerns over the representation of the subaltern—the 'subordinated other'—by Western intellectuals (including the poststructuralist Western feminists like Irigaray and Kristeva), in order to expose the politics of the program of 'othering' and 'worlding' as she argues, 'in which colonialism is disguised in culture, literature, historiographies and the benevolent economic programs of empowerment in the context of globalization.'[16]

According to Spivak, in every representation of the subaltern—'the subordinated other'—in the colonial or postcolonial textualities, embodies a colonial desire to construct an essential other. Spivak argues that even the transcendentalist philosophies of God and the other do not transcend the question of 'worlding' or 'colonizing.' The Spivakian notion of subalternity addresses this dilemma in the Continental philosophy of God and the other and signifies a 'postcolonial turn' for theology and politics in a post-Continental theological context.

The Spivakian notion of the subaltern—'the subordinated other,'—theoretically speaking, locates itself in contradiction to the 'transcendent Other' of the Continental philosophy, which is not capable of transcending its program of 'worlding' and 'othering.' In order to explain the fecundity of her notion of 'subordinated other,' Spivak offers a radical discussion on *marginality* as it de-centers the center and de-marginalizes the margin. Margin becomes a rhetorical space of *postcoloniality* where the 'subordinated other' finds itself in a de-essentialized/non-identitarian social position. Alluding to Derrida, Spivak calls it 'quite-other.' *Subalternity*, for Spivak, is a process of 'deconstructive embrace' that takes us to a *theo-politic*, which goes beyond the dialectics between God and the other, transcendence and immanence, and self and the other.

Spivak alludes to a 'detranscendentalized sacred,' a de-ontological and post-metaphysical notion of God that brings the notions of transcendence and immanence, or the self and the other, into a 'non-dualist twoness' informed by Indian philosophical traditions. Spivak invents the notion of *planetarity* through which she detranscendentalizes God and de-others subaltern subjectivity. Appropriating the Spivakian philosophy of God and the 'subordinated other,' contemporary postcolonial/Ecofeminist theologians like Kwok Pui-lan, Mayra Rivera, and Catherine Keller have initiated

various theological discourses on *relational*, *enmattered*, *and embodied transcendence* that signify indigenous epistemologies and theologies. Engaging with some of those postcolonial theologies of God, human and creation, this study offers a constructive proposal for a contemporary Dalit theology of God that affirms the *embodied transcendence* of the Dalit body based on *Lokayata*—the materialist philosophical tradition in India.

De-othering God: Dalit Theology After Continental Philosophy

The category—Dalit—has an antagonistic relationship with God. Gopal Guru, a Dalit academician in India, defines Dalit as a materialist category, which denies any metaphysical or God-centered connotation like Gandhi's term—'Harijan' (the children of God).[17] According to the Indian Vedic philosophy, the Dalit body exists alien to the body of God.[18] The Vedic philosophy denied 'sacrality' to the Dalit body and rendered it as 'untouchable.' Epistemologically speaking, Dalit is an antagonistic category for God. Thus, it is materiality of body that makes God matter to Dalits. If God is immaterial, God doesn't matter for Dalits.

Dalit theology and epistemology have always been a 'contested knowledge' for all philosophies and theologies that try to define God as an ultimate reality that legitimizes the asymmetrical relationship between God and the world, matter and the spirit, soul and body, and self and the other. To overcome the monist/non-dualist philosophies that proposed a fake univocity of God and the creation, Dalit theology and epistemology tried to engage with various philosophical traditions, such as *Lokayata* (Indian materialist philosophy) and other 'heterodox' philosophies (Buddhism, Jainism and so on) in order to validate the materiality of the body and its politics. Christian philosophy reached the Dalit lifeworld in the epistemological context of colonial modernity and offered transcendence to Dalit bodies through its 'missionized theology.' The 'missionized theology' was based on the notions of a 'transcendent God' and a 'missiological Other.'

There is an epistemological dilemma in the approaches to the Dalit body. The 'orthodox' philosophical tradition that was founded on the 'transcendentalist' epistemology denied sacrality to the Dalit body. On the other hand, Christian theologies offered transcendence to Dalit bodies through their sacramental theologies. Dalit theology, as a liberation

theology, locates itself in an internal epistemological dilemma with regard to the Dalit body. While Dalit theology follows the liberation paradigm of the 'offered transcendence,' Dalit epistemology, as it locates itself in the *Lokayata* tradition, does not accord any logic of transcendence to the conception of Dalit bodies. Neither the elitist early Indian Christian theologies, nor the liberation theologies, ever considered the epistemological dilemma embodied in Dalit theology in terms of its absence, or negation, of transcendence with regard to Dalit bodies.

Here I would like to mention one significant work on immanent transcendence formulated out of the comparative study of Sankara and Tillich by John J. Thatamanil. Sankara belongs to the 'orthodox school' of Indian philosophical tradition. It is a significant work in terms of its novel attempt to compare Indian and Western philosophies of God. Based on the non-dualistic Hindu tradition, and its interface with the Tillichian notion of God as 'ground of being,' Thatamanil argues that, 'Gone is a properly infinite God; what remains is a deity subject to the categories of space, time, causality, and substance.'[19] As a comparative study, this work is valid and significant. The only inadequacy with this thesis is that it does not attend to the epistemological formulations of the Indian 'orthodox philosophies' over and against the 'heterodox' philosophical traditions like *Lokayata*. As an episteme, Sankara's philosophy locates itself in the pro-caste epistemology that defines the Dalit body as untouchable and, in turn, invalidates the materialistic epistemologies in India.

The primary task of this study is to address the dilemma in Dalit theology with regard to the issue of the 'denied' and the 'offered transcendence' of the Dalit body and re-locate the Dalit theology of God in its own materialist epistemological framework of embodied transcendence. In order to reimagine Dalit theology in a post-Continental philosophical context, this study offers a critical intersticing between Dalit epistemology and the Continental philosophies, including postcolonialism. Taking my cue from contemporary postcolonial/Ecofeminist theologies that envisage an *enmattered transcendence* in their critical engagements with Spivak, and at the same time offering a critique of the Spivakian neglect of the indigenous epistemologies, this study offers a constructive proposal for a contemporary Dalit Theology of God. I will argue that Dalit theology, as it emerges from the materialist philosophy of non-transcendence, offers a political theology of an immanent God or de-othering God, and thus relocates itself in a post-Continental philosophical context.

Outline of this Volume

The work that follows is divided into four chapters. The second chapter analyzes the notion of God as the 'transcendent Other' as it is explained in Continental philosophy. In order to de-limit and to focus, I analyze three French phenomenologists: Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Luc Marion, whose philosophical school is known as the ' theological turn.' I argue that their philosophy of the 'transcendent Other' maintains an asymmetric relationship with immanence and thus becomes inadequate in the context of the *agonistic politics* of the 'concrete others' in the postcolonial world.

In the third chapter, I argue for a 'Third World Turn' in the Continental philosophy of God and the other by analyzing the Spivakian theory of *subalternity* (the subordinated other). I explain the Spivakian contentions with the postmodern/poststructural assumptions of the 'colonized other' while appropriating it with her notions of *marginality* and *planetarity*. In *planetarity* and in the notion of 'detranscendentalized sacred,' she alludes to a de-ontological God and a de-othered subjectivity. *Learning to learn from the subaltern* as her pedagogy is discussed in order to envisage a postcolonial deconstructive (non)method for contemporary theology and philosophy.

In Chap. 4, I try to engage with contemporary postcolonial and Ecofeminist theologians who interact with the Continental (and the post-Continental) philosophies of God and the other signifying the Spivakian theoretical notions of *subalternity*, *marginality* and *planetarity*. By engaging with Mayra Rivera, Catherine Keller, W. Anne Joh, Kwok Pui-lan, Vitor Westhelle, and Whitney Bauman, this chapter deals with the postcolonial theologies of God, Human, and Creation and explains how they interrogate the Continental philosophies. By bringing in responses from indigenous theologians, this section attempts to address the flaws in the Spivakian philosophy, specifically on the issue of the interstice between indegeneity and subalternity.

The fifth chapter offers a constructive proposal for a Dalit theology of an immanent God or de-othering God as it emerges out of a materialist epistemology. Engaging with the post-Continental philosophers of immanence, such as Gilles Deleuze, Giorgio Agamben, Catherine Malabou, and Jean-Luc Nancy, this chapter explores the possibility of proposing a Dalit theology of an immanent God—a God free of transcendence. Of course, the fundamental question before us is: How can there be a Dalit theology

of God without having any Christian philosophical baggage of transcendentalism? The study ends up with a clarion call for the Indian Christian Theology to take a turn towards immanence, which is political and polydoxical in content.

While the first part of this thesis is mainly concerned with problematizing Continental philosophies of God and the other, the second part attempts to establish Dalit theology as a 'radical political theology of immanence' in the post-Continental philosophical context. At the outset, this study intends to interstice between philosophy, theology, and political theory and offers a dialogue between Indian Christian theology and the so-called 'Classical' Christian Theology. It takes a methodological tour through liberation, feminist, eco-feminist, post structural, postmodern and postcolonial theologies and assumes a 'dancing methodology,' which locates itself in the political aspirations of the disenfranchised.

Notes

1. Catherine Keller, "The Flesh of God: A Metaphor in the Wild," in *Theology That Matters*: *Ecology*, *Economy*, *and God*, ed. Darby Kathleen Ray (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 91–107 at 91.
2. Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
3. Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, in *Public Culture* 15 no. 1 (2003): 11–40. Mark Lewis Taylor, *The Theological and The Political*, *On the Weight of the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011). Bo-MyungSeo calls the other of the West as "othered selves." See, Bo-MyungSeo, *A Critique of Western Theological Anthropology*: *Understanding Human Beings in a Third World Context* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005). The categories like 'othered selves,' and 'other others' are used here as synonyms. 'Other worlds' signifies the non-European worlds.
4. Here I acknowledge the contributions of Wittgenstein, Bergson, Heidegger, Kojeve and so on who tried to engage with the Enlightenment in the post-World War I period. For a detailed study on Continental philosophy, see David West, *Continental Philosophy*: *An Introduction* (UK & USA: Polity, 2010), 3–4.
5. Simon Critchley, "What is Continental Philosophy?" *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 5 no. 3: 350; Simon Critchely, *Continental Philosophy*: *A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 14.

6. J Aaron Simmons, *God and the Other: Ethics and Politics after the Theological Turn* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 2. Other than David West's *Continental Philosophy: An Introduction* and Simon Critchely's above sited books, another significant work that defines postmodern turn as the contemporary Continental philosophy is Robert Piercey's *The Crisis in Continental Philosophy: History, Truth and the Hegelian Legacy* (NY & London: Continuum, 2009).
7. Gabrielle Hiltmann, "Introduction: Accounting for the Other: Towards an Ethics of Thinking," in *The Other: Feminist reflections in Ethics*," ed. Helen Fielding et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1–20 at 1.
8. Michel R. Ott, 'The Notion of the Totally: "Other" and its Consequence in the Critical Theory of Religion and the Rational Choice Theory of Religion' in *Marx, Critical Theory, and Religion, A Critique of Rational Choice* edited by warren S. Goldstein (Boston: Brill, 2006), 143.
9. Enrique Dussel and Mayra Rivera offer a critical engagement with the Continental philosophies of God and the other from the Latin American context (Enrique Dussel, "The World-system': Europe as 'Center' and Its 'Periphery' Beyond Euro centrism," in *Beyond Philosophy: Ethics, History, Marxism, and Liberation Theology*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003; Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007); African philosophers like Robert Bernasconi and Emmanuel ChakwudiEze engage with the Continental philosophical tradition and differentiate the incommensurability between Continental philosophy and African philosophy; see Emmanuel ChaukwudiEze, ed., *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader* (USA & UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997). Black feminists/womanists like Maria del Guadalupe Davidson, Kathryn T. Gines and Donna-Dale L. Marcano offer a critical appropriation of the continental philosophy and envisages a "transracial sisterhood" in the contemporary era of post feminism. See Maria del Guadalupe Davidson et al., *Black Feminism and Continental Philosophy* (New York: Suny Press, 2010.
10. Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy: Followed by Two Essays*: '*the (Re)Turn of Philosophy Itself and* '*Definition of Philosophy*', trans. N. Madarasz. New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 30–31.
11. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), 45.
12. David West, *Continental Philosophy*, 245.
13. Luce Irigaray, *Key Writings* (London: Continuum, 2004), 171–172.
14. AnnemieHalsema, "Luce Irigaray's Transcendence as Alterity," in *Culture and Transcendence: A Typology of Transcendence*, ed. Wessel Stoker & W. L. van der Merwe (Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012), 133.

15. Judith Butler, *Parting Ways, Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2012).
16. 'Othering' is a term that Spivak derived from the whole corpus of texts by Hegel, Lacan, and Sartre which denotes the ideological process that isolates people who are seen as different/variant/abnormal from the norm of the colonizers. According to Spivak, 'othering' is the way in which imperial discourse creates colonized, subaltern subjects. Spivak's concept of 'worlding,' derived from Heidegger, is closely related to the dynamics of "othering" in colonial discussion. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 211–212.
17. 'Harijan' has a wrong connotation as it signifies to the 'Devadasi system' (temple prostitution) and calling Dalits as the 'Children of God' denotes them as the illegitimate children. For Gandhi, it was a benevolent title for Dalits. For a detailed study of the category Dalit see, Gopal Guru, "Understanding the Category Dalit," in *Atrophy in Dalit Politics*, Gopal Guru, ed. (Mumbai: VikasAdhyayan Kendra, 2005), 63–75 at 63.
18. According to the *PurushaSukta* in Rig Veda, the elite class *Bhrahmana* was born out of the mouth of God, the *Rajanya*—the warrior class came out of the arms of God, the *Vaisya*-the business class came from the things of God and the *Sudra*-the working class was born out of His feet. In this *varnasrama dharma* (four fold caste system) Dalits exist out of the body of God. Rig Veda, 1981: XXC, 126.
19. John J. Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine and the Human Predicament: God, Creation, and the Human Predicament, An East-West Conversation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 19.

CHAPTER 2

God as the 'Transcendent Other': A Critical Engagement with 'The Theological Turn'

Abstract This chapter analyzes the notion of God as the 'transcendent Other' as explained in Continental philosophy. In order to de-limit and to focus, three French phenomenologists are analyzed: Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Luc Marion, whose philosophical school is known as the 'theological turn.' In this chapter, it is argued that their philosophy of the 'transcendent Other' maintains an asymmetric relationship with immanence and thus becomes inadequate in the context of the *agonistic politics* of the 'concrete others' in the postcolonial world.

Keywords Theological turn • Hypertranscendence • Transcendent Other • Onto-theology • Continental philosophy • Radical other • Indeterminacy • Infinity • Totality • Alter ego • Polydoxy

> 'The face of the other evokes responsibility for the self; but the other is dying!'
>
> Judith Butler[1]

The 'theological turn' in Continental philosophy specifically refers to the French thinkers in the second half of the twentieth century who were working in the wake of Husserl (or Heidegger). It was the French philosopher Dominique Janicaud who attributed the 'postmodern turn' of

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Continental philosophy to a 'theological turn.'[2] Janicaud held the view that it was this turn by theologians that hijacked the philosophical enterprise. According to Janicaud, this new turn in Western phenomenology was inaugurated by Emmanuel Levinas, who published the ground breaking book *Totality and Infinity* in 1961 and Michel Henry, who published *The Essence of Manifestation* in 1963, and it was continued by Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Yves Lacoste, Jean-Louis Chretien, and Jacques Derrida. This school of thought gained recognition in America through postmodern thinkers like Merold Westphal, John Caputo, Jeffrey Bloechl, and Hent de Vries. The 'theological turn' in Continental philosophy signifies a 'postmodern turn' in Western philosophy through which the radical otherness of God and the other is affirmed.

John D. Caputo and Michael Scanlon, who identify this postmodern response to the classic idea of transcendence in European thought as 'hypertranscendence,' define it as one that invokes the notion of the 'Wholly Other.'[3] Here, the traditional idea of transcendence is criticized for not being transcendent enough since it fails to escape the immanence of being. According to Christiana M. Gschwandtner, these are the 'postmodern apologetics' that 'articulate the coherence and value of religious experience and belief in God in the post-Nietzschean era.'[4] For Hent de Vries it is a 'religious turn,' where religion becomes the answer to philosophical dilemmas.[5] This chapter analyzes the philosophers of 'hypertranscendence,' especially Levinas, Derrida, and Marion, as they offer a comprehensive picture of the Continental philosophy of God and the other.[6]

As a critical engagement with the Nietzschean death of God theory, the philosophers of 'hypertranscendence' offered a theology of a possible God who is the 'transcendent Other.' Other in this philosophical project eludes any kind of objectification and comprehension. Here, the metaphysics and the ontology that accommodate both being and the other in totality are denied. The other assumes the location of infinity. God as the 'transcendent Other' invokes us to see the divine 'height' at the face of the other. The constitutive otherness of God and the other invokes criticisms for being absolute and abstract. Analyzing some of these criticisms from post-Continental philosophers, this chapter interrogates the postmodern philosophies of God and the other for being inadequate in the context of political oppression, violence and violations against the 'repressed others' who hesitate to be accommodated within the category—'the transcendent Other.'

Levinas and the 'Transcendent Other'

Emmanuel Levinas was a Jewish philosopher who later became one of the prominent 'philosophers of otherness.' Many writers have opined that it was his experiences of victimization under totalitarian Nazism that influenced him to become a philosopher of the radical other.[7] In a critique of Husserl, Levinas raises the question of transcendence in order to challenge the Western monistic philosophy that rendered the object or the other as comprehensible to the subject. Alluding to Platonic categories, such as 'the same' (*to auton*) and the other (*to hetron*) that cannot be derived from each other, Levinas tries to expose the 'monism' (or totality) in the Western philosophical tradition. Levinas translates these categories into French and thus uses *la Meme* and *l' Autre*. For Levinas, the human other (*l'autrui*) is the transcendent Other/the absolute Other (*Tout Autre*). By dismantling the absolute (Western) subject and challenging the ontology and metaphysics of (Western) philosophy, Levinas locates himself in a post-metaphysical and de-ontological school of thought within the contemporary Continental philosophical tradition.

It is in his major work, *Totality and Infinity*, first published in 1961, when Levinas outlines his disagreements with the Western philosophical trajectory of 'totality.'[8] According to Levinas, Western philosophy has always been concerned with 'totality' (he calls it 'ontology') in which the 'alterity' of the other is comprehended and manipulated. Along with Kierkegaard and Franz Rosenzweig, Levinas criticizes the Hegelian system, because it reduces reality to nothing more than an outward manifestation of a single principle, *Geist*, or Mind. Levinas calls this 'Hegelian totality.'[9] Levinas contends that this attitude can also be seen in the phenomenological tradition. The Levinasian critique of Husserl is that the other is being objectified and reduced to a version of myself (alter ego) and thus the other loses its alterity (otherness) and difference.

Levinas raises the same objection against the Heideggerian philosophy of *Dasein* (being-in-the world). Heideggerian *Dasein*, as a critique of Husserlian phenomenology, concludes that Being (the Supreme Being but not God) and being (existing being) always already engaged in time and history. Levinas is of the opinion that the Heideggerian Being is always chained to itself.[10] For Levinas, Heidegger's Being is still within the processing of sameness and does not go beyond the question of totality. Levinas highlights the totalitarian content of the Heideggerian ontology in Heidegger's inclination towards National Socialism and the politics of

Nazism. Levinas wanted to dismantle this totality and to affirm the alterity and the irreducibility of the other.

In order to overcome the totalitarian philosophy of the Western tradition, Levinas offers a 'counter intentionality'—an intentionality that proceeds from 'the other' toward 'me' instead of the reverse. As Christina M. Gschwandtner explains, this 'counter intentionality' makes us envisioned and interrupted by the other instead of treating the other as an object of my gaze.[11] Contra Husserl, the Levinasian other is not the product of the alter ego, or a 'phenomenological modification of myself.' Contra Heidegger, the Levinasian other is not the manifestation of the more comprehensive Being. Rather, the other is beyond comprehension and reducibility. The other is beyond being or 'Otherwise than Being.' Other comes to mean 'enigma' that disturbs me.[12] For Levinas, the other is a spark of transcendence, an 'enigma' that cuts through consciousness without appearing; beyond being; an end in itself and never a means to the contemplation of Being as such. Unlike the Derridean *tout autre*, the Levinasian other is not a sheer nothingness, but a human other.

'The other' comes to 'me,' Levinas claims, as a 'face.' The face of the other comes to me with a voice: 'thou shall not kill!' The face speaks from the 'height': 'the other' is infinitely above and prior to 'me.' At the same time, this voice of the other is so vulnerable and weak as in the case of 'the widow, the orphan, and the stranger.' 'From my part,' Levinas says, 'every attempt to establish an obligatory relationship with these vulnerable others will be assimilative.' Then the response must come from the other. Here 'I' is on the responsive side. The response of the 'I' is nothing but 'self-emptying' on behalf of the other. It is a call to make ourselves vulnerable for the other. The other demands our *kenosis*. As Levinas commends: 'sharing the last piece of bread out of one's own mouth.'[13]

The other comes to me as an interruption. By interrupting me and awakening my responsibility, the other becomes independent. By substituting 'myself' for the other, 'I′ become hostage of the other. For Levinas, the relationship between I and the other is always an asymmetric one. Care for the other is so demanding sometimes. It may demand suffering or even death for me. The responsibility for the other demands an unconditional suffering. According to Levinas, the ethicality of this relationship depends on unconditionality and infinite generosity towards the other. In short, for Levinas, the relationship between the self and the other is nothing but ethical, of course, beyond ethics.

Levinas makes use of the category—God in order to justify the alterity of the human face. The Levinasian human other is beyond the other. Levinas says, it is in the face of the other, 'I' see the glimpses of God. It is God's absolute transcendence that turns into my responsibility for the other (*autrui*). Levinas affirms that God is a word that directs us to the other.[14] God is the one who places us in service to the other. Levinas defines God, or the divine, as 'a trace of *illeity*' (in French third person singular *Il* means He). For him, God is an absolute absence. Levinas describes it as the 'origin' of the 'face'—the alterity of the other. Here Levinas goes beyond the 'onto-theo-logical' understanding of God and makes space for a 'transcendental God' who is 'uncontaminated by being.'[15] It is the human other that matters, not God. The human other is not God. God, for Levinas, is the otherness behind the human other. God stands outside of my relationship with the other as a 'Third,' to remind me of my responsibility to the other. Here God comes to me as a rupture of myself as in the case of the radical other. Alluding to the Hebrew scriptural traditions, Levinas defines God as the unapproachable, unknowable, and unnamable. God has always already passed and hardly left a trace. Levinas contends that 'God is the other who turns our nature inside out, who calls our ontological will-to-be into question.'[16]

However, there is a tension between the 'abstract other' and the 'concrete other' in Levinasian philosophy. In Levinasian philosophy, the other has been located in transcendence. The human other, just like the transcendental God, assumes a position of beyond. Alford explicates this dilemma clearly: 'Levinas was never interested in the concrete reality of the other person, whose fleshy reality can only get in the way of transcendence.'[17] In this sense, other as transcendent faces interrogation from the 'concrete other'. As Sarah Ahmed argues, Levinas fails to specify the social system that excludes the other.[18] Ahmed further explains this: '"Cutting off 'the other' from the modes of encounter in which one meets another, that is, from their contexts and histories, 'allows 'the other' to appear in Levinas' texts as an alien being, whom one might then encounter, in the entirety of that very form."[19] Mayra Rivera contends that otherness as a characteristic of the other in Levinas constitutes two types of beings: beings and alien beings where the alien beings are considered as transcendent.[20] According to Rivera, for Levinas, it is 'exteriority' that determines the transcendence of the other. For Levinas, the other is an exterior other.

In her recent work *Parting Ways, Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*, Judith Butler exposes the scriptural and political baggage of Levinasian

ethics in considering the widow, orphan, and the stranger as the other, and its ambiguity in addressing the question of the 'concrete other' in a global political scenario.[21] Butler asks: Can Levinas consider a Palestinian as a 'radical other?' This question is valid in the context of his silence on the question of Israel's killing of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza. Butler challenges the Levinasian inclination towards Zionism and the inherent contradiction in his ethical phenomenology. Butler asks whether there is any obligation to preserve the life of those who appear 'faceless?' 'Because,' she argues; 'in Levinasian theory those who do not have the face do not appear at all.'[22] Critiquing the Levinasian philosophy of suffering, Butler comments that Levinas assumes, 'we do not take responsibility for the other's suffering only when it is clear that we have caused that suffering.'[23] She affirms that the Levinasian subject has the privilege to discern what is 'our' responsibility to the other if it is responsible for the others' suffering.[24]

Levinasian sympathy for the Jewish genocide by the Nazis and the formation of the State of Israel as an historical necessity reveal his Zionistic mentality. At the same time, he neglects the extrajudicial killings and the forcible displacement of Palestinians in Gaza. Butler contends that he means 'persecution' only as a Jewish experience. But the Jews are the persecutors. She asks: 'Is the Jewishness a pre-ontological category?'[25] According to Butler, Levinas foresees a new kinship between self and other—Christians and Jews—and warns against the rise of 'the countless masses of Asiatic peoples and underdeveloped peoples who threaten the new-found authenticity.'[26] He cautions against all other religious traditions except Judaism that fail to refer to 'the history of the saints and to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'[27] The question raised by Butler is important: 'Do the poor children who are suffering from malnutrition within the violently policed borders of Gaza lack a 'face'?'[28]

Is Levinas concerned with the 'desire' for a 'renewed Western subjectivity'? John E. Drabinski offers a postcolonial analysis of the Levinasian philosophy of self, God, and the other and argues that 'for Levinas, Europe is the measure of every Other in the world.'[29] Drabinski points to Levinas' comment on Chinese culture where 'every thing is dance.'[30] Postcolonialists, such as John E. Drabinski ask Levinas what is the historical content of the ethical intentionality that reimagines the other as the Other? How does ethical intentionality overcome imperial desire? They ask why Levinas kept silent about the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria. Why does Levinas seem unaware of literary works like Frantz Fanon's

Wretched of the Earth and those life-worlds (death-worlds)? even though they were published in the same period of Levinas' own works? Why does Levinas only address the genocide of the Holocaust and not the brutal killings in slavery, colonialism, political imperialism in other parts of the world? In summary, the Levinasian philosophy of 'transcendent Other' is inadequate in the political context of the 'other worlds.'

Derrida and *le tout autre*

Jacques Derrida is one of the most well-known twentieth-century philosophers in Continental philosophy.[31] Derrida's deconstruction is one of the prominent streams of thought in postmodernism through which he offers a post-metaphysical theory of difference. Theology, in Derridean thought, cannot take a fixed, ontological, dogmatic discourse about the presence of God rather; it signifies the presence of the absence of God—the incomprehensible God. The Derridean fabric begins with Husserlian phenomenology. Derrida argues that Husserlian phenomenology is founded on the reduction of immanence and presence. According to Derrida, there can be no pure presence or immanence and no return to a single origin. No 'I' is ever able to be fully present to itself. The meaning of being and the language that represents it always coincide with each other. Derrida would call this *différance*.[32] It is here where Derrida finds possibility in the rereading of the Heideggerian critique of Metaphysics. Heidegger's main concern is with the thinking of Being. In Heidegger's view, metaphysics has been unable to think of being, remaining trapped in an understanding of Being as yet another being. Derrida picks up a key aspect of this critique, which is that Being has been thought to be presence. Unlike Heidegger, Derrida does not argue for the end of metaphysics; rather, he offers his theory of deconstruction, which signifies the undecidability and indeterminacy of meaning.[33]

In line with Heidegger, Derrida argues that in metaphysics, God functions as transcendental signified, that is, as a point external to a system, which is used to guarantee its operation. For Derrida, there can never be God as a central point that sanctions the existence of inside and outside since the language that signifies 'God center' has no assured meaning. It is impossible to think of God as presence and ground. God, for Derrida, is an 'experience of impossible.' The question which Derrida brings to theology has to do with the possibility of a thinking God who cannot be

reduced to the dimensions of thought and an excess, which leaves only traces to be read in faith.[34]

Alluding to Plato's *Timaeus*, Derrida uses the word *khora* (instead of Plato's *chora*) to denote the state of emptiness and deferral—the 'surname' for *différance*. For Derrida, *khora* is a non-place, or a name without the name. *Khora* is the name of the 'bottomless collapse, of the endless desertification of language.' It is not a state of being or non-being. Derrida explains:

> *Khora* does not give place as one would give something, whatever it may be; it neither creates nor produces anything, not even an event insofar as it takes place. It gives no order and makes no promise. It is radically ahistorical, because nothing happens through it and nothing happens to it…*Khora* is nothing positive or negative. It is impassive, but it is neither passive nor active.[35]

For Derrida, *khora* remains absolutely impassible and heterogeneous to all processes of historical revelation or anthropo-theological experience. He explains that 'it is neither Being, nor the good, nor God, nor Man, nor History. It will always resist them, it will always have been the very place of an infinite resistance, of an infinitely impassible remaining: a completely other without face.'[36]

For Derrida, *khora* is the absolute indeterminacy—the groundless ground for a universal politics. *Khora* signifies God because without *khora* there would be no God, no Other, no spacing of the non-spacing. Christina M. Gschwandtner comments about the connection between the name of God and the *khora* in Derrida.[37] She interprets that God in Derrida is the unnameable nameable. It is a God who is beyond all anthropomorphisms and theomorphisms. We cannot represent this God. We can only pray to this God. The name of God is linked to the impossible: 'it mandates, it necessitates doing the impossible, necessitates going there where one cannot go.'[38] John D. Caputo calls this Derrida's hope and affirmation of 'religion without religion.'[39]

Derrida in *The Gift of Death* establishes a link between the religious responsibility and the mystery of the sacred and offers the notion of the divine as the *mysterium tremendum*. God is the mysterious and inaccessible source of our responsibility. The responsibility is always linked to guilt: one is never responsible enough. Giving in its radical responsibility always demands nothing, but the gifting of death. Derrida reflects on Abraham's

'giving' of Isaac. Abraham obeyed the God the *mysterium tremendum* with silence. Responsibility requires silence and secrecy. Absolute responsibility to God demands the gift of death. It is beyond any human law or morality. For Derrida, the gift of death is the infinite duty in the name of the absolute duty. "It is the name of God—the completely other, the nameless name of God, the unpronounceable name of God as other to which I am bound by an absolute, unconditional obligation by a nonnegotiable duty".[40]

Derrida contends that 'the other as absolutely other, namely God, must remain transcendent, hidden, secret, jealous of the love, requests, and commands that he gives and that he asks to be kept secret. Secrecy is essential to the exercise of this absolute responsibility as sacrificial responsibility.'[41] God is the absolute secrecy through which we are connected to every other. 'Every other is the wholly other' (*letout autreest tout autre*). Everyone is infinitely other in its absolute singularity. Every other is transcendent. Everyone is responsible to every other in terms of giving the gift of death. The sacrifice of the self is forced by the gaze of the mysterious God—the totally other. "God is the name of the possibility I have of keeping a secret that is visible from interior but not from the exterior…God is in me, he is absolute 'me' or 'self,' he is that structure of invisible interiority that is called subjectivity."[42] Derrida contends, "the name of God is the call of conscience in me. The name of God is a name of infinite promise and enables responsibility toward the other".[43]

Derridean 'totally other' is not the human other. It is not even the 'marginalized other.' God is the 'totally other'—the call, the secrecy, and the gift– that evokes responsibility toward the marginalized other. In the Derridean line of thought, giving or gifting is also connected to the forgive-ness (*par donner*). Forgiveness is a request from the self for not being able to be responsible and it is given by the other. Like a gift, forgiveness is always infinite and unconditional and thus ultimately impossible. Forgiveness is the 'impossible truth of the impossible gift.'[44]

The Derridean understanding of *tout autre* is well explained in his concept of hospitality.[45] Derrida deconstructs the act of hospitality as it is defined in the Western tradition. The word 'hospitality' is derived from the Latin word *hospes*, formed from *hostis*, which originally meant a stranger or enemy or hostile. Etymologically speaking, hospitality and hostility can be concurrent events. Caputo explains the politics of hospitality as 'the act of welcome extended to the guest, is the function of the power of the host to remain the master of the premises.'[46] Derrida reminds us that there

is a 'tension,' 'aporia,' 'paralysis' in the act of hospitality—what Derrida calls 'hostil/pitality.' According to Derrida, when the 'outsider' or 'the stranger' has to meet the criteria of the 'other' in the act of hospitality, it becomes conditional. Conditional hospitality concerns itself with rights, duties, obligations and so on and it is in the realm of immanence and presence.

In opposition to conditional hospitality, Derrida proposes an unconditional hospitality which is not associated with right, law, debt, or duty. It rests outside of right, above that which is juridical. Commenting on Kierkegaard, Derrida states that if duty is obeyed 'only in terms of duty, I am not fulfilling my relation to God.'[47] It is a 'gift or 'promise.' It is structured as a universal singularity, without imperative, order or duty. It encompasses all kinds of obligations, restrictions and compensations. Derrida's absolute hospitality is dictated by a law that exceeds the social contract of hospitality. It is a "law that exceeds the limitations of the laws of the state. It is a 'law without law.'" The absolute law or 'the secret' or 'the gift' that goes beyond the plural laws of the state, demands a kind of hospitality that is given to an unknown guest, which makes the whole deal impossible. Thus for Derrida unconditional hospitality is im/possible. Hospitality, in Derridean philosophy is beyond hospitality that is always to come. Derrida's concept of 'otherness' is very much related to the impossibility and the 'visitation' of the messiah. According to Derrida, 'for pure hospitality or a pure gift to occur, however, there must be an absolute surprise. The other, like the messiah, must arrive whenever he or she wants. She may even not arrive.'[48]

For Derrida, the hospitality which is to come is an act of faith. In contrast to religion, according to Derrida, faith is something that is presupposed by the most radical deconstructive gesture. He says: 'You cannot address the 'other,' speak to the other, without an act of faith, without testimony.'[49] To speak to another is to ask them to trust you: 'As soon as you address the other, as soon as you are open to the future, as soon as you have a temporal experience of waiting for the future, of waiting for someone to come; that is opening of experience. Someone is to come, is now to come.'[50] Faith of someone to come, according to Derrida, is undeconstructible, while religion is deconstructible since it is a human construct and a closed system. While explaining the 'hospitality to come,' he talks about 'messianicity' in contradiction to the 'messianism' of closed religions and their fixed dogmatics. Derrida invokes messianicity as: 'the unexpected surprise…If I couldn't anticipate, if I had a horizon of

anticipation, if I could see what is coming or who is coming, there would be no coming.'[51] Derrida's understanding of messianicity is not limited to the religious context, but extends to the general political context of marginalization, alie(n)/nation, and *globalatinization*.[52]

Derridean radical hospitality is infinite, absolute, and completely open—a welcoming of the other regardless of the risk involved. Whether at the personal level, or political level, Derrida's radical hospitality calls on us to rethink the concepts of self, other, identity, community, ethnicity, tradition, democracy, religiosity, ethics, politics, theology and culture.

In *Rogues*, Derrida envisions a democracy that fulfills the condition of absolute hospitality; 'the democracy to come.'[53] In the new era of *globalatinization*, it questions our national immigration laws and the bordering of territories. It ultimately interrupts our self, our home and our nationality. It asks us to open ourselves, our homes, our ethnicities, our territories, our traditions, our theologies, our ecclesiologies, our missiologies to welcome the other, the stranger, the infinite, the messiah. The cost demanded is nothing but our lives. Thus the act of the coming of the other is not devoid of violence. The Derridean God is not exempted from the act of violence. It brings war or violence to the One, uniformity, and the Truth. As in the case of Babel, God wars against the One and envisages difference, fragmentation, and multiplicity. It is in this violence that the deconstruction of non-violence takes place.

The Derridean 'transcendent Other' is a 'totally Other.' It is an abstract other. Richard Kearney calls the Derridean God a 'desertified God' and asks how we can pray to this God. He criticizes the Derridean *khora* as "barren, radically nonhuman and atheological; It is a 'no-place' that remains deserted; Just ashes and ashes without ascensions into heaven; Abyss and abyss without elevation from the void."[54] 'It is not the place that I want to live and hope for,' he says. For Kearney, the Derridean *khora* is not at all redemptive. Caputo responds to this charge against Derrida, arguing that Derridean *khora* signifies the possibility of impossibility and the hope against hope. However, as Nancy Fraser from the feminist standpoint comments on the contemporary context of violence, demands ethics and politics more than moments of difference or negation.[55] According to William Paul Simmons, this dilemma is most apparent in the Derridean notion of forgiveness. For Simmons, the Derridean act of forgiveness as an impossibility demands an explanation in the immediate context of violence and discrimination.[56] The emphasis on forgiveness and unconditional hospitality face interrogation from the struggling people for

neglecting the other side-suffering. Suffering as a result of political hegemony and epistemological arrogance do not provide sufficient clarification of this thesis of forgiveness. The weakness of God, on the other hand, legitimizes the existing power structures, and political hopes are focused on the notion of 'to come'. Justice for Derrida is to expect an interruption of the 'transcendent Other,' the 'wholly other' to deconstruct the law, ethics, and politics. Can this transcendental justice account for the immediate context of the 'material destruction of the human bodies and populations' in the 'Third World' context? Does the secret, or call, or the *tout autre*, have the capacity to challenge the immediate experiences of death, discrimination, and violence? As Judith Butler comments, of course, the face of the other demands the possibility of impossibility, but the other is dying![57]

Jean Luc-Marion and the 'Saturated Other'

Jean-Luc Marion is an important contemporary French philosopher who offers a phenomenological theology of God in the postmodern context. Marion became known in the English-speaking world through his theological work *God without Being* (1991), which was originally published in French in 1982.[58] In *God without Being*, Marion offers a post-metaphysical and de-ontological phenomenology of God by following the Heideggerian, Levinasian, and Derridean traditions. A clear 'theology of gift' is developed in *Being Given* (2002). In his recent book, *The Visible and the Revealed* (2008), Marion develops a 'Christian philosophy' through which he highlights the 'heuristic' function of Christianity in the contemporary world of theology and philosophy. With his notion 'saturated phenomenon,' Marion remains one of the prominent proponents of the 'theological turn' of Continental philosophy and the theology of God and the other.

Marion begins his philosophical journey from Cartesian metaphysical questions. In Marion's view, Descartes is the first thinker who really fit the Heideggerian definition of metaphysics as onto-theology.[59] It is in Descartes, Marion argues, that Aristotelian metaphysics becomes epistemology. Descartes's ontology is a 'grey' (hidden) ontology as it replaces the question of 'being' with the 'ego cogito' (human thinking mind). Descartes is the first philosopher to ground all being and entities firmly on a first being, namely the 'I think' (*ego cogito*). Descartes's being of the ego is grounded on God—the *causa sui*—the creator of ego—the 'thought of

the infinite.' It is this *causa sui* from which God becomes the ground of all other beings. Marion opines that in the Cartesian *causa sui* God—God is God's own cause—the 'ontological difference' of all beings is forgotten and metaphysically centered. Thus, Descartes is the first onto-theologian who fulfils the Heideggerian criterion of metaphysics.

Another important point of Marion's work on Descartes is what he calls 'white theology.'[60] According to Marion, Descartes vigorously denies the subjection of God to reason, employing univocal language for God. Here, Descartes seems to protect God's omnipotence and otherness from human logic. Marion contends that by conceiving God as *causa sui*, Descartes confuses the medieval language for God and becomes idolatrous by making God an 'alter ego'—giving God an essential location outside of human logic.

In *God without Being*, Marion makes clear in his thesis that God is not subject to 'being' and not even a Being beyond being.[61] Marion draws a distinction between 'idol' and 'icon' in the language for God. An 'idol' is a 'true' vision of God. but it is the one in which the viewer attempts to grasp the divine. 'Idol' is nothing but the human grasp of God. In the 'idol' the divine is de-limited and stopped. In Marion's words, 'idol is a human experience of the divine.'[62] Marion's 'idol' is the true reflection of the gaze of the viewer as he has of the divine. The 'icon,' on the other hand, reverses the gaze. The gaze travels through the 'icon,' back and forth and never ends up with a fixed image of self or the divine. In contrast to the 'idol,' the 'icon' is just a 'passage' or 'window' through which the gazes of both human and divine travel back and forth and transform the human gaze.[63] We cannot control this 'iconic experience.' It is an experience of 'excess' and 'abundance' which humans cannot control at all. In this 'iconic experience of excess' communion with the divine is assured, and, at the same time, the difference in between is not erased.

Not only images serve as 'idols' and 'icons,' but ideas and thoughts can also be in the same trajectory. Marion opines that Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God is to be celebrated, because it was an announcement of the death of the philosophical idol. It was the proclamation of the end of the onto-theological God—the super being—the alter ego. According to Marion, Nietzsche's death of God philosophy opens up new ways of 'iconic' seeing/speaking of God. God as a being, or as a super being, is an idolatrous way of speaking of God. In this being/Being, we see nothing, but our perception of God—the idolatrous one. On the

other hand, the iconic ways of speaking of God come from God, not from us. For Marion, all our talk about God becomes idolatrous in its onto-theological sense.

However, Marion does not deny the possibility of God-talk. He reminds us of the problem of an onto-theological God as Being. He points towards the possibility of a 'seeing'/'speaking' God without being. Marion doesn't reject the presence of God rather, he offers a language of God that 'crosses out' the difference between divinity and humanity, or being and without being. Of course, the difference between them is not 'erased' or surmounted by Marion.[64] It is here where Marion finds possibility in some of the Eastern patristic traditions, especially Dionysius the Areopagite, who preserves the distance between being and divine, while crossing this distance through prayer and praise of God. Prayer and praise are not an attempt to define God but to celebrate God. It is an experience of opening ourselves before God and receiving God's blessings to us as a gift. Marion calls this 'mystical theology' that goes beyond any *kataphatic* (affirmative) or *apophatic* (negative) language of God.

It is in his notion of saturated phenomena that Marion comes up with his radical phenomenology that goes beyond the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. As Husserlian phenomenology locates God as a 'bracketed God,' or beyond the horizon that sanctions the meaning of the object, Marion contends that things appear to us as they are 'given' to themselves. That is, there is a 'givenness' in things that cannot be objectified. Marion's phenomenology is known as phenomenology of 'givenness' (Marion uses the word *donation*).[65] In contrast to Husserl and Heidegger, Marion asks us to concentrate on the 'givenness' of phenomena rather than its 'beingness' or 'objectness.' The 'givenness' of the phenomena saturates our vision and experience and returns more 'excessive' meanings of the object. It denies the over emphasis of Husserlian 'intentionality' and 'intuitionality' of the human subject and destabilizes it in terms of the eventuality of the 'givenness.' Marion argues that the Husserlian phenomenology gives the human subject too much power and control and restricts the 'self-givenness' of the phenomenon. He criticizes Husserlian phenomenology for being constituted on the basis of 'deficiency.'[66] On the other hand, Marion's phenomenology is based on the 'saturated,' fulfilled and abundant phenomenon. It is not lacking, but rich and abundant. He says, 'it blinds me, overriding my intentionality.'[67]

According to Marion, the experience of God or the divine revelation is an experience of 'excess,' 'blindness' (blindness because of the excess

of light), and 'bedazzlement.' It is an experience of love that unsettles those who engage within it. This 'unsettled,' 'devoted,' and 'given over' subject is contrary to the Cartesian self-sufficient subject. The subject in 'saturated phenomena' does not control the phenomena, rather, it is at the receiving end of it. Here Marion becomes Derridean, arguing that the 'saturated phenomena' presents itself as a 'Gift.' The saturated phenomenon destabilizes the power and control over the other and allows the other to reveal itself as a 'Gift.'[68] In 'saturated phenomena,' the subject becomes a 'devoted self' to love and receives the 'Gift' of love without demanding anything. Love, for Marion, is entirely selfless, completely committed to the Other—the saturated Other—and a supreme gift of self-abandonment.[69]

Marion's 'saturated Other' is a 'pure givenness' through which there is no possibility of objectification of the other. The Other remains an excess of all meaning processes and our intuitions and intentions. Marion says that 'it must be a waiting, a loving, a closing of our eyes.'[70] What is positive here is that it affirms the individuation of the Other. But the question here is, does this saturated phenomena transcend the hegemonic interpretation of the other by the subject? Marion alludes to the Derridean/Levinasian 'gift,' 'secret,' 'the third person,' as the source of a kenotic self or ego to reimagine the other in its own individuation or concreteness. It is here that Marion's phenomenology of charity faces interrogation.

In his recent work *Certitudes negatives*, Marion develops a phenomenological theology of sacrament.[71] According to Marion, theology must proceed from God and be grounded in the Eucharist. The Eucharist functions as the locus for the hermeneutics of the divine word, which ultimately refers to Christ. In the Eucharist, we 'cross' the idolatrous experience of God and we receive the gift of God's love towards us. Any attempt to stop God's self-revelation of love in the sacrament becomes idolatrous. The Cross is the iconic passage through which the divine-human gazes meet. The Eucharist is the 'crossing experience' where each is open and ultimately vulnerable to the other.

The Eucharist is nothing but an experience of 'abandoning.' The sacrament becomes an icon of Christ, the visible icon of the invisible God. In the sacrament, God is abandoning God self, and this abandoning we receive as a gift. It is this moment of the sacrament when the visible meets the invisible, the divine meets the human, and the self meets the other. The experience of abandoning makes the sacrament ultimately the sacrament of sacrifice. Thus the givenness of the sacrament, or the gifting of the

Eucharist, happens in flesh and body. Marion connects the phenomenality of this gift to the phenomenality of the sacrament.[72] Similar to gift, sacrifice escapes the rationality of the object. It is the sacrifice that enables the gift. Abraham's willingness to gift Isaac to God explains the role of sacrifice in the divine experience of gift. Sacrifice goes beyond the visible gift to givenness itself.

According to Marion, Christian faith has its own peculiar rationality which gives it coherence, integrity, and validity. Christianity has something special to contribute to the wider philosophical discussions of love, justice, and peace in the contemporary nihilistic secular culture. Christianity is founded on the logic of love—sacrificial love. It has the logic of charity, which qualifies Christianity today. It is this logic of charity that enables Christianity to have a 'heuristic' function in the global philosophical scenario.[73] Marion contends that philosophy's logic of reason or mind is lower than the logic of love, and thus Christian logic is superior to the other logics. What theology has to gift to philosophy is nothing but the philosophy of charity.[74] What Christianity has to do with the world is that it invites the sacrificial love of God through which Christianity itself goes through kenosis. Marion describes this as the 'apologetics of vulnerability.' He accepts that all human love ultimately has its source in divine love. However, the role of 'Christian philosophy' is to invite all to see the divine love, charity, and vulnerability through which we all are illuminated by the dazzling splendor of God—the saturated Other—Jesus Christ.

Like Levinas and Derrida, Marion's 'saturated phenomenon' is also indefinable, impossible, and unforeseeable.[75] The 'saturated Other' comes to us in excess. But this excess of meaning or the 'bedazzlement' depends upon the intentionality of the self, or ego. It is to come out of sacrificial love or charity of the self. As Paul Simmons argues, 'the ego literally constitutes the Other.'[76] Marion states this clearly: 'The other appears only if I gratuitously give him the space in which to appear.'[77] The appearance of the Other is an act of charity (Marion), faith (Derrida) and disinterestedness (Levinas) which needs a validation from 'beyond.'

Richard Kearney argues that Marion's theology of God is negative—empty talk about God that has no enabling effect.[78] Kearney, on the other hand, speaks of God in terms of the possibility of the 'faith in the promise of advent.' Another important critique of Marion is John D. Caputo's, who asserts that Marion's 'saturated phenomenon' is over determined by his particular religious tradition (Christianity) and ecclesiastical affiliation to Roman Catholicism.[79] Caputo asks what the relevance of this 'Christian

philosophy' would be in a polycentric, polydoxic, and multi-religious 'non-European' context? Vitor Westhelle offers a sharp critique of Marion's conception of 'idol' and argues that 'idol' in Marion bears a European-Christian understanding of demonry as it defines the pre-Christian Third World religions as idolatrous.[80] The question before us is how this saturated phenomena that turns to be a charitable act of the (Western) self attends to the issue of 'the failed transcendence' (Ernesto Laclau) and the 'bare life'—the life outside of humanity (Giorgio Agamben)?[81] Does this excess meaning of the Other provide new political imagining for the marginalized people in the 'other worlds'? Does it challenge the systems of hegemony, alienation, and colonialism embodied in the constitution of the 'othered selves' in colonized nationalities? Here the Continental philosophy of 'hypertranscendence' finds its inadequacy.

Conclusion

The 'transcendental God/Other' of Levinas, Derrida and Marion offer a break from the Western philosophical tradition of Theism, Atheism, and onto-theology. It is a postmodern/post-metaphysical God after the 'death of God.' The other in this postmodern turn rejects any kind of objectification and devaluation; rather, it locates itself in the 'hyper presence' of God. Other signifies the infinity that elucidates our comprehension. However, as we have seen, the philosophies of 'hyper transcendence' do not offer a total discontinuity with the Western philosophical tradition founded on the notion of 'beyond.' Starting from Aristotle who proposed the idea of 'being qua being' (*on e on*), Aquinas's 'highest being,' Tillich's 'ground of being' through Heidegger's 'super Being' to Jean-Luc Marion's 'without being,' there has always been a quest for being or non being in the Western philosophical tradition.[82] The quest for being or non-being is all about subjectivity. What is interesting is that all searches culminate in the very question of formulating or reformulating the (Western) subjectivity. The whole question of transcendence has been tied up in the question of (Western) self and its dialectical relationship with the other. Neither God nor the other is unattached to the question of (Western) subjectivity. Today the 'other others' in the (other/Third) world ask the basic question: Who is this charity oriented self and the enigmatic 'transcendent Other' in postmodern Continental philosophy? Does it go 'beyond' the (Western) colonial self and the other? How does the moral and ethical baggage of Western religious traditions de-limit this philosophy in its own way to define God and the other?

As we have seen, the Derridean, Levinasian, and Marionion conceptions of transcendence signify a 'distant transcendence,' which has an asymptotic relationship with immanence. The 'pure transcendence' of the Derridean *tout autre* remains as 'barren land' in which the 'othered selves' find no hope in their immediate lived experiences of marginalization and exclusion. The undecidability and the contingency of God seem to be apolitical in the concrete situations of violence, violation, and discrimination. The Levinasian Other fails to conceive a 'concrete other' which is more apparent in the case of the Palestinians. The failure to elucidate the sociopolitical specificities that determine the marginalized other makes the Levinasian other insignificant and inadequate. Marion's 'saturated other' ultimately depends on the counter ego which comes from love/charity of God—the ultimate givenness of God. Marion's phenomenology of hyper-ego still leads to interpretation of the other; of course, it may be ego of love/charity—a sacramental ego. It is not the issue of the 'bedazzlement' of the other, but the capability to critique the power structures that determine the exclusion of the other that is important. In fact, no 'bedazzlement' of the Other happens in the immediate experiences of 'killings of human bodies and populations' in the 'other worlds.'[83]

There are segments of populations, as Jacques Ranciere describes 'the part that has no part' who are often subjugated to systemic violence.[84] Achille Mbembe argues that in the contemporary context of *necropolitics* (the subjugation of life to the powers of death) the subjugation takes multiple forms and reconfigures the relationship between resistance, sacrifice, and terror. He contends that in the era of *necropower*, 'Technologies of destruction have become more tactile, more anatomical and sensorial, in a context in which the choice is between life and death'.[85] For Mbembe, the era of *necropower* is characterized by the deployment of weapons 'in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creating of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead.'[86] In this context of 'material destruction of mass populations,' the charity oriented self, other and God of Continental philosophy miserably fails and becomes inadequate and impotent for the 'other others' in the 'Third World'.

The next chapter analyzes the Spivakian notion of subalternity or the subordinated other, which envisages a 'postcolonial turn' in Continental philosophy. Engaging with Levinas, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze and Irigaray, Spivak addresses the issue of 'worlding of the other' and the

'ontological enclosure' of the 'colonized others' in the colonial and post-colonial textualities. Unlike the Continental philosophies of God and the other, Spivak focuses the question on subalternity, marginality, and postcoloniality in an immanent transcendent notion of planetarity where the notion of God is de-transcendentalized and the other is de-othered. Engaging critically with Western feminist thought, especially with French feminisms, Spivak takes us to the point of the gendered subalternity, which invokes the question of God and the other at the bottom of human existence—the broken and tortured (gendered) bodies. In the next chapter, I argue that Spivak's account of subaltern exposes the failure of 'hyper transcendent' philosophies to think about otherness in a postcolonial context.

Notes

1. Judith Butler, *Parting Ways*, *Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 58.
2. Dominique Janicaud, et al., *Phenomenology and the* "*Theological Turn*": *The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000).
3. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *Transcendence and Beyond*: *A Postmodern Inquiry* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 2.
4. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics*? *Arguments for God in Continental Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 64.
5. Hent de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
6. I assume they are the widely discussed and influenced 'Continental philosophers' who initiate even a critical turn within the continental tradition. They provide a better cross-section of themes and concerns such as epistemology, ethics, politics, and the philosophy of religion within the Continental philosophical tradition.
7. This is evident in the dedication of his book *Otherwise Than Being* to the victims of the Holocaust. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1981).
8. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, *An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).
9. Joshua James Shaw, *Emmanuel Levinas on the Priority of Ethics*, *Putting Ethics First* (New York: Cambria Press, 2008), 8–9.
10. 10.Philip Blond, *Post-Secular Philosophy*, *Between Philosophy and Theology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 196.
11. Christiana M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics*?, 44.

12. Emmanuel Levinas, "Phenomenology and Enigma," in *Collected Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 66.
13. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 56.
14. Levinas does not speak about theology or the theological theme 'God'. Actually he is against any kind of thematizing God.' For him, it is "onto-theo-logical." Peter Jonkers & Ruud Welten, *God in France*, *Eight Contemporary French Thinkers on God* (Leuven, MA: Peeters, 2005), 112.
15. Peter Jonkers & Ruud Welten, *God in France*, 114–115.
16. Ibid.
17. C. Fred Alford, *Levinas*, *the Frankfurt School and Psychoanalysis* (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 10.
18. Sarah Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*: *Embodying Others in Post-Coloniality* (London and New York; Routledge, 2000), 143.
19. Ibid.
20. Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, *A Postcolonial Theology of Transcendence of God* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 65.
21. Judith Butler, *Parting Ways*, *Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
22. Ibid., 39.
23. Ibid., 40.
24. Ibid., 43.
25. Ibid. 46.
26. Levinas, *Difficult freedom*, 165, cited by Judith Butler, *Parting Ways*, 46.
27. Ibid., 48.
28. Ibid.
29. John E. Drabinski, *Levinas and the Postcolonial*: *Race*, *Nation*, *Other* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), x.
30. Ibid.
31. Derrida was born in a Jewish family in Algeria, a French colony at that time, in 1930. In his childhood Derrida had to pass through several kinds of discrimination for being a Jew. It could be argued that these kinds of experiences played a large role in his insistence upon the importance of the marginal, and the other, in his later thought. For more details, see C. Norris, *Derrida* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987). Derrida died in 2004.
32. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1992), 129.
33. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics*, 59–61.
34. Robyn Horner, "Derrida and God: Opening a Conversation," *Pacifica* 12 (February 1999), 12–26, at 12. For Derrida, God is not "hyperessenial" divine being beyond Being, rather; it is an impossible possibility that denies

any kind of dogmatic fixity, ontological finality, and metaphysical enclosure. Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking," in Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, eds., *Derrida and Negative Theology* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1992), 74.

35. Ibid., 107.
36. Derrida, "Foi et Savoir," 30–31 cited by Horner, "Derrida and God: Opening a Conversation," 23.
37. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics?* 64.
38. Thomas Dutoit, ed., *On the Name* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 59.
39. John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).
40. Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Willis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 67.
41. Ibid., 67.
42. Ibid., 108–109.
43. Ibid.
44. John D. Caputo et al., eds., *Questioning God* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 48.
45. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, *Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond*, trans. Rachel Bowlby(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
46. John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*: *A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 110.
47. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 63.
48. Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida" in R. Kearney and M. Dooley, eds., *Questioning Ethics*: *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1998), 70.
49. Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction Engaged*: *The Sydney Seminars*, ed. P. Patton and T. Smith (Sydney: Power publications, 2001), 67.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Derrida uses the word globalatinization instead of globalization in order to address the epistemological politics of the everyday life. Globalatinization is one of the Derrida's many enduring neologisms through which he addresses the "madness, the absolute anachrony of or time, the disjunction of all self-contemporaneity, the veiled and cloudy day of everyday." Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001), 52.
53. Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michel Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 81–82.
54. Richard Kearney, "Khora or God," in *A Passion for the Impossible*, ed. Mark Dooley (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 110.

55. Nancy Fraser, "The Force of Law: Metaphysical or Political," in *Feminist Interpretations of Jacques Derrida*, ed. Nancy J. Holland (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 159.
56. William Paul Simmons, *Human Rights Law and the Marginalized Other* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 87–88.
57. Judith Butler, *Parting Ways*, 48.
58. Currently, Jean-Luc Marion is the John Nuveen Professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and professor emeritus at the Université de la Sorbonne, Paris.
59. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics?* 108.
60. Ibid., 109.
61. Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 19.
62. Jean-Luc Marion, *The Idol and the Distance*: *Five Studies* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 6.
63. Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, 19.
64. Peter Jonkers and Ruud Welten, eds., *God in France*, 194.
65. Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given*: *Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 190.
66. Ibid., 194.
67. Ibid., 197.
68. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics?* 115.
69. Jean-Luc Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002).
70. Ibid., 122.
71. Jean-Luc Marion, *Ceritudes negative*, cited by Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics?* 118.
72. Jean-Luc Marion, "The phenomenality of the Sacrament—Being and Givenness," in *Words of Life*: *New Theological Turns in French Phenomenology*, ed. Bruce Ellis Benson and Norman Wirzba (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 89–102.
73. Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner and others (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).
74. Jean-Luc Marion, "On the Foundation of the Distinction Between Theology and Philosophy," in *Phenomenology and the Theological Turn*: *The Twenty-Seventh Annual Symposium of the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center*, ed. Jeffrey McCurry and Angelle Pryor (Pittsburgh: The Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center, 2012), 48–71.
75. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics?* 116.
76. William Paul Simmons, *Human Rights Law and the Marginalized Other*, 112.
77. Jean Luc-Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity*, 166.

78. Richard Kearney, *The God Who May Be*: *A Hermeneutics of Religion* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2001).
79. John D. Caputo, "God is Wholly Other—Almost: Difference and the Hyperbolic Alterity of God," in *The Otherness of God*, ed. Orrin F. Summerrell (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998).
80. Westhelle contends that there is always some idolatry in sacramentalism. Vitor Westhelle, "Idols and Demons: On Discerning the Spirits," *dialog*: *A Journal of Theology*, Volume 41, Number 1, Spring 2002.
81. Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (New York: Verso, 2005), 244; Georgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 3.
82. For a detailed study, see Calvin O. Schrag, *God as Otherwise Than Being*: *Toward a Semantics of the Gift* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002).
83. Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics" in *Public Culture*, 14.
84. Jacques Ranciere, *Disagreement*: *Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 7.
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86. Ibid., 40.

CHAPTER 3

Spivak and the 'Subordinated Other': The "Third World Turn" in Continental Philosophy

Abstract This chapter argues for a 'Third World Turn' in the Continental philosophy of God and the other by analyzing the Spivakian theory of *subalternity* (the subordinated other). It explains the Spivakian contentions with the postmodern/poststructural assumptions of the 'colonized other' while appropriating it with her other notions of *marginality* and *planetarity*. In *planetarity* and in the notion of 'detranscendentalized sacred,' she alludes to a de-ontological God and a de-othered subjectivity. *Learning to learn from the subaltern*, as her pedagogy, is discussed in order to envisage a postcolonial deconstructive (non)method for contemporary theology and philosophy.

Keywords Third-World turn • Subordinated other • Colonized other • Representation • Subalternity • Marginality • Planetarity • Pure immanence • Continentalism • Hegemony • Feminism

> 'The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another; and yet we inhabit it, on loan.'
>
> Spivak[1]

No thinker has struggled more with the question of the 'colonized other' in the contemporary globalized context than Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. From her widely-read essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' through her

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magnum opus *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* to her recent work on *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Spivak has problematized the question of the representation of the 'colonized other' in the colonial-Western-dominant institutional and cultural discourses, textualities, and practices.[2] According to Spivak, by speaking for the 'colonized other' Western academia (mis)-represents them and further cauterizes their voice. Spivak even critiques postcolonialists like the *Subaltern Studies Collective* in India, who tried to re-inscribe the stories/histories of the indigenous subjects with the help of proto-poststructuralist theories. For Spivak, the representations of the indigenous subjects, even in the postcolonial historiographies, are essentialist and identitarian.[3] Spivak, who locates herself in the post-humanist and deconstructive postcolonial epistemological position, argues that there cannot be an essentialist other who can speak and resist as was proposed by the subaltern historians. She insists that the Western intelligentsia cannot but undergo a postcolonial deconstructive process in order to 'quite' their privileged position and learn to learn from the 'colonized other' rather than speaking for the marginalized other.

Spivak theorizes a notion of 'subaltern' that elucidates its radical otherness as informed by the philosophers of 'hyper transcendence' in the Continental philosophical tradition. In her widely-read book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Spivak analyzes how the great philosophers of the west— Kant, Hegel, and Marx—foreclose on the 'native informant'—the subaltern—in the Third World through the textualities of literature, culture and history. Spivak takes a new turn—a 'Third World turn'—one that challenges the Continental philosophies of the 'transcendent Other'—as it ignores the question of Western imperialism and colonialism. Spivakian subalternity offers a postcolonial deconstructive notion of the other in which she denies the question of transcendence as 'exteriority.' Spivakian subalternity is a place of alterity (she calls it planetarity) to grant themselves permission to deny essentialism and the process of 'othering.'[4] Mark Lewis Taylor offers a significant reflection on Spivakian subalternity and defines it as the 'subordinated other' (the Latin word 'alter' means other and the word 'sub' points to the question of subordination).[5] According to Taylor, Spivakian subalternity is a rhetorical space of pathos and resistance. For him, it denotes the struggle against any kind of subordination or assimilation. This study appropriates the Spivakian definition of subalternity in order to signify it in our whole discussion of God and the other.

Engaging with the works of Spivak, this chapter explores the effects of the presence of the 'subordinated other' in the encounter between God and the other. It specifically points out the 'postcolonial turn' in the Continental philosophical tradition as Spivak takes her theoretical turns from both 'hyper transcendence' and 'post-transcendence,' or 'pure immanence.'[6] Locating Spivak within the discourses of Continental philosophy might be questionable at least for a few readers. It is Spivak who convincingly engages with 'First World' academia as a 'Third World' intellectual to reimagine the 'Continentalism' embodied in it. Taking her cue from post-Continental philosophies, Spivak signifies a 'Third World turn' in the Continental philosophical tradition using postcolonial theory.[7]

I argue here that the Spivakian notion of 'subordinated other' offers a theology of an 'immanent transcendence' through which the whole discussion of God and the other takes a 'radical turn' towards the 'colonized other' in the 'Third World.' The Spivakian 'subordinated other' departs from the postmodern 'absolute other' and the post-colonial 'essentialist other.' God in Spivak is denied transcendence in terms of its 'beyondness,' but is imagined as an experience of alterity in relationality (she terms it as 'deconstructive embrace'). The whole discussion about God and the other, here, takes a 'postcolonial turn,' marking a significant move towards the political ontologies and epistemologies of immanent transcendence.

The Spivakian Epistemological Itinerary

The Spivakian epistemological itinerary is really complex.[8] She uses multiple theories, such as postmodernism/poststructuralism, postcolonialism, Marxism, and feminism to question the cultural and philosophical foundations of Western imperialism and colonialism.[9] The Spivakian methodology is a 'dancing methodology' that intersects and interrogates various theories, disciplines, and methods.[10] Stephen Morton provides a rationale for the Spivakian interaction method within the disciplines. According to Morton, the purpose of the disruption of various disciplines is for 'rendering the voices, histories and experiences of the disempowered and the disenfranchised intelligible to her readers.'[11] Many writers have termed her approach 'postcolonial deconstruction,' which is unique in both postcolonial and postmodern traditions. Spivakian postcolonialism takes a new turn from the conventional postcolonial theory and her deconstruction is totally different from the other postmodernists.

Departing from the question of the representation of the 'Third World' as it was proposed by Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Spivak questions the essentialist location of the other and exposes its complexity and heterogeneity. Said argued that "Orientalism is nothing but a political program of the construction of the other—'the Orient' as reconstructed, reassembled, crafted in short born out of the Orientalists' efforts."[12] However, unlike Said, who uses a totalizing vision to see the strategy of colonialism and discursive hegemony in perspective, Spivak attempts a 'postcolonial deconstruction' through which she prefers a 'persistent critique' of the logic of Western rhetoric in representing its other. Sumit Chakrabarti clearly distinguishes between Said and Spivak and opines that 'unlike Said who evaluates the architecture of the discursive socio-political apparatus based on the Foucauldian theory of knowledge and power, Spivak sneaks into dead ends to subvert the logic of the dominant Western rhetoric as it was informed by Derridean deconstruction.'[13] Spivak does not follow a totalizing vision of an imperialist culture; rather, she prefers a disruptive, interventional, and fragmentary method, which differentiates her from typical postcolonialists. Thus, even though she has been designated one of the 'postcolonial trinity,' Spivak locates herself in a contestatory position within postcolonial academia.[14]

Taking her cue from Derridean deconstruction, Spivak offers an interventionist approach that begins with the question of the representation of the (gendered) subaltern by the *Subaltern Studies Collective* in India. Her interventionist approach originates from Third World representations of the gendered subaltern and extends to the Western discourses, clearly explicating her complex method of postcolonial deconstructive feminism.[15] Sumit Chakrabarti argues that Spivak's strategic use of deconstruction is an affirmative deconstruction through which she enables 'a constant effect of engendering of the social positioning and its ever-present heterogeneity within a class or a group or a collective consciousness.'[16] This affirmative deconstruction helps Spivak to connect the 'radical Other' with the 'concrete other' through a 'deconstructive embrace.' The otherness of the other is not an absolute otherness in Spivak, rather, it is an 'irreducible other' and even 'quite-other'. Mayra Rivera further explains the 'deconstructive embrace' as 'the encounters that co-constitute who we are.'[17] For Rivera, it is an experience of 'relational transcendence' where the self-other dyad is disrupted and re-imagined for new incarnations.

By re-reading Marx through the lens of Derrida, Spivak illumines the Marxian dichotomy between *Vertreten* (proxy) and *darstellen* (portrait)

in order to expose the politics and dilemmas inherent in representation.[18] Spivak rejects both the idea that 'the masses' are known to themselves and able to make their interests manifest politically (Foucault and Deleuze), and the idea that intellectuals can fulfill their political responsibility by representing or speaking for the masses (Marx).[19] Spivak's criticism of the *Subaltern Studies Collective*, who draw heavily on the Foucault-Deleuze conversation, is that by constituting a self-speaking postcolonial subject as an 'essentialist other,' and trying to speak for them; in effect, the 'true subaltern' becomes silent. Spivak critiques the Deleuzian usage of 'workers struggle,' that which neglects the 'textures of power' in the context of colonialism. Spivak's problem with the postmodern Continental philosophers is based mainly on their ignorance of the positional relations of the dominant to the subaltern. Spivak interrogates Western intellectuals for taking their privileged subjectivity for granted while trying to expose their disregard for the questions of ethnicity, race, and empire in the context of globalization. She stresses the imperative of a self-reflexive position in the context of theory: 'What we are asking for is that…the holders of hegemonic discourse should de-hegemonize their position and themselves learn how to occupy the subject position.'[20] The intention behind this de-hegemonizing theory is to affirm the *radical alterity* of the subordinated other—the colonized other—and on the other hand, to destabilize the 'radical autonomy—the claim of the authenticity of the 'real experience' of the (gendered) subaltern. Of course, the Spivakian method is double or multiple-edged.

While attending to euro-centric feminism, she problematizes the colonial (mis)-representation of the experiences of gendered 'subordinated other' in the 'Third World' and its inadequacy to proxy any other particular experiences like the subaltern women in the South. Spivak criticizes the French *avant-garde* feminism that homogenizes the experiences of women irrespective of their cultural and geographical differences. She writes:

> This is a set of directives for class- and race privileged literary women who can ignore the seductive effects of identifying with the values of the other side while rejecting their validity; and, by identifying the political with the temporal and linguistic, ignore as well the micrology of political economy.[21]

Spivak exhorts French feminists like Kristeva and Irigaray to 'learn to stop feeling privileged as woman'.[22] For Spivak, international feminism is nothing but a discourse of the North. She criticizes the universal liberation

discourses of metropolitan, 'emancipated,' white middle-class women who want others to become like themselves.[23] Critically engaging with Julia Kristeva's novel 'About Chinese Women' (1977) and Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847), Spivak exemplifies her theory of cauterization of the subaltern by representing them in Eurocentric textualities. Through these textualities, Third World women are stereotyped and given fixed subjectivities of victimization. She contends that this 'matronizing and sororizing of women in developed countries is also a way of silencing to the subaltern.'[24] Critiquing the benevolent global ethics of the international economic agencies who homogenize female labor and the value of production and misrepresent them in an 'othered space,' Spivak underscores her argument that the involvement of First-World intellectuals in Third-World academy functions self-interestedly as a process of self-constitution and, in turn, constitution of the other.[25] On the other hand, Spivak points towards the emergence of the 'new subaltern' and proposes a theory of *planetarity* that takes us from the discourses of the ethics of human rights and love for the other to a de-othered globality through which the *other* is revisited and the self is reimagined in a globalized era.

Whether it is postcolonialism or poststructuralism or feminism or Marxism, Spivak seems to be skeptical of any kind of totalizing ideologies and meta-theories as they are 'deeply marked' by colonial imprints. For this reason, she strategically uses the concept *postcoloniality* as a rhetorical space where the colonial epistemological violence is encountered and the subaltern subjectivity is reimagined as a non-essential category. As Ritu Birla clearly contends, it is a call to 'quite-other,' or the social location of alterity, that is, that which escapes consolidation into narrative and identity.[26] Sangeeta Ray's comment on Spivakian methodology is quite meaningful and self-explanatory:

> Spivakian methodology hinges on the following: acknowledging complicity, learning to learn from below, unlearning one's privilege as loss, working without guarantees, persistently critiquing the structures that one inhabits intimately and that one cannot say no to, and giving attention to subject formation such that it produces the reflexive basis for self-conscious social agency.[27]

In short, postcolonial deconstructionist feminist epistemology seems to be the methodological focal point through which she tries to attend to the issues of the colonized, disempowered, marginalized, and disenfranchised

other—the 'subordinated other' in the Third World. Spivakian notions of the subordinated other and the planetary creatures embark on a 'postcolonial turn' in the contemporary global culture, politics, philosophy, and theology.[28] This chapter analyzes the category subordinated other in relation with her other notions, such as marginality and planetarity, and tries to appropriate them in our discussion on God and the other.

Subalternity

Subalternity seems to be Spivak's basic theoretical issue. The use of the term *subaltern* is primarily informed by the work of the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci on the rural-based Italian *peasantry* and the research of the international *Subaltern Studies Collective* on the histories of subaltern insurgency in colonial and postcolonial South Asia. Gramsci used the Italian term *subalterno*, which translates roughly as 'subordinate' or 'dependent' to refer to 'any group that is collectively subordinated under the hegemonic control of the ruling elite.'[29] Stephen Morton observes that the Gramscian use of the term 'subaltern' goes beyond the Marxian category 'proletariat' and signifies the rural peasantry in Southern Italy, whose achievement of social and political consciousness was limited and their political unity weak.[30] According to Gramsci, it is the responsibility of the intellectual 'to search out signs of subaltern initiative and incipient class identity that could be nurtured and educated into true class consciousness and effective political action.'[31]

In the program of the *Subaltern Studies Collective*, this Gramscian category was extended to 'the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way.'[32] They used this term to signify the unprivileged social classes and groups who were denied access to the social and political practices in India. For them, it was a category that points to the subordinate sections—the marginalized—the Dalits, the Tribals, the Adivasis, the farmers, the unorganized laborers, the minorities, women and so on who have not been considered subjects of their own histories and consciousness in the colonial and national elite historiographies.[33] The *Subaltern Studies Collective* sought to reread and rewrite the established historiography of Indian nationalism that had been dominated by elitism and bourgeoisiesm as a consequence of British colonialism.[34] Though she was part of this group, Spivak took a critical stand, arguing that the

re-writing of the consciousness of the Indian nationalism had excluded the subaltern female from the nationalist postcolonial consciousness.

Spivak asserts that there is no such essentialist postcolonial subject who can speak and know their conditions by themselves, as the *Subaltern Studies Collective* proposed. She contends that 'there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself' and asks, 'With what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?'[35] The Spivakian thesis is double bind; on the one hand, she argues that the colonialists and postcolonials have (mis-)represented the subaltern subject and, on the other hand, there cannot be an 'essentialist subaltern subject' to speak against colonial/postcolonial (native) representation as it was proposed by the *Subaltern Studies Collective*. It is out of this epistemological context that the Spivakian thesis arises: 'The *subaltern* cannot speak themselves.'[36] For Spivak, the voice of the subaltern cannot be heard because its language cannot be understood within the dominant discourse. Spivak explains this: 'The subaltern cannot speak means: even when the subaltern makes an effort to the death to speak, she is not able to be heard, and speaking and hearing complete the speech act.'[37]

The question of the 'unspeakability' of *subalternity* is further extended to the question of gender. By focusing on women as *subaltern*, Spivak asserts that 'within this effaced itinerary of the subaltern, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced.'[38] Spivak explains this doubly effaced female subjectivity by entering into the discussion of the psychobiography of *Sati* (widow-immolation) in pre-colonial India. According to Spivak, women as *subaltern* have had their voices silenced in between the 'imperialist/colonialist object-constitution and the patriarchal subject-formation.' She argues that the voices of the sexed subaltern subjectivity has been lost in between the notion of the 'liberative act' of the imperialists who tried to abolish this 'crime' in the name of civilization and the patriarchal notion of *Sati* as a 'heroic act' through which it was translated as the subaltern women 'wanted to die.' For Spivak, the voice of the female subaltern subjectivity is silenced in between the colonial and patriarchal translations of their consciousnesses. Spivak explicates this thesis through a very specific story—the story of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri—a young woman of sixteen or seventeen who hanged herself in her father's house in Calcutta in 1926. She was menstruating at the time, which would indicate that she was not pregnant. Years later it emerged that she had killed herself because she had been unable to carry out a mission for a revolutionary group of which she was a member. According to Spivak, Bhubaneswari's suicide was an act of

subaltern rewriting of the social text of *Sati*-suicide.[39] Yet the 'message' self-inscribed on her body was not read. "She 'spoke' but the women did not, do not, 'hear' her."[40] Thus, Spivak argues that the *subaltern* as female cannot be heard or read even though they speak or write.

Spivak here problematizes the audibility of subaltern voices. According to Spivak, the non-audibility of the subaltern women is not a failure of articulation, but the result of the failure of representation.[41] The subaltern speaks, but it cannot be heard. Spivak argues that while the intellectuals claim that the subaltern can speak for themselves, they assume the position of 'proxy' and the voice of the 'true' subaltern remains as *aporia*, *where* the possibility and the impossibility, absence and presence, voice and voicelessness, essentialism and constructionism coincide with each other.[42] It is out of this theoretical lacuna of representation that Spivak proposes what she calls the 'strategic use of positive essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest'. Spivak explained this notion later in an interview when she denied any kind of theoretical sanction for essentialism. She warns that it can be used as a theoretical alibi for proselytizing academic essentialisms. For her, it is not a theory, but a strategy or tactic fitting a specific situation. It is a political space of *alterity* and *difference* that has nothing to do with *identitarianism*. As she remarks in the interview: "I think *identitarianism* ignores what is most interesting about being alive, that is to say, being angled towards the other. I therefore found that it was unfortunate that people liked that phrase ('strategic essentialism')."[43] Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera comment on this Spivakian phrase: 'rather than assuming that action flows naturally from identity, strategic essentialism acknowledges the employment of or appeal to an essentialized concept of identity, however deconstructible, as a sometimes necessary political tactic.'[44]

Spivakian *subalternity*, or subordinated other, is a political position—a 'decolonized space,' which means 'without a place in the colonial scheme.'[45] She denies that it is a synonym for the word 'oppressed' or any identitarian positionality. Spivak explains: 'If the subaltern speaks, and it is heard; then he or she is not a subaltern.'[46] For Spivak, it is a 'rhetorical space' that cuts across any essentialist position in terms of caste, class, gender and geography. If subaltern speaks, it is an 'Echo,'[47] a 'secrete,' which is impossible for any kind of gazing, cognition, or representation without deconstruction. What is most dynamic in the assumption of *Spivakian subalternity* is that it destabilizes the 'epistemic violence' of the 'othering' of the subaltern, and it postpones the 'truth' of *subalternity* in order to

rescue it from any kind of representation or 'worlding' in history, culture, politics, and theology. Of course, the Spivakian 'subordinated other' is an enigmatic other, but not an absolute other. It is a 'concrete other'—the marginalized other. The Spivakian subordinated other is a space of de-othering of the 'colonized others,' and it is the political space where the subjugated others 'quite' their 'worlded' otherness.

Marginality

Spivak rejects the transcendentalism of the other and locates it in a concrete context. She further explains this idea through her notion of *marginality*. As in the case of *subalternity*, *marginality* signifies the 'rhetorical space' that denies its obligation to the center. Spivak talks about a different kind of *marginality*, which denies the marginality of the margin and the centrality of the center. In the Spivakian understanding of *marginality*, the notion of center crumbles, and thus the margin becomes a non-margin. Spivak theorizes a non-essentialist, heterogeneous and contestatory location of *marginality* that erupts at the center. *Marginality*, just like *subalternity*, is an *aporetic* space of impossibility which cannot be simply represented or assimilated. She probes the notions of *margin* and *marginality* while theorizing her own location as an intellectual from the 'Third World' in a 'First-World academy':

> A word to name the margin. Perhaps that is what the audience wanted to hear: a voice from the margin. If there is a buzzword in cultural critique now, it is 'marginality'. Every academic knows that one cannot do without labels. To this particular label, however, Foucault's caution must be applied and we must attend to its *Herkunft* or descent. When a cultural identity is thrust upon one because the center wants an identifiable margin claims for marginality assure validation from the center.[48]

For Spivak, *marginality* is an assumed location where the problem of 'worlding' of the other is re-positioned. It is a theoretical position to challenge the privileged position of Eurocentric knowledges. Thus it is a location of *postcoloniality*. While theorizing the transfiguration of the 'Native Informant' to the 'New Immigrant' in the financialized global economy, Spivak de-ontologizes the *subaltern* as it points towards her own location 'in other worlds.'[49] According to Spivak, in the period of Bretton Woods agencies and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which represent

the indigenous subaltern as the source of trade related intellectual property, the logic of the inaccessibility of marginality to the center is to be rethought. She says that the indigenous subaltern is now turning into a 'new global subaltern' in the logic of global capital.[50] The indigenous cultural traditions are becoming the focus of the capitalist global media. Subalternity has to be repositioned in the new globality. In sum, marginality is not a fixed location that demands the validation from the center; rather, it is a deconstructive space that upholds its 'irreducible singularity' and alterity, which signals the ethical re-positioning of oneself in relation to the 'other.'

In order to escape the logic of 'margin' and 'center' Spivak chooses a different name for herself: 'teacher.' As Simon Swift comments: 'pedagogy can become one way of thinking through a different relation to dissent, a denial of the marginality of the margin and an exposure of how that margin keeps erupting in the center.,[51] Spivak proposes a pedagogy of aesthetical education through which she reimagines *subaltern* as the teacher,[52] and the educational program as the *training in the imagination* to 'learn to listen to the voice of the other.'[53] In the radical pedagogy of Spivak, the *subaltern* as the marginalized other is not an object of study; rather, it is a discursive engagement through which the education is reimagined as a *learning to learn from below*, where the asymmetrical power relations between subaltern and intellectual, educator and educated are radically reconfigured.[54]

Both Spivakian subordinated other and the marginalized other are connected to each other. Together they problematize the representation of the other and reimagine in terms of alterity and irreducible difference. When the privileged speak for the other, it in fact further cauterizes the other. She relentlessly questions the ability of the 'self' to empty itself to represent the other. It may seem that she is advocating quietism. On the other hand, alluding to Derridean deconstruction, she challenges us to keep on trying to learn to learn from below. To learn from below is easy. But how to learn to learn from below always keeps us in a process of impossible possibility. It is to listen to the 'Echo'—the silenced memory of the marginalized other. It is not an easy job; it is a deconstructive politics similar to catching lightning and then bottling it. Stephen Morton rightly characterizes it: 'Against silencing and foreclosure of the subaltern, Spivak's deconstructive reflections on responsibility and ethical dialogue work towards imagining the conditions of possibility for an ethical dialogue to take place.'[55]

For Spivak, even though the marginalized other is a concrete other, it is impossible to enter into its space. It is easy to locate a marginalized other or a subaltern, but it is impossible to learn the other without keeping the self-ego intact. In other words, it is difficult to learn to unravel the hegemonic system that constructs both the other and the self. As Simmons comments, it is a self-suspending leap into the other's sea.[56] Alluding again to Derrida, Spivak contends that learning to learn from below requires *teleopoiesis*. For Derrida, *teleopoiesis* becomes the process of creating toward an ever-distant future (*a-venir*). By adding the question of space, contrary to Derrida, Spivak defines it as the process of creating toward a distant future with a 'distant other., As Simmons observes, 'it suggests that the gap between the ego and the Other will never be bridged. Awareness of this distance leads to humility and suspension of certainty.'[57] The space in between the ego and the other is not just 'nothingness' but a space—a space of alterity. This new imaginative space of *subalternity* and *marginality* is well explained in her notion of *planetarity* and theory of 'deconstructive embrace.'

Planetarity

The Spivakian notion of *planetarity*, as in the case of *subalternity* and *marginality*, is a space of *alterity and difference*. In *planetarity*, Spivak elucidates the difference between the notions of globe, which is conceptualized in the program of capitalism in the era of globalization, and the notion of planet that is conceptualized as a 'sheer space of alterity., 'I propose the planet to overwrite the globe,' Spivak comments. She constructs planetarity as a 'limiting idea to counteract the global reach of capital and the computerized globe.' In her words: 'The globe is on our computers. No one lives there. It allows us to think that we can aim to control it. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another; and yet we inhabit it, on loan.'[58] She further says that 'it belongs to another system—a system that is beyond our grasp as it is the inside of our bodies.'[59] Ritu Birla explains the notion clearly: 'The planet, unlike the world, is a conceptual metaphor infused with the possibility of seeing from outside, of seeing from the perspective of the alien, and not merely of apprehending the unified sphere that is familiar to us from prominent discourses of absolute oversight.'[60]

Spivak asserts that the globe on which we live is a manageable world where we are successful and comfortable in showing love to our 'others.' On the other hand, she proposes 'planetary love,' which is not love for

the other; rather, it is an experience of the 'deconstructive embrace' where both the self and other invent their new incarnations. Spivak comments that this love is dangerous as it is powerful and it is the *irreducible supplement*.[61] *Planetarity* is a mentality in which we revisit the constitutive other and the self in the context of globalization and envisage a 'radical relationality' that extends to the whole system of life on the planet. She continues: 'if we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us. This is as close to the *sacred*, again, as I come.'[62]

As Kwok Pui-lan contends, *planetarity* is an invitation to imagine the complexity and plurality of planetary systems and not be confined by narrow identity politics or superficial binary thinking. It is not just an ecological exhortation, or a theological/ethical reminder of our stewardship. A planetary ethos thus calls for the experience of the impossible—*detranscendelized sacred*—that is radically open-ended and that is 'to come.'[63] Instead of God, Spivak here uses the word—'planet' where we experience the 'detranscendelized sacred' and the 'deconstructive embrace.' It is in this *planetarity* that irreducibility and relationality are affirmed and experienced.

Following Derrida, Spivak does not believe in a religiosity that is opposite secularity. She doesn't talk about a theology of God. She doesn't believe in a super natural God who is antagonistic towards nature. On the other hand, her notion of a *detranscendelized sacred* that 'aims to destabilize the binarism between secularist politics and the religious practice,' alludes to the notion of displaced transcendence or immanent transcendence.[64] According to Spivak, to be attentive to the *detranscendelized sacred* means to live in a 'radical love'—the 'irreducible supplement.'[65] This 'radical love' is not simply an obligation to the 'other' as it is theologized by religions: 'love your neighbor' and by human rights activists: 'solidarity with the other.' It is not just trying to speak for others. Spivak comments that even slogans such as 'learning from below' can be a winning slogan in the contemporary context of globalization. She seems to be struggling to signify religion or religiosity, in a globalized secularity, by destabilizing its 'autonomy' and 'otherness' as it is characterized in conventional thinking. Religion, for Spivak, is to live in radical love.

However, for Spivak, *planetarity* is not a license for easy theological talk about the 'the wholly other' or a 'transcendent reality' or God.[66] *Planetarity* deconstructs the dichotomy between transcendence and immanence. According to Spivakian planetarity, transcendence is being

brought to the mundane, earthly and within space. As Susan Abraham contends, for Spivak, transcendence is presented as the going out of self in response to the need of the other.[67] It is an invitation to live in an enigmatic relationship with the other, God, and the earth. Here, time, space, home, identity, and nature become enigmatic, alluring, and uncanny. The Spivakian *detranscendelized sacred* provides a vision of a relational, embodied, and sensible God that transcends the Western, theistic, ontological theology of God. Since it falls on the back of immanence, Spivakian planetarity interrogates the philosophies of 'hyper transcendence.' As Jea Sophia Oh argues, Spivakian planetarity is a call for responsibility. It is not one of romantic imagination, but one that reflects the ethical practice of human beings as planetary subjects.[68] Spivak, who signifies the planet as God, defines planetarity as religiosity or *dharma*. The Spivakian God, here, locates itself beyond any kind of anthropomorphism of the divine, or theo-morphism of the human. Developing this de-ontological Spivakian notion of God, Mayra Rivera proposes a theology of the Holy Ghost through which it is reimagined as a theological figure that touches us with the haunting memories of human history in terms of the 'ghostly encounters' of the victims.[69]

'Subordinated Other' as the Teacher

Spivak's major contention with the colonial education of the West is that it legitimizes a colonial self and, at the same time, constructs its other. She illustrates this problem with her story of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri. Spivak, while talking about the pedagogy of an aesthetic education in the globalized era, speaks about a process of learning to learn from the subordinated other. This Spivakian pedagogy of listening to the voice of the subordinated other starts from the Levinasian obligation for the other. As Levinas contends, the responsibility for the other calls the ego to a constant interrogation to 'open ourselves to an other's ethic.'[70] Such a constant critique, Spivak argues, requires an education that reorients our thinking of ourselves and our knowing of the other. There are two dimensions to this pedagogy: one is to 'learn to learn from the subordinated other,' which is nothing but a 'self-suspending leap into other's sea.'[71] The second dimension is to 'learn to unlearn one's privileges.' Spivak says: 'Our privileges, whatever they be in terms of race, class, nationality, gender and the like may have prevented us from gaining a certain kind of Other knowledge.'[72]

In order to explain this radical pedagogy of knowing, Spivak makes use of the Derridean term *teleopoiesis*. For Derrida, *teleopoiesis* means the process of creating toward an ever-distant future (a-venir) in terms of time. Spivak, on the other hand, defines it as creating a distant future with a 'distant other.' It suggests that there is an unbridgeable gap between the self and the other. According to Spivak, *teleopoiesis* demands a turning off the self's voice. She defines it as an embrace of a different episteme, which requires the suspension of the hegemonic language and the institutional practices that cauterize the other. This is what she means by 'deconstructive embrace.' Here, the other is conceived not as an absolutely exterior other, rather; it is relational and, at the same time, a differentiated one.

Unlike the philosophies of 'hypertranscendence,' Spivak falls on the side of 'immanent transcendence.' Mayra Rivera expands on this idea, saying, 'it requires a departure from self-enclosed notions of subjectivity to become mindful of the intricate relationships between our own subjectivities and the system.'[73] In the Spivakian understanding, in this 'deconstructive embrace,' the self and other are both invited to their own multiple incarnations and transcendences. Here, the logic of the self-other duality is disrupted and enters into an unfinished process of transcendence. Spivak's idea of 'planet' signifies the differential relationship between the self and the other which is devoid of any kind of external transcendence. For Spivak, the planet signifies God—the reality in which the self suspends itself to learn to learn from the other without objectifying the other.

Learning to learn from below as pedagogy is an invitation to live in a 'radical imagination' where the other is revisited and the sacred is detranscendelized. It is to live in a state of ethical responsibility and to live in a subject position of 'quite-other'(Derrida). It is living in the marginal space, where the *impossible subaltern* voices—the unspeakable speak. It is an apocalyptical space where the self, the other, the community, and the tradition unveil themselves and touch the infinite—the radical transcendent—the radical other. Spivak explains:

> Radical alterity—the wholly other—must be thought through imagining. To be born human is to be born angled toward an other and others. To account for this, the human being presupposes the 'quite-other.' This is the bottom line of being--human as being-in-the ethical relation. By definition we cannot—no self can—reach the 'quite-other'....This is the founding gap in all acts or talk, most especially in acts or talk we understand to be closest to the ethical—the historical and political. We must somehow attempt to supplement the gap.[74]

The challenge before the pedagogy of learning, or listening, is whether it can supplement this gap. This education challenges *training in the imagination* where the 'othering' and the 'worlding' of the 'colonized other' is moved toward an ethico-political responsibility. It is a kind of counter pedagogy, to educate the educator by learning to learn from below. Pedagogy for Spivak is not contradictory to epistemology; rather, it is ontological and political. Learning, knowing, hearing, being, and living are part of the same pedagogy. Spivak's affirmation of subaltern as her teacher is not to romanticize the other and not to locate the other in the first phase, as in the case of Levinas. Rather, it is a counter pedagogy in which the relationship between teacher and student—educated and the educator—the subaltern and the intellectual—are being radically reconfigured and reimagined. According to Morton, this Spivakian pedagogy has two functions: One is to foster a critical intelligence in the children of the rural poor about the power structure that prevents their political participation in the parliamentary democracy at a local and national level; second, it encourages human right workers and social justice activists to recognize the ways in which the dominant discourses of rights is also implicated in a relationship of ethical responsibility with the subaltern, which Spivak names 'subordinate cultures of responsibility.'[75] For Spivak, it is these 'subordinate cultures of responsibility' that provide the critical and the cultural resources for the invention of a subaltern counter-public.

Religion after Spivak

Spivak interrogates the Eurocentric metaphysical foundations of religion and its transcendentalism. Religion after Spivak is to be religion without religion, as in the case of Derrida. To that end, she exposes the imperial imprints on the organization of religion. According to Spivak, the so-called great world religions are deeply implicated in the narrative of the ebb and flow of power.[76] Spivak senses the continuities between Christian monotheism and secular monopoly capitalism. Critiquing this monotheist theology of God, which has been formulated within the colonial imaginary, Spivak defines religion as the ethico-political practice of love and irreducible alterity. For Spivak, religion in the postcolonial era is not a systematic exposition of doctrines and dogmas as in the modern history of Christendom that sought legitimacy over the so-called 'other religions'; rather, it signifies the ethical responsibility to its others. For Spivak, the name of God may signify that responsibility towards the other. She explains

this clearly: 'the name of God may be seen as the name of the radical alterity that the self is programmed to imagine in an ethics of responsibility.'[77] Spivak prefers the category *dharma* to 'religion' through which she tries to define it as an ethical behavior or radical responsibility.[78] In this ethical sense, the dichotomy between religion and atheism, spirituality and secularity, theology and philosophy, West and East, and the self and the other are reconfigured and reimagined.

Religion for Spivak has to take an ethico-political turn in order to renounce its transcendentalism and Eurocentric imperialist dogmatism. The Spivakian notion of 'detranscendelized transcendence' does not erase the role of religion or repress religion. As Susan Abraham concludes, the Spivakian challenge to religion, or theological discourses, is to affirm its ethico-political content and, in turn, interrogate the secularist politics that seek to marginalize religion.[79] In Spivakian planetarity, politics takes a new turn from its identitarian forms of ethics to the deconstructive politics of (im)possibility. Despite her critique of the transcendentalism of Christian philosophy, Spivak validates the role of religion as a resource to engage in social analysis and political practice in the contemporary postcolonial context.[80]

Subalternity and Indegeneity: A Critical Engagement with Spivak

However, Spivak has been interrogated by the indigenous theoreticians and theologians for being rhetorical and academic. For indigenous thinkers, the category 'indegeneity' that marks the epistemological project of the 'contested knowledges' signifies counter hegemonic knowledges and practices. Indigenous theoreticians who creatively engage with the Spivakian subalternity argue that Spivak seems to neglect the indigenous epistemological practices through which they try to speak, preach and dance.[81] Jodi A. Byrd and Michael Rothberg hold that, as an exhortation to the intelligentsia who try to re-present the subaltern voice in historical and political textualities, the Spivakian subalternity appears to be very useful. At the same time, they argue that the next step that attends the re-presentation of the indigenous people, based on their epistemological practices, seems to be less important in Spivakian thought. Even though, Spivak talks about the process of learning to learn from the subaltern, indigenous theoreticians argue that, Spivak doesn't bring out the

implication of the rhetoric of the subaltern as her teacher, or the political and the epistemological implications of the process of listening to the subaltern. On the other hand, Spivak poses sharp criticism toward the essentialism and identitarianism of the indigenous theories.

Spivak herself faces questions for neglecting the epistemology of caste in the Indian context and its ramification for subject formation of all, especially subaltern women. Even in the discussion of the suicide of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, the casteist formation of her body, knowledge, and social space are not considered by Spivak. It is interesting to note that the caste issue has never been a point of discussion for Spivak, even in her discussion of Indian culture, tradition, and body politics. Of course, Spivak's concern with the issue of *Sati* (widow-sacrifice) was not to initiate a discussion on the ethics and logic of the Hindu-elitist practice. Rather, she was interested in exposing the colonial-patriarchal political agenda that silences the victims. It is unfortunate, however, that she never enters into a radical critique of the caste epistemology of the *sati* practice. This is why Spivak is criticized by the 'indigenous intelligentsia' for neglecting the contestatory knowledges of the 'indigenous people and cultures.'

The historical resistances of 'contested knowledges,'[82] such as Dalit women/Tribal women in India, through which they deconstruct their epistemology and social space, seem to be neglected by Spivak. It is here that indigenous knowledges can contribute many more insights to the Spivakian theory of subalternity. Robert Warrior, a Native American theologian, offers a revision to Spivakian subalternity, claiming that the subaltern can dance and also sometimes be the intellectual.[83] The revision that comes from indigenous theologians is primarily of the second part of the Spivakian notion of subalternity. They argue that Spivak's exhortation is more to elites and intellectuals to check the process of hearing subaltern voices. They argue that Spivak is more concerned about the question: How is receptivity of the subaltern voice among intellectuals and social activists? On the other hand, indigenous theoreticians and theologians are interested in the second part of Spivakian subalternity: How do the silenced speak? If they don't speak, they cry, they laugh, they preach, and they dance. How can it be counter-imaginative, counter-communicative in resistance to the hegemonic systems of oppression? At the same time, the Spivakian invocation to the indigenous epistemologies to deconstruct themselves by rejecting their essentialist/–identitarianist social positions and affirm their *difference* and *alterity*, still remains valid and significant. It is one of the major terrains from which Spivak keeps her distance from

other postcolonials who still search for the naïve indigenous epistemologies and spiritualities without recognizing the changes that impact them in the neo-capitalist economy and culture.[84]

Conclusion

While problematizing the question of representation, especially representing the rhetorical space of the subordinated other, the Spivakian postcolonial deconstructive (feminist) epistemology attends to the difference and alterity of the subaltern voice, which is im/possible for any kind of colonial program of 'worlding' and 'othering.' The most significant contribution of the Spivakian epistemology is that it invites all colonial discourses, whether cultural, political, economical, historiographical, feminist or theological, to deconstruct the assumed positionalities and to stop locating 'the other' from their own privileged subjectivities. Any colonized academia, whether it be Western or anti-Western, which homogenizes and essentializes its others, is invited to learn to learn from the subordinated other in order to reimagine their own otherness. In other words, the subordinated other –the non-essentialized, engendered, and non-fixed rhetorical (non) space—interrogates any kind of representations of subordination and marginalization. The Spivakian notion of planetarity further legitimizes the process of the uncloseting of subjectivity, otherness and transcendence.

The Spivakian understanding of the *detranscendelized sacred* signals a de-ontological notion of divinity as it overcomes the onto-theological constraints of conceiving God as *she/he/it*. The body is conceived as metapsychological where we feel and live in a radical alterity, and the notion of a 'deconstructive embrace' of *planetary love* point towards a post-humanist deconstructive philosophy and theology. *Learning to learn from below* repositions ourselves and invites us to live in an ethically responsible manner, where our ethics, theology, and politics interface and interrogate each other. The significant contribution of Spivak to theory, philosophy and theology is that she unties the notions of God, self, and other from their rigid locations of certainties and enclosures and exhorts us to listen to the silence through which the subordinated others speak or unspeak. Thus Spivakian 'subordinated other' offers a theology of an 'immanent God' through which the dichotomy between transcendence and immanence, and the dialecticality between the self and the other is denied. Contrary to the philosophies of 'hyper transcendence' and the 'proto-poststructuralist postcolonialism,' the Spivakian 'subordinated other' signifies a theology of

God and the other, which is simultaneously apophatic and kataphatic—the irreducible and relational.

The Spivakian 'subordinated other' signifies a counter pedagogy through which the relationship between teacher and student, educator and educated, and the intellectual and the subaltern are reconfigured and reimagined. This counter pedagogy is a 'training in the imagination' by which the rural poor are invited to recognize the power structure implicated in the social democracy that prevents them from effective participation in the political process. At the same time, it invites the human rights worker and the social justice activist to realize the inability of civil rights to reach the subalterns, and to recognize the 'subordinate cultures of responsibility' toward the subalterns. This is the politics of 'deconstructive embrace' and the epistemology of 'planetary love.' The ontology is located here in the political practices of love in which God is detranscendelized and the other is de-othered.

The next chapter explores the theological implications of the Spivakian notion of 'subordinated other.' The postcolonial, process, and ecofeminists who engage with Spivak open up new vistas for Spivakian theories and envisage theology as it is dialogically connected with philosophy, politics, science, and art. Analyzing the theological discourses of Mayra Rivera, Kwok Pui-lan, Wonhee Anne Joh, Vitor Westhelle, Whitney Bauman, and Catherine Keller, the next chapter intends to reconfigure the doctrinal discourses of God, Human being, and Creation. The main intention is to address the interface between Spivak and theology by attending to appropriations of contemporary theologians who formulate various theologies according to Spivakian notions of *subalternity*, *marginality* and *planetarity*. Ultimately, it is here where theology becomes a critique of the Theology of the 'beyond.'

Notes

1. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 72.
2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is best known for her contributions on contemporary cultural studies and critical theories. Spivak was born in India in 1942 and studied in US. Currently she holds the Avalon Foundation Professor of the Humanities at the Columbia University of New York. Spivak's publication includes translations, books and numerous articles. The first and famous of her translation is Derrida's Of Grammatology

(Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). Her books include *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (Routledge, 1987); *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (Routledge, 1993) in which Spivak offers strategies for improving higher education on a global scale; *Thinking Academic Freedom in Gendered Post-Coloniality* (University of Cape Town Press, 1993); *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Harvard University Press, 1999); *Death of a Discipline* (Columbia University Press, 2003); *Other Asias* (Blackwell, 2007), and *An Aesthetic Education in The Era of Globalization* (London: Harvard University Press, 2012).

3. *Subaltern Studies Collective* consists of certain historians who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Studies. The group—formed by Ranajit Guha, and initially including Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman and Gyan Pandey—has produced five volumes of *Subaltern Studies: essays relating to the history, politics, economics and culture of subalternity.*
4. The term 'othering' denotes the colonial process through which the colonized is seen as different/variant/abnormal from the norm of the colonizers. The question of 'othering' has been problematized by the postcolonial theorists and Spivak carried on this discussion in connection with the question of 'worlding.' Spivak addresses the question of the "worlding" of the other through which she destabilizes both colonial and postcolonial representations of subaltern subject.
5. Mark Lewis Taylor, "Subalternity and Advocacy as Kairos for Theology" in *Opting for the Margins, Postmodernity and Liberation in Christian Theology*, ed. Joerge Rieger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 23–44.
6. John D. Caputo and Michael Scanlon differentiate two types of postmodern responses to transcendence: 'hyper transcendence' and 'post-transcendence.' hyper transcendence offers a notion of more transcendent vision and the post-transcendence signifies the critique of the hyper transcendence position. John D Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, ed., *Transcendence and Beyond: A Postmodern Inquiry* (Indiana: Indian University Press, 2007), 7.
7. Sumit Chakrabarti, *The Impact of the Postcolonial Theories of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and HomiBhabha on Western Thought; The Third-World Intellectual in the First-World Academy* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010).
8. Spivak's approach is often describes as a journey back and forth between thinking, research, writing and teaching- what she calls the 'itinerary' of her thinking. Landry and MacLean cited by Catarina Kinnavall, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Critical*

Theorists and International Relations (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 318.

9. Methodologically speaking, Spivakian method is a non-method, which is not just interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary; rather it is non-disciplinary, trans-theoretical, and constantly open to revision. Spivak talks about the death of discipline. See, Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (Columbia University Press, 2003).
10. It is being coined after the Toni Morrison's term 'Dancing Mind.' Toni Morrison, cited by Kwok Pui-lan, "What has Love to Do with It?" in *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 32.
11. Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (London: Polity Press, 2007), 3.
12. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978), 2.
13. Sumit Chakrabarti, *The Impact of the Postcolonial Theories of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha on Western Thought*, 180.
14. Spivak hesitates to be located as a postcolonialist, even though she is designated as one among the 'Postcolonial Trinity'. Edward Said and HomiBhabha are the two other most influential exemplars of postcolonial theory. One of the main reasons for this rejection of the label 'postcolonial' is an increasing recognition that postcolonial theory focuses too much on past forms of colonial domination, and is therefore inadequate to criticize the impact of contemporary global economic domination of the economic agencies of the west on the economies and societies of the global South. See for more detailed discussion, Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Ethics*, 2.
15. Spivak is often called a "feminist-Marxist-deconstructivist"; see MacCabe, Foreword, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), ix. However, Spivakian usage of deconstruction is affirmative and thus she calls herself as a 'stain' on the Derridean deconstruction.
16. Sumit Chakrabarti, *The Impact of the Postcolonial Theories of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and HomiBhabha on Western Thought*; 180.
17. Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 116.
18. Spivak reads Marx through the lenses of Derridean deconstruction and feminism. The foundationalist approach of Marxism that legitimizes a monolithic reading of social structure and an essentialist social location for the marginalized, provoke Spivak to propose a project of subalternity through which she rescue the marginality from any kind of enclosure. See, Sumit Chakrabarti, *The Impact of the Postcolonial Theories*, 320.
19. Spivak criticizes Marx for holding a unilateral view of the gendered international division of labor that ignores the problem of women. Spivak,

The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 100.
20. Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critique*, 121.
21. Spivak, 'French feminism in an International Frame,' in *In Other Worlds*, 136.
22. Ibid.
23. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 390.
24. Ibid., 386.
25. Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices and Politics* (London: Verso, 1997), 92.
26. Ritu Birla, "Postcolonial Studies", in *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 88.
27. Sangeeta Ray, "An Ethics of the Run," cited by Stephen D. Moore, "Situating Spivak" in *Planetary Loves*, 17.
28. As Graham Ward suggests the Spivakian feminist epistemology is to be analyzed in order to re-examine the traditional doctrines of systematic theology and even envisage a feminine systematic theology. Graham Ward, *Theology and Contemporary Critical Theory* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), 42.
29. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. And ed. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 52–120.
30. Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, 96.
31. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 28.
32. RanajitGuha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, Vol. I (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), vii.
33. For a detailed study of the epistemological trajectories of the category-subalternity in the theoretical methodology of the Subaltern Study Collective, see the introductory essay 'A Brief History of Subalternity' in *Reading Subaltern Studies*, ed. David Ludden (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 1–42.
34. Bill Aschroft, Gareth Grifith, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies* (London: 1999), 217.
35. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*,262.
36. Ibid., 273.
37. Spivak, *The Spivak Reader*, 292.
38. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 274.
39. Ibid., 307.
40. Ibid., 247.
41. Ibid., 72–74.
42. Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), 205.

43. Chakravorty, Milevska, and Barlow, *Conversations with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (London and New York: Seagull Books, 2006), 64.
44. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera, eds., *Planetary Loves*, 10–11.
45. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 310.
46. Spivak, *The Post-Colonial critic*: *Interviews*, *Strategies*, *Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Rutledge, 1990), 158; Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera, eds., *Planetary Loves*, 145–6.
47. According to Spivak, 'Echo' is an attempt to give women a space to deconstruct her out of the representation and non-representation, however imperfectly. See, Spivak, 'Echo,' *The Spivak Reader*, 177.
48. Spivak, *Other Asias*, 17.
49. 'Native Informant' is the category which denotes the native people who may be the academicians, politicians, economists or social activists who represent whole native people to the European continent. Sanders Mark, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, *Live Theory* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), 10.
50. Spivak, The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview, in *Mapping Subaltern Studies and The Postcolonial*, ed. Vinayak Chaturvedi (London and New York: Verso, 2000), 324–340.
51. Simon Swift, "Contours of Learning: On Spivak," *Parallax*, 17 no. 3 (2011), 1–3.
52. Ibid., 269.
53. Spivak, *Death of Discipline*, 12–13.
54. Spivak, *Other Asias*, 36–7.
55. Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, 60.
56. William Paul Simmons, *Human Rights Law and the Marginalized Other* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 141.
57. Simmons, *Human Rights Law and the Marginalized Other*, 142.
58. Spivak, *Death of Discipline*, 72.
59. According to Spivak, the body is metapsychological where you feel and live in a radical alterity.
60. Ritu Birla, "Postcolonial Studies," in *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 97.
61. Spivak, "Love: A Conversation," in *Planetary Loves*, 60.
62. Ibid., 62.
63. Kwok Pui-lan, "What has Love to Do with It? Planetarity, feminism, and Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 33.
64. Susan Abraham, "Detranscendalizing Postcolonial Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 80.
65. Spivak, "Love: A Conversation," in *Planetary Loves*, 60.
66. Mark Lewis Taylor, "Subalternity and Advocacy as Kairos for Theology," in *Opting for the Margins*, 40–41.

67. Susan Abraham, "The Pterodactyl in the Margins: Detranscendalizing Postcolonial Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 81.
68. Jea Sophia Oh, *A Postcolonial Theology of Love*: *Planetarity East and West* (California: Sopher Press, 2011), 81.
69. Mayra Rivera, "Ghostly Encounters: Spirits, Memory, and the Holy Ghost," in *Planetary Loves*,135.
70. Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching in the Machine*(London: Routledge, 1993), 177.
71. William Paul Simmons, *Human Rights Law and the Marginalized Other*, 141.
72. Spivak, *The Spivak Reader*, 4.
73. Mayra Rivera, 115.
74. Spivak, "A Moral Dilemma," cited from Ritu Birla, "Postcolonial Studies," 98.
75. Stephen Morton, "Subalternity and Aesthetic Education in the Thought of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak," in *parallax*, 17 no. 3 (2011), 70–83.
76. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 382–3.
77. Spivak, *A Critique of the Postcolonial Reason*, 355 n. 59.
78. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera, eds., *Planetary Loves*, 67–68.
79. Susan Abraham, "The Pterodactyl in the Margins: Detranscendentalizing Postcolonial Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 79–101 at 80. Susan Abraham analyses the significance of Spivakian feminist epistemology for envisaging a postcolonial feminist theology. See, Susan Abraham, *Identity*, *Ethics*, *and Nonviolence in Postcolonial Theory*, *ARahnerian Theological Assessment* (New York: Palgrave, 2007).
80. Spivak seems to be skeptical about the program of theology. Spivak acknowledges the role of theology, but keeps a "but" always. She explains this: "I am always a creature of "buts"—as has been said forever about liberation theology by people like me—cynical, awful, unbelieving people—I wish we could have had the liberation without the theology." Spivak, "Love: A Conversation," in *Planetary Loves*, 71.
81. For example, see Jodi A. Byrd and Michael Rothberg, "Between Subalternity and Indegeneity: Critical Categories for Postcolonial Studies," in *Interventions*, 13:1, 1–12; Robert Warior, "The Subaltern Can Dance, and So Sometimes Can the Intellectual," *Interventions*, 13:1, 85–94.
82. Michel Foucault says that there are knowledges in history that have been disqualified as inadequate, located down in the hierarchy and subjugated as "low ranking knowledges." Steven Seidman calls them "contested knowledges." Steven Seidman, *Contested Knowledge* (USA: Blackwell, 1994).
83. Robert Warrior, "The Subaltern Can Dance, and So Sometimes Can the Intellectual," *Interventions*, 13:1, 85–94; Jodi A. Byrd and Michael Rothberg, "Between Subalternity and Indegeneity: Critical Categories for Postcolonial Studies," in *Interventions*, 13:1, 1–12.

84. Susan Abraham, while signifying Spivak for a postcolonial feminist theology, relates Spivakian epistemology with the traditional Hindu-Brahmanic notion of *Advaita*. Susan Abraham, "Detranscendentalizing Postcolonial Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 80. Kwok Pui-lan, in her article "What has Love to Do with It?" in *Planetary Loves*, tries to romanticize indigenous cosmologies without attending the history of its discursive formation (31–45).

CHAPTER 4

God, Human, and Creation: Spivak and Postcolonial Theologies

Abstract This chapter tries to engage with contemporary postcolonial and Ecofeminist theologians who interact with the Continental (and the post-Continental) philosophies of God and the other signifying the Spivakian theoretical notions of *subalternity*, *marginality,* and *planetarity.* By engaging with Mayra Rivera, Catherine Keller, W. Anne Joh, Kwok Pui-lan, Vitor Westhelle, and Whitney Bauman, this chapter deals with the postcolonial theologies of God, Human, and Creation and explains how they interrogate the Continental philosophies. By bringing in responses from indigenous theologians, this section attempts to address the flaws in Spivakian philosophy, specifically on the issue of the interstice between indegeneity and subalternity.

Keywords Postcolonial theologies • Theopolitics • Political theology • Planetary theology • Deconstructive embrace • Detranscendentalized sacred • Multiple transcendence • Relational transcendence

> "The projection of a transcendent outside as a sustaining precondition, Theology always shows its 'imperio-colonial sense.'"
>
> Mark Lewis Taylor[1]

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's approach to postcolonial theory is unique and distinctive. Unlike the other representatives of postcolonial theory, such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, Spivak pays more attention to the

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economic, cultural, and political facts of present postcolonial circumstances, and the international division of labor and its cultural and political consequences in which postcolonial nations are embedded.[2] Within the postcolonial framework, she directs her focus on the colonial imprints on the gendered subaltern who are most silenced within colonial and postcolonial institutional structures, textualities and practices. Thus, the Spivakian approach locates itself in a post-postcolonialist rhetorical location that is being termed as 'postcoloniality.'[3] Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*: *Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* explains her contentions with so-called postcolonial theory that has become "a thing of the past, an unproblematized past that grounds a homogenous 'postcolonial identity and identitarianism.'"[4]

The postcolonial theology that emerged in the mid-1990s began in the field of biblical studies through which the ancient imperial context of the biblical texts and their use in Western colonial adventures were exposed and interrogated.[5] The eruption of this postcolonial theology marked a new phase in the theological program and, as Vitor Westhelle comments, 'it initiated the indisposition or inquietude toward the hegemonic canons of Western theology.'[6]Spivakian notions of postcoloniality, subalternity, and planetarity have been appropriated by contemporary postcolonial theologians in order to address the colonial implications embodied in the formulation of Christian doctrines. This chapter will analyze the interactions between Spivak and postcolonial theologians in order to sketch out the contours of the interface between Spivak and theology and thereby unsettle the settled discourses on the doctrine of God, Human, and Creation in contemporary postmodern/postcolonial epistemological context.

Spivak, Theology and Theopolitics

In his brilliant exposition on the ethico-political content of theology and its implications for the theoretical positions of political philosophers, such as Spivak, Zizek and Agamben, Mark Lewis Taylor, in his recently published book *The Theological and the Political*: *On the Weight of the World* distinguishes between Theology and 'the theological.' Alluding to Spivak, Taylor defines 'Theology' as a guild discipline, 'a credentialed profession in the 'Christian West' that typically reflects on doctrines of a religious tradition and fosters an ethos of transcendence.'[7] According to Taylor, 'Theology' is a strict discipline in terms of its dogmatic rigidity and doc-

trinal fixity. The 'theological,' on the other hand, is a: 'spectral haunting Theology, which is already unsettling it, perhaps dissolving it, disseminating it anew among other languages and other disciplinary discourses—on the way to revealing something much more significant than Theology's doctrinally structured ethos of transcendence.'[8]

Taylor proposes theological, in contrast to Theology, as a dimension of agonistic political thought and practice. Unlike the dominant ethos of Theology, which is transcendental and dogmatic, Taylor's theological finds its fullest expression in the "prodigious force of artful signs deployed in spectral practice, and it is born of the struggle of those bearing, resisting, and finding life under 'the weight of the world,' particularly that weight as shifted, or concentrated, in structures of imposed social suffering."[9] Taylor argues that the projection of a transcendent outside as a sustaining precondition, Theology always shows its 'imperio-colonial sense.'[10] He locates his political theorization of the theological in the political philosophies of immanent transcendence, including Spivak, Slavoj Zizek, Allan Badiou, Ranciere and Nancy.

Similarly, Catherine Keller defines contemporary political theology as *theopoetic* since it is aesthetical and eschatological rather than doctrinal in the process of reimagining a radical democracy in the contemporary context of Empire. Keller contends that 'such rhizomatic radicality is not about uprooting our traditions but about exposing them to our confounding togetherness—as species, peoples, genders, sexualities, races, religions, even—Lord help us—our Christianities.'[11] For John D. Caputo, theological is an act of *theopolitic* as it reexamines our theological presuppositions.[12] For Caputo, *theopolitic* is nothing but thinking theology differently, which means to think about God otherwise, to reimagine God. Along with these insights, theology becomes political for Spivak as it destabilizes its imperial-dogmatic rigidity and unsettles the theological certainties in the contemporary postcolonial context.

Interpreting Spivak as a postcolonial Christian philosophy and a planetary theology, Susan Abraham contends that 'theology in view of planetarity must revise its ontological framework and reliance on the traditional theological metaphysics and belief systems in its presentation of the relationship between transcendence and immanence.'[13] Spivak would envisage a theology—if she envisages a theology at all—which is purely materialistic and postcolonial. She talks about the experience of 'deconstructive embrace' through which the dialecticality of the transcendence and immanence is rethought and the dichotomy between self and the other

is rejected. The transcendence is re-located here to a cultural mode and the immediate, the material, and the local is disclosed to its own transcendence. In that sense, theology after Spivak takes a materialistic turn.

Spivak and Postcolonial Theologies

Spivak has become one of the most important interlocutors for postcolonial theologians. It was the Spivakian theorization of the neocolonial Empire that provoked some theologians to de-colonize the Western theological imagination embodied in Christian Theology. The book *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (2004) was an outcome of this desire. To introduce the book, the editors write: 'We use postcolonial theory in ways that commit us to something more than theory–that is, to an engaged and engaging theology, a work of resistance to the layered, ongoing, and novel colonizations of the planet.'[14] Stating that Christian theology suffers from an imperial condition, Catherine Keller signifies the imperative to attend to the excluded people–the colonized other–and their experiences in the theological program. Keller writes: 'with its [Christian Theology] imperial success, the church, one might argue, absorbed an idolatry of identity: a metaphysical Babel of unity, an identity that homogenizes the multiplicities it absorbs, that either excludes or subordinates every creaturely other, alter, subaltern.'[15] For Keller, one of the most important agendas for postcolonial theology is to interrogate the ontological identity of Western Theology and its Omni-God. Taking their cue from Spivak, postcolonial theologians focus on the transgressing space of 'in between' or 'interstitial space' in which the power of hegemony is subverted and the colonial other is de-othered. According to Westhelle, this (non) space is alluring, dynamic and revealing where the subaltern 'preaches' if not speaks.[16]

In order to signify Spivak for a postcolonial theological imagination, Catherine Keller traces Spivak's contentions with liberation theology.[17] According to Spivak, Christian theology does not exceed the 'ebb and flow' of the power of Christianity as a 'religion.'[18] She upholds the view that Christianity like any other 'great religion' in the world is imbricated with power. Spivak interrogates the 'other-worldly transcendence' and the 'super-natural thinking' of (Western) Christian Theology. At the same time, she acknowledges the role of theology as a resource to engage in social analysis and political practice in the contemporary postcolonial context.[19] While signifying the role played by liberation theologies to envisage an ecologically just world, Spivak seems skeptical about their

theological methodology, which is based upon 'individual transcendence' (as she calls it). She writes:

> Having seen, then, the powerful yet risky roles played by Christian liberation theology, some of us have dreamt of an animistic liberation theology to girdle perhaps the impossible vision of an ecologically just world. Indeed the name theology is alien to this thinking. Nature is also super-nature in this way of thinking and knowing…Even super, as in supernatural, is out of the way. For Nature, the sacred other of the human community, is in this thinking, also bound by the structure of ethical responsibility. No individual transcendence theology, of being just in this world in view of the next, however the next is underplayed, can bring us to this.[20]

Spivak shares her desire to have 'liberation without theology.'[21] At this point, Keller raises some questions related to the Spivakian reading of 'animistic liberation theologies' and ecotheologies. Responding to the Spivakian comment on theology that is alien to the thinking of an eco-centric world view, Keller writes: 'But, Spivak's perfunctory critique misses the mark.'[22] Keller, on the other hand, points out some of the liberationist, Eco/feminist theologies that have emerged in the post-War period that interrogated the dualistic thought of the Western imaginary of the divine, and located the notion of transcendence in the materiality of bodyliness. According to Keller, liberation theology in general, especially theologians such as Ivone Gebara, Charles Hartshorne, Grace Jantzen and Sallie McFague, who have approached the universe as the body of God or Divinity as our sacred body, destabilize the other-worldly, super-natural, individual transcendent content of the (Western) Christian theology. And they represent a chorus of voices about which Spivak seems to be ignorant.

Some recent studies, however, take a different stand on this point. While discussing the question of mundane transcendence and enmattered subjectivity in eco-feminist theologies, Anne Elvey contends that the assumed asymmetric relationship between God and nature becomes problematic. According to Elvey, the concept of divine as it sets a 'transcendent Other' outside of the world who is capable enough to come down and touch the earth from beyond becomes problematic.[23] For Anne Elvey, even in Rosemary Radford Reuther's theology of 'immanent transcendence,'[24] we sense a 'transcendent God' who embraces the world. This problem is clearly evident in Elizabeth Johnson also. In Johnson's words:

> Distinct from classical theism which separates God and the world, and also different from pantheism which merges God and the world, panentheism

> holds that the universe, both matter and spirit, is encompassed by the Matrix of the living God in an encircling that generates freedom, self-transcendence, and the future, all in the context of the interconnected whole.[25]

Luke Higgins argues that even in Sallie McFague's theology of creation as the 'body of God' provides room for a pre-eminent spirit:

> In this body model, God would not be transcendent over the universe in the sense of external to or apart from, but would be the source, power, and goal—the spirit—that enlivens (and loves) the entire process and its material forms. The transcendence of God, then, is the pre-eminent or primary spirit of the universe.[26]

While signifying the Spivakian notion of 'detranscendentalized sacred' for postcolonial theological thought, Susan Abraham contends that Spivak invokes theology in order to revise its onto-theological and metaphysical framework. Abraham argues that for Spivak, the relationship between transcendence and immanence shifts to a material and cultural plane while eschewing identitarian cultural conventions. As Abraham highlights, the problem of sexual difference is not ignored in Spivakian thought of the sacred. As she clearly explicates, in Spivakian thought, transcendence is detranscendentalized and brought to the realm of worldly encounters. At the same time, she argues that Spivak's planetary postcolonial thought is not confined to anti-imperial discourse; rather, it goes beyond so-called identitarian postcolonial theological engagements.

Thus, Spivakian thought locates itself in an uncanny space in between postcolonial, postmodern, and liberation theologies. What is specific to Spivak, in contrast to (Western) Christian theology, is that Spivakian detranscendentalized transcendence alludes to an ethico-political theological thought that signifies the immediate, urgent, and present encounters. The Spivakian sacred is encountered in the ethico-political realm of worldly encounters between the self and the other. The Spivakian notion of sacred, or God, differentiates itself from the theistic, monotheistic, and ontological theology of the Western God. In fact, she would like to celebrate the sad demise of the transcendental God and the notion of the 'absolute Other' whether it is the human other or nature. She alludes to an 'enmattered God' as in the case of the Deleuzian *chaosmos*. For Deleuze, *chaosmos* is generated 'from within' by a wholly immanent process of self-organization.[27] Spivak talks about 'planet' through which she envisages a relational, embodied, and multiple transcendence. Contemporary

postcolonial theologians engage with this Spivakian understanding of 'mundane transcendence' in order to revisit the traditional Christian theology of God, human, and creation. The next section offers an analysis of the postcolonial theologies of God, anthropology and creation as they engage with the Spivakian notions of subalternity, marginality, and planetarity.

Postcolonial Theologies of God

Whether it is Western or Eastern, Christian theology of God has had an inseparable relationship with the Western philosophy of God. As Lorant Hegedus contends, 'the *sacra doctrina* had been combined with the *prima philosophia* in Western tradition.'[28] It was the philosophy of God in the ancient Western philosophical tradition that became the theology of God in early patristic and medieval Christian theology. The Platonic and Aristotelian ideas of 'pure actuality,' 'immutability,' and 'impassibility' influenced Western theology from Augustine to Aquinas, who attributed to God 'innate potentiality,' 'final causality,' and the 'inner seed of renewal.' The Eastern fathers' apophatic traditions, and especially the Cappadocian fathers' Trinitarian theology, envisaged a different turn, but did not deny the concept of God as the transcendent beyond. The relationality and multiplicity embodied within Trinitarianism invariably substantiated the monotheistic content of patristic theology.[29]

Modern Western philosophy, founded on the Enlightenment epistemology, carried on the idea of transcendence through the Newtonian 'inertia' and the Hegelian 'Absolute Spirit' (*Geist*), despite its claim to reject religio-centric notions of life. Karl Barth, the most influential theologian of the twentieth century, who described God as the 'wholly Other,' was, in fact, trying to 'rescue' God from the 'pure immanence' of Enlightenment rationality and humanism in the aftermath of World War I. The 'infinite qualitative distinction' between God and human, time and eternity, and culture and revelation, as Barth proclaimed, became a turning point in Western theology (Neo-orthodoxy). Paul Tillich, in his definition of God as the ground of being (being-itself), affirmed the transcendence of God. Tillich says, 'As the power of being, God transcends every being and also the totality of beings-in the world.'[30] John J. Thatamanil, in his comparative study on Sankara and Tillich, argues that the transcendentalism in Tillich does not compete with immanence. Thatamanil is right when he tries to relocate Tillich in a non-dualistic theological framework.[31] However, Tillich still continues to be in an 'inclusive transcendent' theology of God.[32]

Another significant contribution to the theology of life in the twentieth century comes from Jurgen Moltmann, who continued the discussion on the dialecticality of God and creation and of time and eternity. According to Moltmann, the spirit of God who is the 'immanent transcendent'—the operating force of life—accentuates re-creation and affirms life by denying violence against life. However, Moltmann's 'eschatological transcendence' shows its theoretical inclination to the Hegelian *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Similar to the Hegelian framework, Whitehead's process philosophy argues that it is the Spirit (*Geist*) that sets the possibilities and waits for the actualization of the millions of creative events in history.[33] In sum, Mayra Rivera's analysis is absolutely right in connection with the epistemological trajectories of the Western imaginary of God: 'Whether the term 'transcendence' is explicitly invoked or not, the Western imaginary retains the versions of the disembodied controlling power that theism commonly associates with transcendence.'[34]

The emergence of Eco-theologies, liberation theologies, feminist theologies, and the indigenous theological traditions posed radical questions with regard to the 'pure transcendentalism' of the Western imaginary of God. However, studies like Luke Higgins' (a Deleuzian Whiteheadian) and others show that even these liberation theologies have not been able to dispel the 'pure transcendentalism' inherent in the Western imaginary, since they still revolve around the modern Western epistemological locus.[35] On the other hand, while analyzing Deleuzian 'pure immanence' for reimagining an effective liberation theology, Kristien Justaert argues that contemporary theology has to be immanentized in order to reunite spirituality and revolt in a radical way.[36] It seems, however, that the remaining dialecticality of transcendence and immanence; time and eternity; history and eschatology; and the imagined 'true transcendence' and 'pure immanence' still continue to haunt the Western imaginary of God. Postcolonial theologies of God emerge out of this valid critique of the Western theology of God. In postcolonial theologies, God is de-transcendentalized and located on the plane of immanence (of course, not pure immanence for Catherine Keller and Mayra Rivera).

Relational Transcendence: Mayra Rivera and Catherine Keller

One of the significant works that appropriates the Spivakian theory of planetarity to formulate a postcolonial theology of God is Mayra Rivera's *The Touch of Transcendence*. Based on the postcolonial theological frame-

work, she argues that in Western theology, salvation is located beyond the self, community, and nation. For the West, salvation is an experience of exteriority. The subjectivity of the other is always tied to the self-defining capacity of the self (i.e., the West). This is the crucial point of departure for Rivera's postcolonial theology of God.[37] She contends that it is this logic of beyondness that legitimizes the idea of colonization and the extermination of the native people and their land. For her postcolonial theology of God, the transcendence is not located beyond, rather; it may be touched and embraced from within, as Mark Lewis Taylor intuits, by the postcolonial spirit.[38]

In response to the Spivakian planetarity, Rivera offers a model of 'relational transcendence.' She places the question of transcendence in a multiplicity of relations. It is in the flesh of relations that transcendence happens. The space in which the transcendence happens is the site of the intimate embrace, the shared place of our ethical actions, the interval that protects the otherness of the other. For Rivera, 'space' evokes images of intrinsic relations between materiality and the transforming energies of life.[39] She asks, "Is this not what theology calls 'creation?'" According to Rivera's relational transcendence, there is no dichotomy between God and creation. God is not just creating, but begetting—bringing forth from within God-self. 'This beginning like our beginning in the womb evokes an encounter before any encounter in which shared intimacy brings forth otherness, difference, beginnings.'[40]

In Rivera's 'relational transcendence,' God is seen as the 'multiple singularity' that joins together all creatures—creatures that are themselves irreducible in the infinite multiplicity of their own singularity. This radically inclusive reality relates us to one another while maintaining a space of difference between us. This 'intermediary space' is not null and void; rather, it is a space that nurtures each one of us. Rivera comments: 'It is in this 'space of difference' the needs of the Other touch me.'[41] It is the place where we experience the glory of God. She affirms that the glory of God is always encountered as flesh. It is in this 'touch of transcendence' that we experience the glory of God in the flesh of our encounter with the Other.

In her Tehomic theology, Keller defines God as the groundless ground of everything.[42] Creation comes out of a *tehom*—the deep that is the matrix of possibilities; not from nothing, as Western theology establishes. Keller argues that the Western Christian tradition has usually been *tehomophobic*—fearful of 'the deep.' She contends that for the Western imaginary, the deep, the chaos, the darkness, the nothing, the absence and so on are

not just 'things' to be subordinated or controlled, but also to be annihilated. It exemplifies the Western ontology and metaphysics that hierarchically places light over darkness, order over chaos, transcendence over immanence, human beings over the earth, and men over women. Thus, according to the Western Christian tradition, Keller reveals that the *creatio ex nihilo* is nothing but a doctrine of salvation that proclaims the victory of the ideal over the material, which is chaotically (dis) ordered.

As a counter to *creatio ex nihilo*, Keller suggests *creatio ex profundis*, which means creation out of 'everything.' There is no original unity, but only complex pluri-singular beginnings. As Plumwood comments, Keller's *Creatio ex profundis* re-locates and re-connects the relationship in a 'radical materialism.'[43] Unlike the traditional Christian doctrine of creation based on the logic of *creatio ex nihilo*, Keller's Tehomic theology, or the theology of becoming, has no room for an Omni God by whom the creation happens and returns. The theology of becoming, as Keller explicates, 'is neither monistic nor dualistic, proposes pluralism not of many separate ones but of plurisingularities, of interdependent individuation, constantly coming, flowing, through one another.'[44] According to Keller, there is no 'outside space'—outside as transcendence. Keller alludes to the notion of God as relational, embodied and multiple, in contrast to the Western Christian notion of the Omni God. It is interesting to note her paraphrase of the text: 'In the Beginning: a plurisingularity of universe, earth echoing chaos, dark deep vibrating with spirit, creates.'[45]

In conversation with the Spivakian notion of planetarity, Keller argues that no locality can be located apart from its interrelations. It is a kind of interstitial planetarity that is 'not bounded from within, by a pure immanence, or from without, by a supernatural transcendence. Creation takes form within an infinite ecology of relations.'[46] What is crucial in Keller's theology of becoming is a strong notion of a relative self and an open God—open to the continuing creation. God in Keller is a 'plurisingularity' that is, one of becoming and salty by the immanence.[47] In contradiction to the Western self-enclosed deity, Keller defines God in terms of ever creating fluidity. Fluidity denotes multiplicity at the very heart of divine being and becoming. Keller explains this:

> Divine multiplicity is characterized by fluidity, porosity, interconnection, temporality, heterogeneity, and a-centered relation. But divine multiplicity actually flows, bodes, and bodies in spite of all of those abstractions; it is utterly there and so impossible to abstract, after all. It is incarnation, again. After All.[48]

In sum, Spivak becomes an effective interlocutor for a postcolonial theology of God. As Keller understands, Spivakian planetary love signifies a *counterimperial ecology of love*. Laurel C. Schneider terms it love that we 'cannot not want.'[49] This postcolonial love is not just love for the other, or solidarity with the other. Here, the other is not a 'transcendent Other,' but a relational, differentiated, and embodied other. God for Spivak signifies the ethics of responsibility to de-other the other. The age old Western dialectics between transcendence and immanence here takes a 'transimmanent turn' signified by the notion of relationality. As Keller contends, God becomes the embodiment of 'plurisingularity' in which everything is connected and differentiated. Here, the Western Omni-God is being rejected and 'relational transcendence' is affirmed.

However, both Rivera's definition of transcendence as infinite relationality and Keller's ever creating fluidity remain within the Western dialectics of transcendence and immanence. Rivera does not deny transcendence; rather, she redefines it in terms of relationality. Even though she denies any form of supernatural transcendence, Keller affirms at least the 'rumors of transcendence.' For Keller, the transcendence is to be immanentized and, at the same time, immanence cannot be the pure immanence. It is here the marginalized people who are being alienated out of the 'touch of transcendence,' raise questions about the theological affirmation of the transcendentability of all creation. As Ernesto Laclau comments, there are lived experiences of the 'failed transcendence.'[50] For example, Dalits in India are denied transcendence by the hegemonic caste epistemologies that render them as untouchables. Dalits' resistance to caste theology is not based on the reaffirmation of transcendence; rather, they reject it on the basis of their materialistic philosophy of life. Spivak, on the other hand, locates herself in the Hindu-Orthodox theologies, like *Advaita*, which never challenges the caste practice India. Epistemologically speaking, postcolonial theologies compromise with the anti-colonial/nationalist traditions and further cauterize the people who are not even at the margins. It is here that both postcolonial theologies and Spivak herself face the allegation of de-limitation and cauterization. It points towards a new turn in the theology of God—a materialist turn—that even denies the notion of transcendence that is to be related or detranscendentalized.

Postcolonial Theological Anthropologies

Spivak's description of the human as 'intended toward the other' offers a dialogical space for theological anthropology.[51] Spivakian subalternity, or the subordinated other, offers a 'third position' to being human other

than the self and the other. It signifies a marginal position of 'quite-other.' It is a living position of alterity and deference. It evokes a non-essentialist and non-identitarian social position. It is a political location of de-othering as it denies all kinds of epistemological practices of distancing. It is a rhetorical space of postcoloniality through which all kinds of subjugation are being denied. The Spivakian notion of planetarity alludes to a post-materialistic philosophy of body through which all kinds of hegemonic traces are being resisted. Spivakian planetary love further defines it as an open space for the multiple practices of love. W. Anne Joh calls this 'Love's Multiplicity.'[52] This pluralization of love envisages a 'counter-imperial ecology of love' and, at the same time, challenges the Western foreclosed love—the love for the other. This section considers the anthropological issues in the Spivakian theory of de-othering the other and tries to envisage a subaltern theological anthropology by analyzing some of the postcolonial theologians who engage Spivak.

Christian theological anthropology is basically founded on the notion of *imago dei*. *Imago dei* affirms that human beings are created in the 'image of God.' The early church fathers defined the notion of 'image of God' as the 'qualitative' continuity between divine and human. At the same time, they denied any ontological relationality between God and the human/world. They were hesitant to compromise the absolute otherness of God. Modern Western metaphysics, on the other hand, offered an onto-theological understanding of being and God. Based on modern Western Enlightenment philosophy, being in modern theology did assume an essentialist theoretical position. This modern essentialist being was a historical subject who moves towards its historical fulfillment. God the absolute Being was also explained in terms of its historical revelation. Critiquing this notion of the ontological and metaphysical being/Being, postmodern theology offers a theology of an *enigma dei*. It is an enigmatic God—an impossible God—a *mysterious tremendum* who becomes a 'groundless ground' for the post-metaphysical and de-ontological theology, anthropology, and politics. The *enigma die* signifies a de-ontological anthropology. Levinasian, Derridean, and Marion's 'transcendent Other' sought to address the question of other in this ethico-political context, but fall on the side of transcendence. Spivak interrupts, here, with her very specific notion of the 'subordinated other,' that signifies a postcolonial imagination of human subjectivity and body.

Spivakian subaltern anthropology follows the postcolonial theory of de-othering. Taking its cue from the Foucauldian critique of the unilateral

notion of human being, postcolonial theory addressed the issue of 'othering' and 'worlding' of non-European people and their cultures. Edward Said's *Orientalism* envisaged a postcolonial phase of looking at anthropology from the 'other side' of history, politics, culture, and theology. Spivak and Homi Bhabha extended this discussion in a postmodern epistemological framework and examined the question of 'in-between' or 'hybridity,' rather than the Saidian essentialized self and the fixed colonial other. The Spivakian theory of 'subordinated other' mainly engenders the other and thereby offers a radical ontology. Spivak's theory of planetarity offers a shift in theological anthropology in terms of intersubjectivity, embodiment, and multiple singularity. Here I will discuss two Asian theological engagements with Spivak's notion of planetarity in order to explain the contours of the postcolonial anthropology: Wonhee Anne Joh's planetary love and Kwok Pui-lan's 'correlative immanence.'

Planetary Love and Correlative Immanence: W. Anne Joh and Kwok Pui-lan

Wonhee Anne Joh examines the Spivakian notion of foreclosure in conjunction with Julia Kristeva's abjection. While abjection reflects the state of our psyche in the making of our self, Spivak's use of foreclosure adds a critical postcolonial sociopolitical dimension to abjection. Wonhee Anne Joh tries to theologize the Korean concept of *jeong* in order to signify Spivakian notion of planetary love that dismantles the dichotomy between the self and the other and offers a postcolonial embrace of mutuality and difference.[53] Contrary to the Western notion of love that forecloses itself before the practices of 'othering' and interpretations of love, Anne Joh proposes *jeong* as an alternative practice of 'de-othering.' For Joh, the *jeong* points towards a radical practice of love that encompasses, and is not limited to, the notions of compassion, affection, solidarity, vulnerability, and forgiveness.[54] Compassion, according to *Jeong*, is not just pity, but rather 'a disturbance of violent relatedness' and 'mutually assured vulnerability.'

Experience of *jeong* between the self and the other opens up a space in which we begin our journey of awakening to the other and to the self. *Jeong* allows one to recognize the complexity, vulnerability, and fragility of the other. *Jeong* envisages a subject without the foreclosure of the other. It is a kind of 'stepping into the space of the other' with 'bottomless respon-

sibility' to know how to learn from the other as Spivak passionately writes: ' a reaching toward the distant other by the patient power of imagination, a curious kind of identity politics, where one crosses identity, as a result of migration or exile.'[55] Like *teleopoiesis* , *jeong* generates possibilities for 'touching the distant other with imaginative effort.' According to Joh, *Jeong* is a counter practice of love that affirms justice and equality in social life. It initiates new ways of loving and thus offers new ways of being in the world. It evokes *metanoia*—the change of heart that allows one to realize that our being is always positioned/directed toward the other.

While working on the notion of Spivakian planetarity, Kwok Pui-lan, offers a postcolonial theology of 'correlative immanence' through which she problematizes the autonomous notion of self and the other that the Western imaginary has imagined and legitimized through its theology and philosophy. Pui-lan initiates a postcolonial deconstructive thought on the doctrine of creation based on her notion of 'correlative immanence' though which she intends to 'rewrite' the relationship between the Creator and creation, God and the world. In Pui-lan's 'correlative immanence' the God incarnate shares the same stuff with the trees, the stars, and our very flesh. While rejecting the notion of Western transcendence, Pui-lan finds fecundity in the non-European cosmologies that stress intersubjectivity and 'interbeing.'

Unlike the Aristotelian logic of the dichotomized self and other, Pui-lan argues that 'non-European' culture is inherently inclusive and relational. She refers to Chinese philosophy, poetry, painting, and aesthetics that propose the inseparable relationality between self, other, and the earth. While lifting up the Spivakian notion of subalternity for a postcolonial feminist theology, Pui-lan argues that the pedagogy of 'learning to learn from below' invokes feminist theology to the acts of remembrance, lamentation, and celebration through which we are all called to listen to the 'echo' of the 'gendered subaltern' who has been silenced within the hegemonic power structures.[56]

The problem with these postcolonial anthropologies is that they romanticize indigenous cultures and traditions. Often they neglect the contradictions within the native traditions that are even contradictory to each other. Postcolonial anthropology becomes problematic when it valorizes the anti-colonial, native, non-European cultural traditions in a unilateral oppositional identity and location. Spivakian anthropology, in her notion of planetary love, reimagines the self that is always angled towards the other. Living as planetary subjects means to affirm the mutuality and the

alterity of the subjectivity. It is to live in a space of 'quite-other.' It is a kind of self-education into the mindset of being planetary creatures rather than domineering or victimized subjectivities. Spivak exhorts us: 'We must persistently educate ourselves into this peculiar mindset.'[57]

Postcolonial Theologies of Creation

Nature has been considered as a 'colonial other' in the Enlightenment rationality that legitimized the anthropocentric world view. The dualistic thinking that hierarchically located transcendence over and against immanence gave an inferior status to nature. Nature in modernity was objectified for the project of human development. Critiquing the modernist notion of nature as the other, postmodernity envisaged it as a 'transcendent Other'. As the absolute other, nature eludes us. Critiquing the postmodern/poststructural theories that foreclose the 'colonized other,' Spivak envisages a 'subaltern turn' that offers ethical responsibility for the subordinated other—nature. Here, nature upholds a position of planetarity. Invoking human beings as planetary subjects, Spivak calls for ecological living within a complex organic macrocosm where all things together endlessly symbiotically create life.[58]

This section will illumine the Spivakian notions of 'detranscendelized sacred,' the 'subordinated other' and planetarity to revisit the Western doctrine of creation and to offer a constructive proposal for a subaltern theology of nature. The embracing of the other while affirming its difference, in effect, interrogates the act of creation from a 'transcendent' God who is absolutely Other to creation. When nature assumes the position of the subordinated other, the alterity of both God and nature are detranscendelized and the proximity is affirmed. By analyzing some of the significant works on creation theology that engage with Spivak, the next section will propose a subaltern doctrine of Creation.

Spacialized Transcendence and Creatio Continua: Vitor Westhelle and Whitney Bauman

Signifying the Spivakian theory of subalternity, Vitor Westhelle defines postcolonial theologies as indisposition or inquietude toward the hegemonic canons of Western theology.[59] Westhelle, on the other hand, looks at the subaltern theologies that focus on the transgressing space of 'in between' in which the power of hegemony is subverted and the voice of

the subaltern is heard. This alluring space, for Westhelle, is the space of marginality and subalternity.

Westhelle engages with the theology of Creation from the perspective of the displaced in Latin America. Locating himself in the Liberation-postcolonial-subaltern theological stream, Westhelle defines history as the 'place of transcendence' where God and humanity/creation collaborate. It is the place of *theopraxis*. It is in this *theopraxis* that life in 'fullness' is envisaged and the displaced—the disenfranchised—the colonized experience apocalypse. It is a liminal place—a non space—of *weak epiphany*. The God in this weak epiphany is not a God of power and order; rather, it is a God of vulnerability and disorder. Meditating on the crucified God, Westhelle affirms 'what the cross does is precisely this reorientation of our gaze to this limit, the *eschata*.'[60]

Westhelle emphasizes the epiphany of God within the historicity and the materiality of bodilyness. God is encountered within, never outside, the complexities of life. Salvation is not an eruption from outside, but within the materiality of life. Historicity is not enclosed within; rather, it is open and eschatological. According to his liberation model, it is the im/possibility of the reign of God that makes the prophetic challenges against injustices possible today.[61] Taking his cue from Walter Benjamin's 'chips of Messianic time,' Westhelle's methodological point of negativity embodies a hope against hope—a faith that endeavors to allow the rupture of the eschatological moment in everyday life with its rules, expectations, systems and institutions.[62]

While arguing for an 'immanent transcendence,' as Westhelle describes 'the question of transcendence, for the displaced people on earth, is much more related to fences and walls than to a shiny new day to come,' he quintessentially proposes a radical doctrine of creation shaped in the agony of the Latin American displaced people.[63] According to Westhelle, the term created order that is used in the story of creation in the book of Genesis is an ambiguous concept, since the category 'order' is an ideological disguise for domination, repression, and persecution.[64] He explains: "order becomes the moral parameter to speak about God's will in the midst of the cosmos, justifying the organization of the state. Where order is granted by the head of the state; where order is the result of the demiurgic work of the 'invisible hand' of capitalism; where order is the patriarchal hierarchy; the stability and control of the whole society is granted."[65] Westhelle argues that the question of 'order and progress' was the colonial agenda established in Latin America by the colonizers. 'What

lacks order, lacks goodness.' 'Lack of order is evil.' Here the logic of order becomes a tool for annihilation and marginalization. In this sense, a resistance to this 'order' is a 'disorder' or chaos. Unlike the process theologians who approach *creatio ex nihilo* as a pre-biblical cosmogony, Westhelle argues that it has been used in the Bible, especially in Pauline letters and Maccabees, in terms of doxology. For him, *creatio ex nihilo* is a doxological affirmation of the resurrection of the flesh of the oppressed.[66] For Westhelle, theology of creation for the displaced people of Latin America is nothing but a question of place/space or non-space.

The question of place or no-place in the theology of creation is well explained in Westhelle's book *Eschatology and Space*.[67] He argues that the spatial dimensions of the *eschaton* have been glaringly absent from Western theological discourse.[68] Alluding to Enrique Dussel, Westhelle contends that eschatology is the final realization of the proximity of the origin. *Eschaton* is the location in which the reversal of the order occurs. For him, "the eschatology of the theologies of liberation is not about the order and progress, which suggests a longitudinal paradigm, but about limits, borders, and margins. Its attempt is to make these margins visible, for they are the turning point to another world, a world that can only be devised by those who dare to stand at its threshold and remove the veil that hides the truth beyond it. And herein lies the meaning of 'apocalypse.'".[69]

Westhelle makes use of the Derridean notion of *khora* to explicate this apocalyptical content of non-space, or the question of displacement, as he defines *khora* as 'the space produced in the rupture of space that in itself is no space.'[70] These experiences of displacement, or non-space, are the breaking points, transitions, or new beginnings that are hard to fathom.[71] It is the non-space of the *weak epiphany* through which the *kairos* meet *khora* and the displaced people meet the crucified God.[72] Westhelle's God is a marginal God—a subaltern God—as it reimagines the location of margin as the non-space of *eschatone*. His notion of eschatological space redraws the Western notion of a transcendent God and invokes the marginal and alluric. However, Westhelle's theory of negation of negation that he draws upon from the Frankfurt school, returns him to Hegelian ontology and metaphysics. It is here, the epistemological methodology of liberation theology itself faces interrogation and reimagination.

The second approach comes from Whitney Bauman, who proposes a postcolonial theology of creation by offering a sharp criticism against the creation logic of *creatio ex nihilo*.[73] He argues that *creatio ex nihilo* functions as a foundation for the (Western) Christian logic of domination.

It serves the foundational theological notion of the Western onto-theology and metaphysics that inherits a passion for colonizing the deep, the darkness, and the other—the ostensibly 'undeveloped' natures, cultures, and people. For Bauman, the 'other' means both colonized people and the 'conquered' or 'discovered' land. He argues that *creatio ex nihilo* provided a justification for the colonial concept of 'individual property' articulated by John Locke, along with its corollary, the colonial, national legal claims of 'terra nullius' ('no prior presence' so the land can be conquered) in the Western tradition. Since it legitimized the rationale for the colonization and displacement of the 'non-European' people around the world, Bauman, alluding to Keller, opines that the logic of *creatio ex nihilo* and the theology of God, which provides metaphorical support for it, are to be deconstructed.[74]

As a critique of contemporary eco-theology and environmentalism, Bauman contends that those discourses still argue for the conservation, or preservation, of some type of pure or pristine nature. This type of environmentalism, he continues, "does not offer a challenge to the 'human-nature relationship' and in doing so, it participates in the logic of the separation of God and nature suggested in the formula *creatio ex nihilo*."[75] On the other hand, Bauman proposes a post-colonial theology of God and creation that stems from the notion of the 'beginning,' which is 'bio-historical,' 'collective,' and 'interrelated' rather than from 'origin,' which is monolithic, absolute and colonial.

Instead of *creatio ex nihilo*, Bauman proposes a postcolonial theology of *creatio continua*. According to Bauman, creation is not just static or mute; rather, it is 'emergent,' 'gift,' and 'open-ended.' It is a continuous creation. Bauman opines that the 'gift' notion of creation, rather than that of owned property, enables humans to take responsibility for their co-creative nature-cultures.[76] He wants to re-insert our responsibility into the ongoing process of life. *Creatiocontiniua* offers metaphorical support for earth-full living. For Bauman, God should be described as a bio-historical projection. He defines theology as knowledge of God, which emerges out of a bio-historical context. Secondly, by describing God as a bio-historical projection, we locate ourselves in a 'planetarity' where God is also integrally part of a community-earth-living. *Creatio continua*, unlike *creatio ex nihilo*, rejects an omnipotent God and the linear trajectory of New Creation and salvation housed in it. Even in the patristic notion of New Creation, the creator/creation relationship is tied to the logic of *creatio ex nihilo*. Analyzing the patristic theology in *creatio ex nihilo*, Bauman argues

that they are not devoid of the Omni God who continues to do creation eternally.[77] On the other hand, *creatio continua* is located in a very specific logic of 'planetarity.' Bauman says that Spivakian planetarity provides a more dialogical ground for an ethic between humans and the rest of the world and encourages us to pay more attention to the multi-textured, multi-cultural-natural nature-cultures of specific times and places. He asserts that planetarity is a counter logic of difference, as it is subsumed or denied in the current globalized-marketed logic of sameness.

According to Bauman, this logic of planetarity *creatio continua* enables us to have a postcolonial vision of God-earth-human, which opens to a kind of responsibility and emerging newness—a notion of planetary citizenship. It is an invitation to a postcolonial theology of God who is not the Omni-God, or the creator who creates everything out of nothing. It is a vision of God who is the creativity of the creation bringing newness to it always. It is a kind of counter understanding of creation that is always open to future, open to difference, and open to change. It is an invitation to live 'in-between' nature and culture, human and nonhuman, self and other, and life and death. In a nutshell, Bauman's postcolonial theology of creation stands in solidarity with the colonized and the displaced against the process of colonizing/conquering/discovering land and its people.

Conclusion

The Spivakian interface with theology provokes radical thinking about God, human beings, and nature. These three categories are tied together in a 'counter-imperial ecology of love.' The dialecticality between transcendence and immanence is not denied or settled; rather, it is unsettled from within. The unsettling of this dialectic takes a radical turn towards the subordinated other—the foreclosed other—that postmodern theories of the absolute other fail to recognize. Spivakian planetary love envisages a radical living of *metanoia*—a change of heart in realization with the self and the other. As Kwok Pui-lan rightly puts it: 'Spivak articulates a mode of inhabiting the world that is unsettling, open to the unfamiliar and the unexpected, in a kind of secret longing—I need you.'[78]

Christian philosophy is provoked here to take a 'postcolonial turn' as it destabilizes the Western notion of transcendentalism, which denies the multiplicity of the divine practices of love. Planetary love proposes a theology of God who is enmattered, embodied, and relational. It is through these practices of counter-imperial ecology of love that human

beings touch nature and God—of course, the touch of transcendence. Unlike eco-theology, postcolonial theologies of creation locate themselves within the notion of planetarity, in contrast to Western metaphysics, which invokes love for the othered nature.

However, the postcolonial theoretical baggage of some of the postcolonial theologians tend to valorize or romanticize 'indigenous theologies/–spiritualities/–epistemologies' while they remain over enthusiastic about the Spivakian use of subalternity, marginality and planetarity. Spivakian planetarity is not a call to essentialize the 'indigenous cosmology' or aboriginal inhabitation; rather, it is a moment when the 'indigenous epistemologies' are invited to re-locate themselves out of the fixed notions of identity. It is not a retrieval of the 'indigenous' cosmic view of totality as was the case of the Indian-Hindu philosophy of *Advaita* or *dvaita*, which envisaged a false unity consciousness based on caste epistemology.

The next chapter attends to the dialogue between Spivakian subalternity and indegeneity. Considering the Indian Dalit epistemology and theology, this chapter will interstice Spivak with the indigenous epistemologies through which the subaltern try to represent themselves as creative social agents, and not victims. Delineating Dalits as a de-othered subjectivity and the Dalit God as a non-transcendentalized immanent, the study proposes a Dalit theology of de-othering God in its critical engagement with post-Continental philosophies.

Notes

1. Mark Lewis Taylor, *The Theological and the Political: On the Weight of the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 49.
2. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 1.
3. Taoufiq Sakhkhane, *Spivak and Postcolonialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 11.
4. Ritu Birla, "Postcolonial Studies," 87.
5. Kwok Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995); Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-lan, eds., *Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse*(London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*(Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox); Kwok Pui-lan et al., eds., *Empire and the Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield, UK:

Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed. *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism*: *Contesting the Interpretations* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1998); R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire*: *Postcolonial Explorations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies*: *A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000) are some of the early engagements in postcolonial biblical criticism and theology.

6. Vitor Westhelle, *After Heresy*: *Colonial Practices and Post-Colonial Theologies* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010), 147.
7. Mark Lewis Taylor, *The Theological and the Political*: *On the Weight of the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), xi.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., xii.
10. Ibid., 49.
11. John D. Caputo and Catherine Keller, *Crosscurrents*, Winter 2007, 105–11 at 108.
12. Ibid., 106.
13. Susan Abraham, "The Pterodactyl in the Margins: Detranscendentalyzing Postcolonial Theology," 80.
14. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera, eds., Preface, *Postcolonial Theologies*, *Divinity and Empire* (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), xi.
15. Catherine Keller, "The Love of Postcolonialism, Theology in the interstices of Empire," in *Postcolonial Theologies*, *Divinity and Empire*, 223.
16. Vitor Westhelle, *After Heresy*: *Colonial Practices and Post-Colonial Theologies* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010), 147.
17. Catherine Keller, "The Love of Postcolonialism, Theology in the interstices of Empire," in *Post-Colonial Theologies*, 238–242.
18. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 382.
19. Spivak seems to be skeptical about the program of theology. Spivak acknowledges the role of theology, but keeps a "but" always. She explains this: "I am always a creature of "buts"—as has been said forever about liberation theology by people like me—cynical, awful, unbelieving people—I wish we could have had the liberation without the theology." Spivak, "Love: A Conversation," in *Planetary Loves*, 71.
20. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 382.
21. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera, eds., *Planetary Loves*, 71.
22. Catherine Keller, "The Love of Postcolonialism, Theology in the interstices of Empire," in *Postcolonial Theologies*, 238.
23. Anne Elvey, "Material Elements: The Matter of Women, The Matter of Earth, The Matter of God", in *Post-Christian Feminisms*: *A Critical Approach*, ed. Lisa Isherwood and Kathleen McPhilips (UK & USA: Ashgate, 2008), 53–69.

24. Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The God of Possibilities: Immanence and Transcendence Rethought," The Brighter Side of Faith: *Concilium*: *International Journal for Theology* no. 4 (2000): 45–54.
25. Ibid., 50.
26. Luke Higgins, "Toward a Deleuze-Guattarian Micropneumatology of Spirit-Dust," in *Ecospirit*: *Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, ed. L. Kearns and C. Keller (New York: Fordham Press, 2007), 253.
27. Deleuze develops an evolutionist idea of creation-*chaosmos*. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference* & *Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 299.
28. Lorant Hegedus, *A Study in the Concept of Transcendence in Contemporary German Theology* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1991), 3.
29. Giorgio Agamben argues that the early church fathers' Trinitarian account of the fundamental unity of the Triune God hinges on a distinction "between the being of God and his activity." See, Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and Glory*: *For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, 41. According to Agamben, it was a theological propaganda to accommodate the salvific mission of God which is exterior to the ontology of God within the 'economy of God.' Here, the salvific act of the 'single and unique God' is being accommodated within, without destabilizing the transcendent nature (ontology) of God. Agamben argues that the genealogy of the western notion of governing the whole world can be traced back to the patristic theology of *Oikonomia* which is connected to the logic of 'Oneness'.
30. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 237.
31. John J. Thatamanil, *The Immanent Divine*: *God*, *Creation*, *and the Human Predicament*, *An East-West Conversation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 172.
32. Lorant Hegedus, *A Study in the Concept of Transcendence*, 79.
33. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *The Doctrine of God*, *A Global Introduction*; *A Biblical*, *Historical*, *and Contemporary Survey* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004), 74.
34. Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*: *A Postcolonial Theology of God* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 5.
35. Higgins, "Toward a Deleuze-Guattarian Micropneumatology of Spirit-Dust," 253.
36. Kristien Justaert, *Theology After Deleuze* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), 131.
37. Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*; *A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).
38. Mark Lewis Taylor, "Spirit and Liberation," in *Postcolonial Theologies*, 39–55.

39. Ibid., 130.
40. Ibid., 134.
41. Ibid., 137.
42. Catherine Keller is the professor of constructive theology in the Theological School and the Caspersen Graduate School of Drew University. She is the author most recently of *Face of the Deep*: *A Theology of Becoming*(London and New York: Routledge, 2003); *Apocalypse Now and Then*: *A Feminist Guide to the End of the World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996); and *From a Broken Web*: *Separation*, *Sexism and Self* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986). She co-edited *Process and Difference*: *Between Cosmological and Poststructrualist Postmodernisms* with Anne Daniell (N.Y.: SUNY, 2002), and *Polydoxy*: *Theology of Multiplicity and Relation* with Laurel Schneider (London: Routledge, 2010). She discusses Tehomic theology in her book *Face of the Deep*: *A Theology of Becoming*(London and New York: Routledge, 2003).
43. Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*: *The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 190.
44. Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep*: *A Theology of Becoming*, 179.
45. Ibid., 238.
46. Catherine Keller, *God and Power*, 153.
47. Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep*, 179.
48. Catherine Keller, *On the Mystery*: *Discerning Divinity in Process* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 47.
49. Laurel C. Schneider, "The Love We Cannot Not Want: A Response to Kwok Pui-lan," in *Planetary Loves*, 46–51.
50. Ernesto Laclau, *Populist Reason* (New York: Verso, 2005).
51. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 73.
52. Wonhee Anne Joh, 'Love's Multiplicity: *Jeong* and Spivak's Notes toward Planetary Love.' In *Planetary Loves*, 168–190.
53. Wonhee Anne Joh, "Love's Multiplicity: *Jeong* and Spivak's Notes toward Planetary Love," in *Planetary Loves*, 168–190.
54. Ibid., 178.
55. Spivak, "Harlem," *Social Text* 81 no. 22 (2004), 116.
56. Kwok Pui-lan, "What Has Love to Do with It? Planetarity, Feminism, and Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 31–45.
57. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 73.
58. Jea Sophia Oh, *Postcolonial Theology of Life*: *Planetarity East and West* (Upland, California: Sopher Press, 2011), 106.
59. Vitor Westhelle is professor of Systematic Theology at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Vitor Westhelle, *After Heresy*: *Colonial Practices and Post-colonial Theologies* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010), 147.
60. Vitor Westhelle, *The Scandalous God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 156.

61. Ibid., 59.
62. Ibid., 143.
63. Vitor Westhelle, "Creation Motifs in the Search for a Vital Space: A Latin American Perspective," in *Lift Every Voice*: *Constructing Christian Theologies form the Underside*, ed. S.B. Thistlethwaite and M.P. Engel (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), 146–58.
64. Ibid., 149.
65. Ibid., 149.
66. Ibid., 152.
67. Vitor Westhelle, *Eschatology and Space* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
68. Ibid., 79.
69. Ibid., 81.
70. Ibid., 102.
71. Ibid., 107.
72. Ibid., 132.
73. Whitney A. Bauman, *Theology*, *Creation*, *and Environmental Ethics*; *From Creatio ex Nihilo to Terra Nullius* (New York, London: Routledge, 2009).
74. Whitney A. Bauman, "Creatio ex Nihilo, Terra Nullius, and the Erasure of Presence," in *Ecospirit*, *Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, ed. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 353–372.
75. Ibid., 172.
76. Ibid., 164.
77. Ibid., 175.
78. Kwok Pui-Lan, "What Has Love to Do with It? Planetarity, Feminism, and Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 41.

CHAPTER 5

De-othering God: Dalit Theology After Continental Philosophy

Abstract This chapter offers a constructive proposal for a Dalit theology of an immanent God, or de-othering God, as it emerges out of a materialist epistemology. Engaging with the post-Continental philosophers of immanence, such as Gilles Deleuze, Giorgio Agamben, Catherine Malabou, and Jean-Luc Nancy, this chapter explores the possibility of proposing a Dalit theology of an immanent God—a God free of transcendence. Of course, the fundamental question before us is: how can there be a Dalit theology of God without having any Christian philosophical baggage of transcendentalism? The study ends with a clarion call for the Indian Christian Theology to take a turn towards immanence, which is political and polydoxical in content.

Keywords Dalit theology • De-othering God • Lokayata philosophy • Dalit epistemology • Caste epistemology • Denied transcendence • Offered transcendence • Humanization theologies • Transimmanence • Embodied God • Immanent God

> God is not revealed 'in' the world, but the world itself, as it is thus, and insofar as it is absolutely and irreparably profane, is God.
>
> Giorgio Agamben[1]

From Plato onwards, the Western imaginary has always been transcendentalist and has devalued immanence as an enclosed system of matter, body,

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and being. On the other hand, the philosophers of 'hypertranscendence' in the postmodern period, such as Levinas, Derrida, and Marion, problematized and criticized the traditional images of transcendence for not being transcendent enough since they fail to escape the immanence of being.[2] Spivak, along with other philosophers of the 'post-Continental philosophy,' such as Deleuze, Irigaray, Foucault, Badiou, and Zizek, offer a sharp criticism of transcendentalist Western philosophy and its theistic theological discourses. Unlike others in the 'post-transcendence' philosophical wing, Spivakian notions of planetarity and subalternity signify a de-worlded world, de-othered subjectivity, and de-othered sacred in the postcolonial context.

However, the Spivakian notion of 'the non-duality of twoness' and the fluidity between transcendence and immanence seems to have emerged out of certain Indian philosophical thought streams, such as the *Dvaita* and *Advaita* philosophies. These Indian philosophies, according to Indian indigenous materialist philosophies, embody a bogus transcendentalist epistemological content through which they devalue matter and body, and in turn, discriminate against certain bodies like Dalit bodies as untouchable and irredeemable. This issue actually intensifies the criticism of indigenous theoreticians and theologians who invite Spivak to 'learn to learn' from the subaltern epistemological discourses through which they try to represent their subjectivity and agency self-reflexively. While I agree with some of the concerns raised by the indigenous theoreticians and theologians, I do find the fecundity of Spivakian theories in the process of hearing, or listening, to the subaltern voice through *teleopoisis* as secrete or echo.

This chapter tries to intersect Continental philosophy and Dalit theology. Dalit epistemology as an indigenous knowledge system, which signifies a counter-political ontology and epistemology of resistance, rejects the notion of transcendence, or the notion of a 'transcendent God'/'transcendent Other,' based on the early materialist philosophical traditions in India like *Carvaka/Lokayata* philosophy. This study will analyze how the Dalit theology that emerged out of the materialist philosophy of non-transcendence can be a Christian theology in the contemporary context. What would be a contemporary doctrine of God for Dalit theology from the counter philosophy of (De-othering) God? By analyzing the epistemological trajectories of the Dalit body, this chapter proposes an immanent theology of God that might locate Dalit theology in a post-Continental philosophical context.

Defining Dalit as a Materialist Category

Defining the category of 'Dalit' necessitates an epistemological tour of the historical emergence of Dalit consciousness and the Dalit movement in India.[3] Gopal Guru defines 'Dalit' as 'a category that is historically arrived at, sociologically presented, and discursively constituted'.[4] Guru traces various nomenclatures given to Dalits in India in concordance with the various theoretical and epistemological emphases in colonial and post-colonial modernity. During the colonial period, the British East India Company referred to Dalits as 'the Depressed Classes' who needed empowerment to 'catch up' with the elite class. Indian reformers like Gandhi wanted to call them 'Harijans,' which means the children of God. The reformers wanted to accommodate Dalits into the extended fold of Hinduism. In the post-independence period, the terminology 'Scheduled Castes' came into existence. It was an attempt to define Dalits in terms of the welfare measures of the Nation-state. For the Nation-state, Dalits are a problem to be solved. However, it was the Dalit Panthers Movement in Maharashtra that popularized the term 'Dalit' in the post-Ambedkar era as a mark of identity and political agency. For them, it was a revolutionary term that rejects all of the names imposed by others, and it was considered the moment of self-naming by the Dalits.

By analyzing the historical and epistemological trajectories of the constitution of the term Dalit in Indian political philosophy, Gopal Guru defines the category Dalit as a materialistic category. Guru clarifies the reason to deny the metaphysical nomenclature –'*Harijan*' (children of God)—that was offered to Dalits by Gandhi.[5] He argues that Dalit is not a metaphysical construction, but derives its epistemological and political strength through material social experience. For him, the category Dalit receives ideological assistance from the Buddha, Jyotiba Phule, Karl Marx, and Ambedkar, and in the process, becomes human centered rather than God centered.[6] Guru argues that Dalit is a materialist category, which is 'not immune' to its own transcendence. For him, it signifies the politics of the 'lived experiences' through which Dalits envisage social identity and agency.

Dalits are still politically neglected, economically poor, socially discriminated against, religiously untouchable, and symbolically othered people in India. They are mainly concentrated in *Cherries* or colonies—the geographical spaces provided to them by the age old developmental patterns and civilizations. They live on the outskirts of the 'public living' spaces by doing caste-assigned and, thus enforced, menial jobs like scavenging,

and animal skinning. The exclusion, or the marginalization, or the othering of Dalits is not because of the malfunctioning of welfare measures, or developmental activities of the state; rather, it is an epistemological issue that defines ontology and politics discursively. It is here that caste as an epistemological practice, which comes into our discussions imperatively.

The prominent theories on caste define it as a social system that is connected to a particular period of history, or pertaining to certain consensus on values. Louis Dumont offered a theory of a mutually dependent society in which both higher and lower castes are organized hierarchically.[7] According to Dumont, it is the principle of purity and pollution that determines the relative position of castes within the hierarchy. Michael Moffat, on the other hand, explains this theory by exemplifying the practices of purity and pollution within the low caste communities.[8] The modern progressive social theories like Marxism and socialism, on the other hand, believe in the historical dissolution of such 'internal contradictions' in due course in history.

Contra to the other theories that render caste as a social system, this study analyzes caste as an epistemology which is being disseminated through certain institutional practices. Caste is to be seen as a social practice which emerged out of some hegemonic social knowledge that determines social distribution of the cultural, economic, and symbolic capital. Caste functions as the basic knowledge that legitimizes the subsequent hierarchical ordering of the social body, unequal distribution of social capital, and marginalization of Dalit bodies as untouchables. Since the Indian social body is inherently casteist, all social relations, bodies, spaces, and capital are infected by the contagious caste epistemology.

Caste epistemology was founded on the Vedic epistemology of the 'orthodox' (*Astika*) philosophical traditions in India. 'Orthodox' knowledge systems in opposition to the 'heterodox' (*Nastika*) knowledge systems, upheld the some unitary visions of God, being, and the other. They had a vision of an 'omniscient unitary order,' the absolute Being—the God who is the 'ritualistic force' and 'the essence' of all being (self). The being and the world are ontologically separated from God, but ritualistically connected. Knowledge, which is ritualistic, is situated in the soul (Atman). This ritualistic knowledge is 'given' and esoteric. This esoteric knowledge of God and the world is the prerogative of the people who hold ritualistic power. Dalits, who are alien to this esoteric knowledge and the disseminating ritualistic practices, hence, cannot be knowledgeable. Thus, Dalits are

unable to understand 'mantras' pertaining to the functioning of the divine and the world. This is the epistemological reason for denying education to the lower caste people in India. The caste logic perceived education for Dalits as a violation of the *Sanatan Dharma* (Universal Truth).

'Denied Transcendence': The Dalit Body and the Caste Epistemology

According to the caste epistemology, sacrality and purity of the body and space are defined by accessibility to the esoteric knowledge of God and the ritualistic practices that disseminate this knowledge. In Vedic epistemology, the body is made up of certain *gunas* (qualities) which are 'given' and thus eternal. In this thought, some bodies are insufficient for certain *gunas* so they cannot come up with the highly qualitative bodies. Less qualitative bodies cannot have social spaces as in the case of higher bodies. The hierarchical ordering of labor, social spaces, and social capital are foregrounded on the epistemology of the ontological separation between divine/sacred body and the 'non-divine'/impure bodies.[9] What is interesting is that it is the body that becomes, here, the primary 'ground' of all caste violations and violence, which forces Dalits to define their ontological politics as materialistic.

One of the cosmologies of the early-Vedic tradition defines the four fold social structure (the *varnasrama dharma*) in connection with the very being of God, which provides the epistemological and theological rationale for the construction of the Dalit body. According to the *PurushaSukta* in Rig Veda, the elite class, *Brahmana,* was born out of the mouth of God; the *Rajanyas*—the warrior class came out of the arms of God; the *Vaishyas*—the business class came from the thighs of God; and the *Sudras*—the working class were born out of His feet.[10] According to this cosmogony, Dalits exist alien to the very being/body of God and thus have no 'ontological participation' with the divine or transcendence. The Dalit body is rendered here as a self-enclosed body, which is denied of transcendence. According to this cosmology of 'denied transcendence,' the Dalit body is 'inherently irredeemable' and eternally unalterable.

Denying the caste epistemological construction of the Dalit body and redefining it in terms of a political ontology, Guru reimagines the Dalit body as a potential site of resistance as well as liberation.[11] The Dalit body, in this sense, is open to its own transcendence even though it is denied

transcendence by the Vedic epistemology, ontology, and politics. For Guru, the Dalit body embodies resistance and social agency. In this view, the Dalit body holds internal potential for its 'counter formations' based on certain 'counter knowledges' that stems from their own 'materialist experiences.'[12] The Dalit body has the potential for its counter subjectivity. In this understanding, the Dalit body becomes not just a closed thing in itself; rather, as Achille Mbembe alludes, 'clothed resistance' within it.

'Offered Transcendence': The Dalit Body and the Christian Theology

Christian Theology approached the Dalit body in the context of colonial modernity. Christian Theology responded to colonial modernity differently. Indian Christian Theology is an outcome of those responses through which Christian Theology interacted, appropriated, and interrogated colonial modernity in India.[13] The Indian Christian Theologies, whether influenced by the theologies of the Western missionaries, or the Indian elitist philosophical traditions, offered transcendence to Dalit bodies through their sacramental theologies.[14] The non-dualistic theologies like Raimon Panikkar's *theoanthropocosmic* vision promised transcendence to Dalit bodies without attending to the epistemological construction of the Dalit body. Jayakiran Sebastian, a prominent Asian theologian tries to make a connection between Panikkar and Dalit theology in one of his recent studies.[15] Jayakiran's intention—to offer Dalit theology a new method of inter-disciplinarity and to enrich Dalit theology with other epistemological inter-connections—is to be appreciated and validated. The inadequacy of his thesis is that it does not enter into the epistemological differences between Panikkar and Dalit theology. Panikkar seems transcendental in epistemology and thus fails to locate Dalit issue in its own epistemological vein. Following Sankara's *Advaita* philosophy, Panikkar argues for a mystic unity of God, cosmos, and human being.[16]

For Sankara's *Advaita* (non-dualism) philosophy, only Brahman is real, and the world of experience is unreal, because it is subject to change and perishing. The notion of an unreal world and the body is not the same as the Cartesian dualistic ontology, but contributed to the legitimization of Brahmanic (high caste) hierarchy and patriarchy in an Indian context that disparaged both indigenous knowledges and their bodies. As Gopal Guru argues, the consciousness of Oneness and Reality in Indian 'orthodox'

philosophy never attended to the difference of the Dalit life-world and assumed a fake relationality between social groups.[17]

The emergence of liberation theologies in the post-independent period, on the other hand, marked a (secular) humanist turn in Indian Christian Theology that affirmed 'the humanization of nature, creativity of man in purposive history, liberation from social bondage, and realization of love in human relation as the promise and potentiality of mankind in every historical situation.'[18] Following this vein of thought, theologians like M. M. Thomas and Sebastian Kappen shared the hope of the breaking in of the kingdom in history: 'as when the blind see, the deaf hear, the oppressed are set free when the poor take possession of the earth' which is foundational to the Liberation model. Arvind P. Nirmal's address at the Carey Society of the United Theological College, Bangalore, entitled 'Towards a Shudra Theology' is considered the initiation of the formal theological treatise on Dalit theology and envisaged a new turn by critiquing both the elitist theological engagements and the liberation theology in India for neglecting the Dalit pathos in the caste hierarchical Indian social body. Of course, Dalit theology's relationship with liberation theology is complex and contested.[19]

This study argues, however, that Dalit theology, though it criticizes Latin American liberation theology for neglecting the Dalit life-world for theologizing, shares the same epistemological and ontological understanding of God, body, and othering. It is argued here that Dalit theology, as it is conceived by Dalit theologians in India, still carries the baggage of liberation theology in terms of its doctrine of God, human and creation. For that matter, two theologians, one from liberation theology and the other from the Dalit theology, are analyzed as they approach the Dalit body theologically in the post-independent period in India: M. M. Thomas and Sathianathan Clark.

Dalit Theology and Liberation Theology: M. M. Thomas and Sathianathan Clarke

M. M. Thomas emphasized the role of Christian theology in the formation of a democratic Nation-state in India.[20] Thomas was convinced of the liberationist motive of theology in order to make it a 'living theology' in the context of dehumanization and marginalization in India. Following the liberationist model, he tried to correlate the Christian theology of salvation with the secular politics of humanization. The mission of the

Church in post-independent India, for him, is nothing but to reinforce the acts of humanization. He explains his thesis:

> The crucial question raised in the theology of mission…is that of the relation between the gospel of salvation and the struggles of men everywhere for their humanity, constituting as this (in) the contemporary context of the world in which the gospel has to be communicated. The question, in other words, is that of the relation between Mission and Humanization.[21]

This quest for the fullness of humanity and the quest for liberation and justice signify his methodological inclination towards Latin American liberation theology. Thomas attends to the Dalit issue as the basic example of dehumanization in the Indian context. The theology of the new humanity in Christ, according to Thomas, exemplifies the theological potentiality of a transformed society in which justice for the Dalit is also promised and realized. Thomas contends that a new humanity in Christ is a call to humanity to discern the presence and activity of Christ in this world in order to renew structures of society to develop a true human community. In the sense of liberation, as Adrian Bird comments, Thomas qualifies himself as a Dalit theologian.[22]

Being a liberation theologian, Thomas believes in the 'infinite possibilities of the eschatological becoming historical.'[23] According to Thomas, it is in solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed that reveals the eschatological hopes in our contemporary life. For him, the cross signifies the identification of God with the victims of oppression in the contemporary world. Thus resurrection means that the forces of death and evil, which find expression in the oppression of humanity, have been, and will be, finally overcome.[24] The following words summarize Thomas' theology of humanization as the methodological paradigm of Indian Christian theology:

> God calls human beings to participate with God in all these three levels of Divine mission, namely to participate in programmes of creative development, to be involved in fighting injustice and establishing social justice through the rule of law and other checks to oppressive power and along with it all to participate in the redemptive mission of love.[25]

Following the liberation methodology, Thomas defines God as the God of history. He affirms God's salvific engagement in the historical realm. For him, 'salvation is of man as historical being and it invests history

and human freedom and action in history with ultimate spiritual significance.'[26] Nature is seen by Thomas as the Creation of God providing the background for history as salvation and sharing in it. Salvation involves social liberation of all people from bondage including the distorted nature. Christ becomes the sign and the sacrament of this wholistic liberation.

According to Thomas, (hu)man is created in the image of God, which means 'he' (sic) has been given freedom and at the same time creativity with responsibility. Thomas explains his theological anthropology:

> Man has to transcend 'himself' to become himself through the exercise of creativity and responsibility. An orientation of the Future or/and the Beyond, is thus inherent in it as an imperative. This imperative is the call of the Infinite Spirit, of the ultimate values of truth, goodness, and beauty on man's finite spirit, and is sustained by it. Therefore, the reality of man, human society and human history cannot be interpreted in purely naturalistic or purely spiritual terms. Humanism is not naturalism at a higher stage, or a closed social organism or spirituality at a lower stage. Man is becoming creatively open to the future, with objectivities of dynamic nature, subjective self understanding of persons and societies and the reality of a transcendent Providence, all playing their roles in their inter-relation. An interpretation of the dialectic of history has to take all these elements into account to be essentially human or adequately true.[27]

Thomas upheld the view that it is human self-centeredness that makes them sinful. Jesus' Cross becomes the answer to this human problem where God himself shows his way of becoming a true human by sacrificing himself for the other.[28] It is the cross that reveals to us the complete sense of humanization. The values of forgiveness and self-sacrifice that have been revealed on the cross of Jesus Christ, and communion in this spiritual ferment offer a new humanity in Jesus Christ, which is fundamental to the call and the commission of the church in this world. This self-sacrificial love transcends human planning, organization, and politics. This self-sacrificial love is always angled towards the other—the weak, the poor, and the marginalized. It is our critical engagement with the unjust social structures and powers that marginalize the poor and the vulnerable that determines and reveals the presence of the Risen Jesus Christ with us. Humanization is very much linked to an eschatology that discloses any kind of self-centeredness and self-righteousness in history. Salvation is humanization where the new humanity in Jesus Christ is envisaged and envisioned.

Despite the criticisms against Thomas' theology from Dalit theologians, who highlight the 'high caste' social location of Thomas, M.M. Thomas, as a liberation theologian, signifies himself in the theological process as rejecting all kinds of epistemologies of domination, including caste and patriarchy. Recalling the mission of the church Thomas notes:

> The outcastes, the poor and the orphans saw Christian faith as the source of a new humanizing influence and the foundation of a human community. Where conversion was genuine, whether of individuals or of groups, the converts saw Salvation in Christ not only in terms of individual salvation or heaven after death, but also a spiritual source of a new community on earth in which their human dignity and status were recognized.[29]

On the demand for human dignity, equality, and freedom, no distinction can be seen between Thomas and Dalit theologians, except in the question of their respective ethnicities. The inclination towards the Hegelian dialectics and the Western ideologies of secularism and humanism qualifies Thomas as a true liberationist that keeps him close to the methodology of the Dalit theologians in India. Methodologically speaking, in fact, there is no distinction between Thomas' theology of humanization and the contemporary Dalit theology in their notions of God, being, and the other.[30]

Sathianathan Clarke, a prominent Dalit theologian in India, on the other hand, concentrates on the liberation of Dalits in India as a theological project.[31] Following the liberationist paradigm, he renders the social location of exclusion, marginality, and discrimination as the theological site for God's preferential option for the poor. In his comprehensive monograph *Dalits and Christianity*: *Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India*, he offers a liberation theology of Dalits invoking Indian Christian theology to validate and advocate the experience of marginalization of Dalits in India. Moving beyond the 'methodological exclusivism' of Arvind P. Nirmal, Clarke explains the inclusive methodological matrix of Dalit theology[32]:

> Deeply affected by the person of Jesus and passionately aligned with the work of Christ, Christian Dalit theology is a specialized discipline. It documents the reflections of liberation-identified Dalits and Dalit-identified liberationists on the interlocking of divine and human matters that both generate life now, and reimagines future life for communities pushed towards physical and economic death. Thus Dalit theology is founded on the 'pathetic' experience of specific Dalit communities, filtered through the inspirational

> person and work of Jesus Christ, and entwined into the lives of oppressed peoples in India with the objective of funding and finding life in all its fullness for all human beings.[33]

Sathianathan Clarke's Dalit theology finds liberation as the link that binds all communities together in a common mission that benefits, first, Dalits, and next, other subjugated communities, and eventually all human beings as they seek to live together in security, justice, peace, and life in all its plenitude.'[34] For him, as with any other liberation theology, an ongoing dialectic between resistance and liberation is fundamental to Dalit theology.

Sathianathan Clarke alludes to a God who has been relocated from the metaphysical riddles of reason into the broken bodies of Dalits. Unlike the Brahmanic gods, Clarke argues for a just and passionate Dalit God who has been revealed through Jesus Christ. He contends that Jesus as co-sufferer with the afflicted becomes the model for human living as ordained and acceptable to God.[35] Clarke, in his excellent work, envisions an interactive theology of God for Dalit Christian theology by creatively interacting with Dalit religious and cultural resources that stem from their pain-pathos and the Judeo-Christian conceptions of the identifying God in history. It is out of his theological insight that he creates the slogan—Jesus as the Dalit drum.[36]

Clarke, as in the case of Enrique Dussel, upholds the perception that it is the 'excluded one' who determines the transcendence of the system as it dismantles the system. Thus the 'excluded one' is nothing but the 'transcendent Other.' According to this theology, the marginalized and the oppressed Dalits signify God—the 'wholly Other'. However, unlike Dussel, who has been criticized for essentializing the category poor, Clarke tends to define Dalit identity, or Dalit consciousness, beyond the question of essentialism. He argues that it is not their ontological privilege that provides them centrality in the preferential option of God; rather, it is their participatory knowledge in the struggles for justice, along with God in the cooperative journey toward authentic and free life, which substantiates God's presence along with them. It is the participation in these struggles for justice that offers an inclusive methodology for Dalit theology. Clarke explains this convincingly:

> For Dalits and Adivasis, just as for all human beings, God is known as the source, sustainer and goal of life. Nevertheless, in an indirect way, because it is primarily the oppressed and exploited (Dalits and Adivasis as the case in

> India suggest) that want to subvert the unjust and oppressive socio-economic and religio-cultural structures, they will more likely join in the working of God to bring about such a life of freedom and dignity for all, especially the subaltern. So implicitly the participation in solidarity with God's liberative working is in a particular way more appealing and germane to the oppressed and alienated. Within this logistic scheme the issue is not set up in a manner whereby God is seen only on the side of Dalits and Adivasis' rather, the argument seems to hinge on the practical possibility that if knowledge of God is conceived of in terms of participatory knowing through commitment to God's working in the world, then it is most plausible than the oppressed and alienated will inevitably take the side of God.[37]

Even though Clarke distinguishes himself from the other Dalit theologians who define Dalit as an essentialized category, Clarke fails to foreground it in a consistent theoretical framework. He makes use of the Gramscian notion of subaltern to define a post-Dalit/post-Adivasi identity, but cannot escape a form of essentialism. Alluding to Gramsci, Clarke defines subaltern in India as the people who hold an 'anti-caste consciousness.' This consciousness of subalternity is similar to class consciousness as it was theorized by Gramsci. Clarke believes in the resistive and constructive role of this 'anti-caste consciousness' among Dalits in their journey toward self-respect and dignity. The problem with this notion of identity consciousness is that it never de-others itself in the epistemological practices of caste. It is nothing but the reaffirmation of the caste positionality of 'dalitness' and assumes an opposite identity consciousness as a derivative of the caste other. Clarke does not compromise with the specific experience of the marginalization of Dalits as a privileged location to gain God's favor. Though he denies the identitarian social location of Dalits as essentialist, Clarke links God's preference with Dalits' social experience of oppression and marginalization.

As in the humanization theology of Thomas, Clarke's God is a 'transcendent Other' who manifests himself in the struggles of justice and freedom from outside or beyond. It is a 'wholly Other' God who comes from beyond. As in the liberation theological paradigm, the poor and the marginalized symbolize the Divine encounter in history. Here, God or the 'transcendent Other' is ontologically defined and metaphysically located. According to Clarke, we are restricted to a particular understanding of ourselves in relation to God. Transcendence or liberation is to come from 'beyond.' Our experience with this God is quite transactional. It is in our

participation in a liberative work that confirms the experience of God, which is given to us as a reward.

As in the case of Thomas, Clarke offers Dalit theological anthropology on the basis of the theological notion of *imago dei*. Human beings are created by God in love and freedom. It is the sin of human beings who created dalitness, oppression, and brokenness by ejecting God from the world. By affirming the liberatory work of God in the world, Dalits rejects the eternally enslaving systems like casteism. The healing of the self is always connected to the healing of the other. It is here that Dalit theology becomes paradigmatic for all liberation theologies that seek the fullness of humanity. Clarke writes: 'If pain-pathos can be the way to overcome suffering and oppression, then Dalit theology may have the key to open new doors of becoming human from the confines of our increasingly exploitative and dehumanizing world.'[38]

Following the liberation theological tradition, the God-world relationship is symbolically connected and theologically argued in Clarke's Dalit theology. The God experience in Clarke is not relational or spontaneous, but conditional and transcendental. The importance of theology in his methodology is that it ensures participation in the experience of transcendence by the participatory knowledge in the liberation action for justice and equality. Here, in contrast to the Brahmanic theologies that deny transcendence to Dalit bodies, Clarke's Dalit theology, offers it to Dalit bodies by the participatory knowledge of action for justice. Clarke's Dalit theology, as in the case of any other liberation theology, offers transcendence to Dalit bodies from 'beyond' based on a Christian philosophy, which is foregrounded in the Western notion of 'wholly Other.' It is here where contemporary Dalit theology has to find a theology of God, body, and the other from its own epistemological discourses.

Absence of Transcendence: Dalit Epistemology After Continental Philosophy

The word 'transcendence' in Western thought is a controversial and over determined one with a long history in both theology and philosophy. In its general sense, transcendence signals 'the beyond.' Immanence is assumed as limited to within certain borders. It is limited within bodyliness or worldliness. Christian theology, with the help of the ancient Western philosophical traditions, tried to bridge transcendentalism and immanentism

with the theistic notion of 'rhetoric of ascent.' The Kantian and Hegelian effort to go beyond transcendentalism ended up with the totalitarian One. Kant offered a theory of immanence—experience of the phenomenal world—that is not determined by a transcendent or external principles, but is the product of reason's own activity. Hegel, by pushing the Kantian notion of immanence to the extreme, offered a *Phenomenology of Spirit* through which reason attains a point of Absolute knowing of itself. The post-transcendence philosophers, such as Deleuze, Irigaray, and Adorno, while critiquing the Hegelian formulation of immanence as closed totality, strive to render immanence as an open whole. It is open because it is capable of self-transcendence or becoming. For them, immanence is a space of difference and alterity rather than coherence and integrity. Patrice Haynes' evaluation is right about the post-transcendence philosophers: 'by relocating transcendence to the plane of immanence, they hope to develop a non-reductive materialism that does not lapse into a totalized, logicized immanence.'[39]

Among the post-transcendentalists, Deleuze is known for his theory of 'pure immanence.' According to Deleuze, transcendence that designates the transcendent which lies beyond, outside or external to the world, is the dominant concept in Western philosophy and theology.[40] The political correlate of this 'transcendent' is the Sovereign: the absolute legislator. Thus, Deleuze constantly calls to 'hunt down transcendence.' Deleuze upholds the view that transcendence is a secondary and temporary phenomenon, or effect, taking place purely within the plane of immanence. Rejecting the Platonic notion of 'One' that falls in favor of transcendentalism, and the Levinasian cry for the protection of transcendence, Deleuze proposes 'the plane of immanence' as a 'basin' that can even receive eruptions of the transcendent. 'Pure immanence' denies any effort to define matter or body or being as inferior to any idea of transcendence or forms. Following Spinoza and Nietzsche, Deleuze offers a theory of univocity that ultimately envisages differences within being. Deleuze borrows the idea of 'internal difference' from Bergson, who created the concept to avoid the sense of negativity that Hegel introduced into his metaphysical system by defining difference as an exteriority. By thinking about difference as internal, Deleuze tries to unite 'the One' and 'the Many' in his thinking. Deleuze writes:

> The essence of univocal Being is to include individuating differences, while these differences do not have the same essence and do not change the essence of Being.…There are not two 'paths'…, but a single 'voice' of Being which

> includes all its modes, including the most diverse, the most varied, the most differentiated. Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself.[41]

Alluding to Spinoza, Deleuze offers an idea of univocity that does not order transcendence and immanence hierarchically. 'Everything is in the plane of immanence.' Here God doesn't remain as a 'transcendent Other' to the creatures; rather, God expresses himself in all creatures internally. According to Deleuze, God and creatures share an identity of form, 'while permitting no confusion of essence.'[42] Being is equal for everything—every being expresses the same amount of Being—but not everything is equal. Deleuze defines Being as difference—a continuously differentiating creative force. It is not denying God; rather, it is denying God as the 'transcendent Other' who has no ontological relationship with the creatures. In a nutshell, Deleuze proposes a notion of immanence that is a practical 'way of life' in which transcendence and immanence, the self and the other, creator and the creatures are completely intertwined.

Another important theoretical position that affirms the non-dualist, dialectical, and relational concept of transcendence and immanence in the post-Continental philosophical tradition is Jean-Luc Nancy's 'transimmanence.' Without embracing the 'pure immanentalism,' Nancy offers a counter position to transcendence. Nancy's 'transimmanence' is neither transcendental immanence nor immanental transcendence. It is an 'open immanence' that does not fix any form of transcendence 'outside,' and it falls back on the 'weight of the world.'[43] Nancy explains it using the example of art:

> One could also put it this way: art is the transcendence of immanence as such, the transcendence of an immanence that does not go outside itself in transcending, which is not *ex-static* but *ek-sistant*. A transimmanence. Art exposes this. Once again, it does not 'represent' this. Art is the ex-position. The transimmanence, or patency, of the world takes place as art, as works of art.[44]

According to Nancy, art is an example of 'transimmanence' through which it forms, forces, and creates its own comings, departures, crossings, and expositions in the singular plural world. Just like art, the body can have its own multiple 'being-in-the world.' Nancy's transimmanence signifies the bodies, their masses, and their singular plural events that have 'the absence of ground.'[45] Thus 'transimmanence' displays a resisting or

liberating quality. The 'weight of the world' of the 'transimmanence' signifies the weight of the sufferings of the world—the agonistic politics of the world. Mark Lewis Taylor while signifying this concept of 'transimmanence' for his theopolitical project expounds on it clearly:

> It is the liberating opening and closing, and continual opening and reopening, of existence to itself, to and through its many singularities and pluralities. Transimmanence is existence thus refusing to be locked in place, 'locked down' in systems that resist continual opening and reopening. It is a kind of passing, a traversing of manifolds and relations of immanence, which can be discerned especially along the boundaries marking agonistic strife between the powers that seek to dispose of weaker peoples and those peoples who resist being so disposed.[46]

Taylor defines 'transimmanence' as a transitive process of creating world, all against the worlding of the powerful, liberating the concentrated miseries of the 'unrounded' masses with all its dread, its fear, its agony. For Taylor, 'transimmanence' signifies an ontological politics of the 'bare life' (Agamben). As in the case of Nancy, who refuses to reject the role of transcendence, Ernesto Laclau advances his populist vision of 'failed transcendence,' which locates itself beyond the dialecticality of transcendence and immanence. Laclau writes:

> What we need, therefore, is a change of terrain. This change however, cannot consist in a return to a fully-fledged transcendence. The social terrain is structured, in my view, not as completely immanent or as the result of some transcendent structure, but through what we could call failed transcendence.[47]

Spivak, in the same vein, tries to re-read the religious notion of transcendence in terms of a materialist culture where the sacred is detranscendentalized and identity is non-essentialized. It is an invitation to a 'mundane transcendence' of the self.[48] As postcolonial theologians argue, through this notion, Spivak affirms the transcendentability of the poor. However, the problem with Spivak is that when she tries to find out the religious sources of this embodied mundane transcendence, as a typical postcolonialist, she tends to depend upon the Hindu-Brahmanic religious cultural resources with which she is acquainted. This is evident in the postcolonial reading of Spivak offered by Susan Abraham. According to Abraham, Spivakian planetarity is consequently in a field of rhetori-

cal play that includes religious and theological attempts to address the relationship between transcendence and immanence, within the cultural frame of Hindu *Dvaita* practices.'[49] She argues that it is this *Dvaita* mindset that helps us to remain free of the distortion of possessing the other, knowing the other, naming the other, and avoiding museumizing the other. Abraham clearly establishes Spivak's inclination to the *Dvaitic* non-dualistic twoness and her hesitation to accept the experience of singularity. It is here that Dalit epistemology, as an indigenous knowledge system, takes a turn from the Spivakian planetarity.

Lokayata/Carvaka: Grounding Dalit Epistemology in the Materialist Philosophical Tradition

Marking its own philosophical 'grounding' on materialist thinking, Dalit epistemology hardly exhibits its inclination to transcendence. Dalit epistemology, as a radical break from the early Indian philosophical traditions, located itself in the ancient forms of 'heterodox' (*Nastika*) philosophical traditions, such as Jainism, Buddhism, and *Carvaka* philosophy. These radical philosophical traditions emerged critiquing the 'orthodox' (*Astika*) philosophical schools (*darsanas*) that rejected the material reality of the world and body. Buddhism and Jainism rejected the ritualistic theology and practices of the Brahmanic-Hinduism, which were meant for the propitiation of God. The *Carvakas*, otherwise known as *Lokayata*, on the other hand, established the materialist philosophy, which rejected the very notion of transcendence or God itself.[50]

Carvaka philosophy, or *Lokayata,* is the most ancient school of materialist thought in India founded by Brihaspati. Etymologically the word 'Lokayata' means 'dealing with the world.' It is said to be the materialist philosophy of the common people. In contrast to the Vedic epistemology and its transcendentalist philosophies of *Advaita* and *Dvaita*, *Lokayata* philosophy upheld the view that there is no transcendence apart from the material and no soul apart from body. Life originates from four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. For *Carvakas*, life is being formed out of the specific conjunction of the material objects. Contra to the Vedic theology, the *Carvakas* held the view that self, or *atman,* means body and not soul. D.P. Chattopadhyaya explains that according to *Lokayata*, the body is made from a combination of material elements and, in them, consciousness exists within the body.[51] Just as intoxicating power emerges from the ingredients of an alcoholic drink, so also the sense of the soul and

consciousness emerge within the body resulting from the combination of material elements. There is a gradual material change to the formation of human beings. It is the material cause that arises according to the laws of motion of nature, which determines the existence of everything. Everything that is mental or spiritual is the product of a material process. There is nothing outside of natural knowledge. The root of the world is nothing but matter. The Body is nothing but material consisting of elements. After death, the body disintegrates to the elements and thus there is no life after death. In his detailed analysis, Katti Padma Rao argues that Carvaka materialist philosophy emerged as a sharp critique against the Vedic epistemology that propagates vague ideals of transcendence and, in turn, devalues materialistic thinking and discriminates against Dalit bodies as untouchable.[52]

Following this materialistic philosophical tradition of non-transcendence, Brahmanic-Hinduism had to face severe questions from the Dalit social movements in the colonial modern period. The hegemonic Brahmanic ritualistic theology was rejected and people like Jyotiba Phule, who believed in the process of secularization in colonial modernity, critiqued the mockery of Vedic epistemology by creating contradicting philosophical treatises like *Advaita* and *Dvaita*. Phule exposed the inability of these philosophical traditions to interrogate the caste epistemology and the practice of untouchability. The failure of colonial modernity and the modern Nation-state to address the caste epistemology differently made people like Babasaheb Ambedkar advocate for better legal protection for the Dalits rather than the Brahmanic laws like *Manusmriti*. Gandhi became the representational figure of this transcendentalist, nationalist, Hindu-Brahmanic philosophical tradition in the discursive terrain of the modern Indian Nation-state.

It was Dr. Ambedkar who envisaged a materialistic political philosophy for Dalits in the modern period and encountered modernity differently. Modernity is not negated in Ambedkar, rather contested and unsettled. Ambedkar was the first Dalit philosopher who exposed the nexus between the Brahmanic-Hindu philosophical tradition and the modern notion of the Indian Nation-state. Ambedkar, on the other hand, found fecundity in the 'heterodox' philosophical tradition and envisaged an ethico-political engagement for democratizing the fledgling democracy in dialogue with Buddhism and Marxism.[53]

Following Buddha, Ambedkar distinguished between religion and Dhamma (morality). He held the view that religion is connected with

revealing the beginning of things, or the origin of the world, whereas Dhamma's purpose is to reconstruct the world. Dhamma is founded on morality. The main content of religion consists of God, soul, prayers, worship, rituals ceremonies, and sacrifices. For Ambedkar, transcendence is foundational for religion whereas Dhamma is built on immanence. The root of Dhamma is not rituals, but rather it is morality. According to Ambedkar, morality enters into religion only when humans come into relationship fellow human. Religion asks us to be moral because we are all connected to God. Be good to your neighbor because we are children of God. In religion, morality is just an attachment. For religion, morality is casual and occasional, and thus it is a secondary thing. On the other hand, Dhamma is nothing but morality. In Dhamma, morality takes the place of God, although there is no God in Dhamma. Morality in Dhamma does not need any divine sanction. It arises out of the human relationship for liberty, freedom and justice.

Morality in Dhamma is considered sacred because it stands for the protection of the weak. Survival of the weakest is the social imperative behind morality. It is the morality, or the politics of the survival of the weakest that determines the progress of the society. As in the case of religion, Dhamma is not controlled by ceremonies, rituals and liturgies, but rather is social morality that sustains the sacred society. Dhamma is not just rhetorical, rather it is practical and thus internally political.

Ambedkar's definition of religion becomes significant in the post-religious and post-secular context. In Ambedkar's political thought, religion (Dhamma) is treated as a political philosophy through which the binarism between the secular and the sacred is being denied and it is being immanently connected to the political process of becoming. The reconfiguration of the subjectivities is inherently connected with the socio-political and the material relations, which are founded on morality or Dhamma. Dhamma as a political form of religion becomes significant in Ambedkar's thought through which it transgresses the limitations of both Marxism and traditional Buddhism.

Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism is to seen as a hermeneutical engagement to counter modernity in a symbolic way. It is to be read as a hermeneutical engagement to counter modernity in a symbolic way. It was a political and epistemological act to redefine Dalit life in the modern period based on a non-transcendentalized political philosophy and theology.[54] The answer to the query, why didn't Christianity become an option

for Ambedkar is his inhibition towards a transcendentalized theology that separates secularity as its other.[55]

Dalit epistemology grounded in the *Carvaka/Lokayata* materialist philosophy becomes a political philosophy in the post-Ambedkar period. Dalits in this new period try to define their social agency and status by searching for new socio-political and symbolic capitals, which in turn help them to reimagine themselves as a political community. The neo-liberal world has necessitated the need of new capitals through which social agency is being determined. Dalits cannot be blind to these new situations and must search for new capitals in order to re-locate themselves in the neo-liberal context. This is happening today as Dalits' struggle for land, right to education, and political agency. While referring to the ongoing Dalit land struggles in India, Sunny Kapikadu, a Dalit activist says, 'these are not just struggles for some raw materials rather they are the new searches for new social capitals which in turn make us active social agents of a democratic civil society.'[56] Here, Dalit epistemology relocates itself in a postmodern/postcolonial theoretical context and redefines its religiosity in terms of its political philosophy.

Toward a Dalit Theology of De-othering God

The question, then, is based on the non-transcendentalist philosophy of *Carvaka/Lokayata*: what would be the Dalit theology of God in the contemporary postmodern/postcolonial epistemological context? Here, Dalit theology has to be a theology of a de-othering God. The Dalit theology of de-othering God neither negates God, as in atheism, nor affirms God, as in theism; rather it redefines God as an imminent political experience of becoming. Richard Kearney calls it *Anatheism*. For Kearney, *Anatheism* is a 'third way' of experiencing God in between 'dogmatic theism' and 'militant atheism'.[57] In the same vein, the Dalit theology of de-othering God offers us a non-'transcendent Other' God who is an enmattered God. Here, God has to deny its transcendentalism and become part of immanence, which is internally open and multiple. The Dalit theology of a de-othering God, or an immanent God wants to avoid the seduction of power, hierarchy, and representation. Unlike the transcendent theology, it envisages an *embodied God* who is intrinsically connected to matter. It is an *enmattered God* in which the becoming of being, or the body, is envisaged within, not in terms of the dialectics between self and the other.

It is an *enwombed God* out of whom the fluidity of life flows out. It is an experience of *chaosmos*, within which an internal evolution of creation is possible. It is here where the dichotomy between transcendence and immanence is being denied and tangled towards a 'univocity' of open-materialism or 'pure immanence.'[58]

Though he calls *Lokayata* an extremist philosophical position, Arvind P. Nirmal, the pioneer of Dalit theology, affirms that *Lokayata* takes the empirical world seriously. Unlike the 'orthodox philosophical schools' that deny the world, matter and body, *Lokayata* signifies the materiality of body—the human life on earth. Nirmal even proposes this materialist philosophy as the new turn in Indian Christian Theology.[59] Nirmal explains:

> *Lokayata* is a part of the Indian tradition—a forgotten part, perhaps, 'indistinct' lines of a picture, perhaps, but it belongs to the Indian tradition. It is forgotten only as a philosophical system, but its assumptions and emphases are living. It needs to be brought to memory more consciously. The secular India today is a developing nation, a nation struggling to overcome the problems of poverty, religious superstition, social caste-structure and so on. For development and progress it needs to understand material values. Its dominating 'spirituality' cannot provide an adequate philosophical and theological basis for such a quest. Where can it turn for such a base? Should it be drawn into the circle of 'Messianic faiths' as Thomas suggests...I would like to suggest that Christian apologetic in India points to the contemporary situation and also to the now forgotten *Lokayata* and hope that a 'switch' will occur.[60]

Though this was suggested by Nirmal in the beginnings of the 1990s, this challenge still haunts Indian Christian Theology. The Materialism of the *Lokayata* is not a closed materialism; rather it is open. The materiality of the body is not an end in itself, rather, it is open to its own eternity. As Achille Mbembe writes, the 'thingness' of the body is not enclosed within it, rather, the poetical dimension of the 'thingness' is 'clothed in appearance'.[61] According to the Dalit epistemology, the eternity or the divinity is not an external 'anubhava'(experience) for the Dalit body. Dalit epistemology and its religious and cultural semiotics and semantics alludes to the internal divinity of the Dalit body.

Out of the Dalit materialistic epistemology and philosophy, this study proposes three dimensions of the Dalit theology of de-othering God: An embodied God, immanent God and Multi-God.

Dalit God as the Embodied God

The Dalit body affirms its internal transcendentability of the materiality of the body. It does not have any notion of 'transcendent beyond,' or 'exteriority,' or 'transcendent Otherness'. The internal transcendentability of the Dalit body is theoretically foregrounded on the *Carvaka/Lokayata* philosophy of open materialism. Alluding to the Butlerian term—'spectral subjectivity,' the Dalit body signifies a political ontology of resistance.[62] As in the Agamben's notion of 'bare life,' Butler talks about the spectrality of humanness through which the 'excluded others' envisage counter practices of transformation. The Dalit body is not just a static thing; rather, it is ever changing subjectivity in the historical process of its political becoming.

The Dalit body as a political subjectivity denies the scars of its ontological discrimination, traces of epistemological violation, and the stigmas of its theological violence. This 'agonistic politics' of the Dalit body always keeps it vibrant, untamable, altering, and uncanny. The historicity of the caste experience, embodied in the Dalit bodies, becomes the haunting memories of transformation in the current situations. The past is not a fixed reality, rather, it is yet to be realized. Memories are not the baggage of the past: on the contrary, they are the ingredients of the unrealized future. Hope is not in terms of *telos,* but in terms of the current experiences of living and resisting. In Derridean terms, Dalit Theology is a 'Hauntology' as it is haunted by the memories of rejection, oppression, and the historical experiences of resistance.[63] This notion of hauntology helps Dalit theology move beyond its own fixed 'ethos' or 'pathos' that makes the Dalit body a 'self-enclosed' subjectivity, or just matter. Hauntology envisages the Dalit body as flesh, which has the inherent possibility of political becoming. This political becoming invokes responsibility, commitment, and indebtedness to justice and freedom that constitute its own transcendence—the 'glory' of God. It is a haunting experience of the 'Holy Ghost,' who is nothing but an embodied God and an enmattered God.

Dalit God as the Immanent God

By denying the caste epistemology of ontological discrimination of human bodies, Dalit Theology advocates the sacrality of the material Dalit body. Departing from the sacramental theology of modern Western Christian theology, which offered sanctification of the materiality through ritualistic practices, Dalit theology celebrates the embodied sacredness of materiality

or secularity. It denies the liturgical theology's emphasis to invoke the God of transcendence to come from above and to transform the 'sinful' materiality. Rather, it is to feel it by reliving the experience of 'transimmanence.' Zizekian Christology culminates in that idea, which is well-expressed in these words: 'what happened in the case of Christ [in incarnation] is that God himself, the creator of our entire universe, was walking around as a common individual.'[64] In Christ we see a human being who successfully embodies the Divine flesh. In a nutshell, the Dalit theology of an immanent God envisages a 'God after God' as it denies the Christian philosophical discourse of the 'rhetorics of descent and ascent.' The Dalit immanent God theology does not negate God, but negates the Western notion of the 'transcendent Other.' The God of immanence in Dalit theology rejects any kind of notion of beyondness, or othering, and at the same time it denies any notion of an enclosed materialism. As in the case of Deleuzian *chaosmos*, the Dalit theology of an immanent God is located in the 'univocity' of life that is differentiated and politically becoming within it. Catherine Malabou's concept of *plasticity* is clearly connected to this understanding of the Dalit immanent God.[65] According to Malabou, plasticity refers to the shaping, folding, and even explosiveness of form; our forms of thought; our situations; and even our brains. He contends that our concepts and our bodies are marked by polyvalent plasticity, and we possess opportunities for experimental modes of thinking and living democratically. The Dalit theology of an immanent God invokes new political practices of Dalit spectral subjectivity and becoming.

Dalit God as the Multi-God

The word 'multi-God' is being coined in connection with the concepts of 'theoplicity' and 'multiplicity'. According to Laurel Schneider and Catherine Keller, 'theoplicity' signifies the multiplicity of God.[66] The 'multiplicity' of the divine flesh doesn't fix a 'transcendent Other.' Contra to all theistic and monotheistic epistemologies/theologies, which try to fix a 'unitary-ritualistic-Other' or Omni-God as the backdrop to the horizon and try to legitimize the graded inequality of intra-human relationships, the Dalit theology of an immanent God is inherently an experience of multiplicity. The theology of 'multi-God,' which goes beyond theism, atheism, monotheism, and polytheism signifies the indigenous religious and cultural traditions that provide fecundity for multiple experiences of divinity within the materiality.

The theology of multi-God helps us to reimagine a God of 'many-ness.' The desire for 'One God' has always been political and totalitarian. The logic of One tries to accommodate the 'other' into the same and thus the 'other' becomes the extension of the 'same.' It was this 'One God' through whom the modern Western missionary movement located its 'missiological others' at the soteriological end of its unitarian mission programs. In the theology of multi-God, Dalits are no more the 'missiological others'; rather, they affirm themselves as the agents of transformation of the whole world through their 'agonistic politics' and 'immanent theology'. The Dalit body is a tortured body, at the same time, as Achille Mbembe recalls, the poeticality of the 'thingness' is still embodied in it.[67] Multi-God promotes multiple 'spectral practices' of 'touching each other, the touch of their breaking down, and into, each other.'[68]

Dalit Theology as a Radical Political Theology of Immanence

Departing from the Christian philosophical traditions, Dalit theology becomes a radical political theology of immanence—a theology that is free from the logic of transcendentalism. Christian philosophy and Theology, as a Eurocentric philosophical enterprise, faces challenges from the Dalit immanent theology based on its postcolonial and materialist epistemological imaginations. At the same time, it differentiates itself from the typical postcolonial theologies that tend to valorize the anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, nationalist knowledge systems and religious and cultural identities as we see in the case of Spivak. Postmodern theologies, since they are hyper transcendentalist in content, seem impotent in the Indian epistemological and political situation. Dalit epistemology, based on its materialist philosophy, in fact, overcomes the deconstructive dialectics between transcendence and immanence and proposes a radical political ontology of resistance.

Unlike the post-transcendentalists of the Continental philosophy who still remain tied up with the question of presence and absence of transcendence, the Dalit theology of immanence locates itself in a non-transcendent epistemological position. Envisaging an embodied God/enmattered God, the Dalit theology of immanence signifies a materialist theology that destabilizes Western eco-theology. Eco-theology still remains a theology of the 'transcendent Other.' Dalit theology, as a materialist theology, locates itself in the enmattered divinity, which is internally relational, mul-

tiple, and differentiated. By rejecting the anthropomorphism of God and the theomorphism of human, the Dalit theology of immanence proposes a theology of earth living where God, body, and earth are internally connected. It is not the incarnation, but the 'inter-carnation' that becomes important for the Dalit theology of immanence. In this understanding flesh is inherently divine, which is potential for its becoming and belonging. Casting divinity as a multiple experience, the Dalit theology of immanence legitimizes its indigenous religious and cultural heritage. By going beyond the 'postcolonial methodologies' that sometimes romanticize indegeneity, the Dalit theology of immanence offers the theopolitic of the 'revivifying practices' in order to reimagine Dalit subjectivity and agency in the contemporary political context of violence and violations. The Dalit theology of immanence as a radical materialist theology finds its relevance in the contemporary land struggles of Dalits through which Dalits engage with the political process of democratizing Democracy.

Dalit theology after the Continental philosophy signifies at least three specific turns in (Indian) Christian theology:

(*1*) *An immanent theological turn*: After Continental philosophy, Dalit theology invokes an immanentization of Indian Christian theology. It is a theology that breaks down the mechanisms of transcendentalism. It is a theology that denies the hierarchical ontology even in the case of God. It is a theology of de-othered God. For the immanent theology, God is not a 'transcendent Other' but integrally related to our flesh. Unlike the liberation theologies that tried to bridge the gap between transcendence and immanence, the Dalit theology of an immanent God signifies the open-materialism, which is internally becoming and differentiating. Dalit body, for this theology of immanence is a political category through which Dalits reimagine their social body and political agency. God, for this immanentist Dalit theology, is nothing but an experience of relationality, plasticity, and fluidity.

(*2*) *A theopolitical turn*: Dalit immanent theology invokes a theopolitical turn through which the theology becomes political and politics becomes theological. Theology here takes a postcolonial turn and tries to listen to the silences of the subaltern. To listen to the silences, theology has to go through *teleopoiesis* and *training in the counter imagination* and become non-theology in order to deconstruct its proclaimed mission to the silenced people in history. Unlike the political theologies that invoke

critical engagement with unjust social systems and seek 'progressive' democracy based on the modern logic of humanism and essentialism, the theopolitical turn envisages new political practices of being, becoming and belonging in the contemporary post-identitarian context. As Giorgio Agamben contends, Christian theology is to de-energize its inherent politics of sovereignty, before it theologizes the current political process.[69] The notion of a sovereign God has been the legitimizing point for all the hegemonic institutions and practices. For the Dalit radical political theology of immanence, the cross becomes the fulcrum of politics through which it envisages a weak God.

(*3*) *A Polydoxical turn*: Keller and Schneider who propose the term—polydoxy—argue that Christian theology signifies its multiple origins in the polydoxical turn.[70] Thus the polydoxical turn provokes theology to be interdisciplinary and inter religious. For Theology, it is an invitation to encounter, articulate, embody, and contest the multiple varieties of doxa, opinion, heritage, tradition, and liturgy. It is here that Dalit immanent theology becomes a common platform for all Dalits and all other marginalized communities, irrespective of their religiosity and traditions, to resist against all totalitarian knowledges and practices. It is the *anatheist* point where the so-called theists and atheists sit together, dream together, and do theology and politics together. Religion, in this polydoxical turn, becomes 'religion without religion' and it is the moment when Christianity is provoked to be a kenotic Christianity. It is the polydox moment for the Christian Church to deny the fixity of its dogmatics, and the idolatry of the traditions. For the Church, it is an invitation to validate the multiplicity of our being, becoming, and belonging in this pluriversity.

Conclusion

The Dalit theology of God, as it emerges out of the materialist philosophy of non-transcendence, envisages a theology of a de-othering God. The absence of the notion of transcendence or beyond absolutely avoids the Continental philosophical baggage for Dalit theology and provides a strong epistemological location in indigenous knowledges and political practices of becoming. Caste, as the hierarchical knowledge system and practice, legitimates the othering of Dalit bodies on the basis of the notion of transcendence. The Dalit body does not remain as non-transcendent and thus is not waiting for redemption from outside itself. The

Dalit body is part of the flesh of God, which is the fluidity of life embodied in it. The God of Dalit theology is an *enmattered God*. The Dalit body as 'spectral subjectivity' is reimagined here as the critical space of resistance and hope. The Dalit body is not merely the tool of identitarian politics, rather, it is the 'tool to come' for an im/possible politics of a weak God and weak people. This im/possible politics reimagines counter democracy and social practices. Here, theology becomes immanentized, theopolitic and polydoxical.

Notes

1. Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 90.
2. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon identify two main postmodern responses to the classic idea of transcendence: 'hypertranscendence' and 'post-transcendence.' Hypertranscendence argues for more transcendent position which cannot be assumed by immanence. Post-transcendence, on the other hand, talks about transcending transcendence which is of course a turn that falls back into immanence. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, *Transcendence and Beyond*: *A Postmodern Inquiry*(Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 2.
3. Etymologically the word 'Dalit' means 'broken', 'crushed', 'downtrodden' and so on. The category 'Dalit' in the contemporary Indian context refers to the most marginalized people who are the victims of the caste power structure. Dalits constitute 20 % of the total population (over 200 million). S. M. Michael, ed., *Dalits in Modern India*: *Vision and Values* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007), 76.
4. Gopal Guru Goapal Guru, ed., *Atrophy in Dalit Politics* (Mumbai: Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, 2005), 69.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus* (London: Paladin, 1972).
8. Michael Moffat, *An Untouchable Community in South India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).
9. Andre Beteille, *Caste*, *Class*, *and Power* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1965).
10. Rig Veda, 1981:XXC, 126.
11. Gopal Guru, ed., *Atrophy in Dalit Politics*, 69.
12. This notion of body has been theorized by Michel Foucault. According to Michel Foucault, the resistances to the hegemonic practices that construct our body, subjectivity and social spaces are inherent within the body coun-

ter practices. Human bodies are not just 'subjected' to certain knowledges, rather; they can be 'subjects' of their destinies by creating counter discourses and practices. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1972), 3–15. For a detailed study of Dalit epistemology, see Y. T. Vinayaraj, *Re-imagining Dalit Theology*: *Postmodern Readings* (Thiruvalla: CSS, 2010), 25–30.

13. Theology in India signifies the postcolonial face of Christian theology. Indian Christian theologies emerged in the context of validating indigenous knowledges and theologies in response to the modern Western Theology. It was an attempt form the Indian Christianity to 'confess its faith and establish its historical existence in dialogue with its own environment.' See, M.M. Thomas, 'Foreword' in *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Madras: CLS, 1969), v.
14. While analyzing the development of Christian Theology in India, J. Russell Chandran highlights five stages of its formation: (1) Missionary Theology, through which the Western missionaries represented the faith and the cultures of Indian Church; (2) Hindu responses to the Western mission theology that emerged outside of the Church; (3) Christian Theology within the Church, in which the early Indian Christian theologians appropriated the Indian categories and philosophical traditions; (4) The emergence of the theology of dialogue through which the interreligious dialogue was signified; and (5) The Theology of Liberation and Humanization. See, J. Russell Chandran, "Development of Christian Theology in India: A Critical Survey," in *Readings in Indian Christian Theology*, *Vol. 1*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah and Cecil Hargreaves (Delhi: ISPCK, 1993), 4.
15. J. Jayakiran Sebastian, "Fragmented Selves, Fragments of the New Story: Panikkar and Dalit Christology," *Exchange* 41 (2012), 245–253. Jayakiran discusses about the inter-disciplinarity of the Dalit theological methodology in one of his articles. See, J. Jayakiran Sebastien, "Can We Now bypass That truth? —interrogating the methodology of Dalit theology." In *Transformation*: *An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 25/2–3(2008), 80–91.
16. According to the Panikkar's *theoanthropocosmic* vision: "there is no God without Man and World; There is no man without God and World; There is no World without God and man." Raimon Panikkar, "Ecology: From an Eastern Philosophical Perspective," *Monchanin* 50 (June–December 1975), 26. All reality has three constitutive dimensions which are present and real in everything that is: divine, human and cosmic. A truly conscious life means to be the conscious nexus of these three dimensions. According to Panikkar, the *theanthropocosmic* principle overcomes both the monistic and the dualistic tendencies in Indian philosophy of God. Raimon Panikkar, "Religious Education in an Inter-Faith Perspective," *Monchanin*, 32. For Panikkar, though Sankara's (Advatic) *Isvara* locates itself in the diversity

between the Brahman and the world, seems helpful for an Indian Christian theology that appropriates the *Isvara* with Christ. *Isvara* of his interpretation points towards the mystery of Christ. Taking the *Advaita* notion of non-relational union with the Reality, Panikkar argues that the spirituality of Holy Spirit is identical with the *Advaitic* spirituality.

17. Gopal Guru and Sunder Sarukkai, *The Cracked Mirror*: *An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012).
18. M. M. Thomas, "The Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ," in *Readings in Indian Christian Theology*, Vol. 1 (Delhi: ISPCK, 1993), 94.
19. Following Nirmal, Dalit theologians like M. E. Prabhakar, James Massey, K. Wilson, M. Azariah, Devasahayam etc. defines Dalit theology as a liberation theology. In a recent work on Dalit theology, Peniel Rajkumar argues that the aim of Dalit theology is liberation of the Dalit communities and this liberation is envisaged through the praxis of relationships. See Peniel Rajkumar, *Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation*: *Problems*, *Paradigms and Possibilities* (England & USA: Ashgate, 2012), 58. A detailed study on the theological positions of the other Dalit theologians is beyond the scope of this volume. In fact, they do not uphold a methodological difference other than the liberation epistemology.
20. Dr. M. M. Thomas' involvement in the secular movements pursued him to formulate a political theology of secular humanism. In his political liberation theology, he tried to signify Christ and Christianity in the pluralist religious context and in the socialist, humanist, and nationalist Indian context. The book *The Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ* reveals his theology of secular humanism.
21. M. M. Thomas, *Salvation and Humanization*: *Some Critical Issues of the Theology of Mission in Contemporary India* (Madras: CLS, 1971), 2.
22. Adrian Bird, *M.M. Thomas and Dalit Theology* (Bangalore: BTESSC/SATHRI, 2008).
23. M.M. Thomas, "The Meaning of Salvation Today," in *Towards a Theology of Contemporary Ecumenism* (Madras: CLS, 1978), 187.
24. M.M. Thomas, "Theological Aspects of the Relationship Between Social Action Groups and Churches," *Religion and Society*, 31 no.2(June 1984), 19.
25. M.M. Thomas, "The Living God," *The Gospel of Forgiveness and Koinonia*: *Twenty Five Selected Sermons/Homilies* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1994), 78.
26. M. M. Thomas, "The Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ," in *Readings in Indian Christian Theology*, Vol. 1 (Delhi: ISPCK, 1993), 93.
27. Ibid., 95.
28. Ibid., 98.
29. M. M. Thomas, *Salvation and Humanization*, 14.

30. Here the argument is that M. M. Thomas and the Dalit theologians share the same epistemological framework and thus there is no such methodological difference in between them. Nirmal's argument for the methodological exclusivism (Dalit theology can be done only by Dalits) locates itself in an essentialist standpoint. The hermeneutical engagement provides space for 'the others' to enter into the process of the search for the textual truth and thus participate in the program of de-casteism. Thus the author here tries to connect M. M. Thomas and Dalit theologians epistemologically on the basis of the postmodern hermeneutical theories and studies.
31. Sathianathan Clarke is currently Bishop Sundo Kim Chair in World Christianity and Professor of Theology, Culture and Mission at the Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington DC, USA. He is the author of *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003) which is one of the authentic studies on Dalit religion and theology in India.
32. Clarke argues that Nirmal does not propose a totally exclusive program of theologizing. According to Clarke, Nirmal tries to signify the empathetic knowledge of Dalits which is integrally connected to the sympathetic knowledge of non-Dalits who participates in the action of liberation. As in the case of the pain-infected stomach and pain effect informed brain works together to voice out the scream of the woman, Clarkes argues that those two knowledges are valid for any kind of liberation theologies like Dalit theology. See for more details, Sathianathan Clarke, "Dalit Theology: An Introductory and Interpretative Theological Exposition," in *Dalit Theology in the Twenty-first Century: Discordant Voices, Discerning Pathways*, ed. Sathianathan Clarke et al. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20–22.
33. Ibid., 19.
34. Ibid., 23.
35. Ibid., 32.
36. Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).
37. Sathianathan Clarke, "Subalterns, identity politics and Christian Theology in India," in *Christian Theology in Asia*, ed. Sebastian C.H. Kim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 277.
38. Ibid., 35.
39. Patrice Haynes, *Immanent Transcendence, Reconfiguring Materialism in Continental Philosophy* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 7.
40. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 47.
41. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), 45.

42. Deleuze, *Expression in Philosophy*: *Spinoza*, trans. M. Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 47.
43. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Muses*, trans. Peggy Camuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 34.
44. Ibid., 35.
45. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 77.
46. Mark Lewis Taylor, *The Theological and Political*: *On the Weight of the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 15.
47. Ernesto Laclau, *Populist Reason* (New York: Verso, 2005), 244.
48. Susan Abraham, "Detranscendalizing Postcolonial Theology," in *Planetary Loves*, 95.
49. Ibid.
50. Representatives of the Carvaka school of thought were present in all ages. During the Ramayana period, there was sage Jabali the materialist. In the Harivamsa, Vena Raju, the follower of Carvaka was renounced by Vyasa. Asita Kesakambali was a contemporary of the Buddha. Payasi was a follower of Kambali. There were many others, born in slavery and who lived to propagate materialism like Makkali Goshala, Poorna Kashyapa and Prakruti Katyanana. For more details see, Subuddhi Charan Goswami, ed., *Lokayata Philosophy*: *A Fresh Appraisal* (Kolkata: The Asiatic Society, 2010). The main problem with the details of the Lokayata philosophy is that we have to depend on the writings of the orthodox schools that oppose the materialistic philosophy considering it as hedonist. The other option is to depend the Western writers who search for their 'exotic others'. See, Richard King, *Indian Philosophy*: *An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 16–22.
51. D.P. Chattopadhyaya and Mrinal Kanti Gangopadhyaya, *Carvaka/Lokayata*: *An Anthology of Source Materials and Some Recent Studies* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1990), 160–163.
52. Katti Padma Rao, *Charvaka Darsan*: *Ancient Indian Dalit Philosophy* (Madras: Gurukul, 1997), 16.
53. For more details see, Anupama Rao, 'Revisiting interwar thought: Stigma, labor, and the immanence of caste-class,' in *The Political Philosophies of Antonio Gramsci and B. R. Ambedkar*: *Itineraries of Dalits and Subalterns* edited by Cosimo Zene (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), 43–58 and Babasaheb Ambedkar: *Writings and Speeches*, edited by Vasant moon and Hari Narke, Vol. 17 (3): 503, Mumbai Education Department, Government of Maharashtra.
54. BebjaniGanguly argues that Indian modernity has, through Ambedkar's efforts, been rendered multivocal and less coercive. Debjani Ganguly, *Caste*, *Colonialism and Counter-Modernity*: *Notes on a Postcolonial*

Hermeneutics of Caste (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 129–154.

55. For a detailed study on Dalit epistemology in the modern period, see Y. T. Vinayaraj, *Re-imagining Dalit Theology: Postmodern Readings* (Thiruvalla: CSS, 2010).
56. Dileep Raj, *Thantedangal* (Kottayam: DC Books, 2001), 14.
57. Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God after God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 20100, 3. Richard Kearney holds the Charles H. Seelig chair of philosophy at Boston College.
58. 'Univocity' is the philosophical notion of Deleuze through which he challenges the bi-vocity of transcendence and immanence, God and creation, and self and other. See, Deleuze G and Guattari F, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 47.
59. Arvind P. Nirmal, *Heuristic Explorations* (Madras: CLS, 1991), 106.
60. Ibid., 106.
61. Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001), 223.
62. Judith Butler in Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging* (London: Seagull, 2007), 15.
63. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt and Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 11–12.
64. Slavoj Zizek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (New York: Verso, 2008), 133.
65. Catherine Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing: Dialectic, Destruction, Deconstruction*, trans. Carolyn Shread (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
66. Laurel Schneider defines God as multiplicity. Laurel Schneider, *Beyond Monotheism, A Theology of Multiplicity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).
67. Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001), 223.
68. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 37.
69. According to Agamben, there is a genealogical conviviality between liturgy and politics in Christian theology. Taking a cue from Carl Schmitt, Agamben argues that in Western tradition, understandings of political sovereignty correlate with understandings of divine sovereignty. Analyzing the emergence of the doctrine of Trinity (economic Trinity) in the early Christian tradition, Agamben contends that Christian theology, through its liturgical practices, legitimizes the notion of sovereign power and its governmentality. For Agamben, liturgy remains as a political activity of the church through which it legitimizes the ecclesiastical hierarchy and power.

Critiquing the modern political theologies for being inadequate to recognize the inherent political content of Christian theology, Agamben offers resources for a radical political theology which affirms the political becoming of subjectivities and rejects the liturgical legitimization of the sovereign God. See, Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and Glory*: *For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011) and Giorgio Agamben, *the Church and the Kingdom*, trans. Leland de Durantaye (London, New York, Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2012).

70. Catherine Keller and Laurel Schneider, *Polydoxy*: *Theology and Multiplicity and Relation*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Abstract Vinayaraj argues that Dalit theology, as it denies the transcendentalist baggage of Christian philosophy and Theology is an immanent theology. Dalit immanent theology signifies the postcolonial phase of Christian theology through which it goes through *teleopoiesis* and *training in the counter imagination* (Spivak) to listen to the silences of the subaltern in the 'Third World.' According to this study, Dalit immanent theology invokes three specific turns in Indian Christian theology and philosophy, viz.: (1) An immanent turn; (2) A theopolitical turn; (3) A Polydoxical turn. It is in this theological context that Dalit immanent theology provokes the Christian Church to turn to the relationality, plasticity, and the multiplicity of life.

Keywords De-othering God • Enmattered God • Enwombed God • Multi-God • Immanent turn • Theopolitical turn • Polydoxical turn

Modern metaphysics and ontology denied the difference and the alterity of the other. The other in modern Western philosophy was considered as a derivative of the Being/God. The being in Continental philosophy, has always been the European self. The postmodern turn in Continental philosophy as we call it 'the theological turn,' especially the phenomenological and deconstructive streams that came up with the notion of the

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'transcendent Other,' criticized the modern metaphysics of God for not being transcendent enough. They offered a notion of the constitutive otherness of God and the other, which eludes us with their incomprehensiveness and contingency. The intention was to re-locate God and the human other in a post-metaphysical and de-ontological epistemological context. Of course, it was an attempt to make God possible in the context of the Nietzschean theory of the death of God and envisage a 'postmodern God'—the 'God after the death of God.'

However, the postmodern God—the 'transcendent Other'—locates itself in the philosophical position of 'hyper transcendence'. The philosophers of 'hyper transcendence': Levinas, Derrida, and Marion, failed to attend to the socio-political situations of the 'other others' of the 'Rest' of the world. The undecidability and the contingency of the Derridean God seem to be apolitical in concrete situations of violence, violation, and discrimination. The failure to conceive a 'concrete other,' which is more apparent in the case of Palestinians living under occupation, makes Levinas insufficient in the post-Continental political context. Marion's 'saturated other' effects no 'bedazzlement' in the context of *Necropolitics.* Achille Mbembe replaces the Foucauldian 'bio-politics' with his new term *necropolitics* in order to signify the political imperative to attend to the 'material destruction of the human bodies and populations' in the contemporary political context. The post-Continental philosophies envisaged a political turn that happens in the 'plane of immanence.'

The post-Continental philosophers argue that the 'transcendentalism' of Continental philosophy is apolitical in concrete situations of violence, violation, and discrimination in the 'other worlds.' Taking her cue from the post-Continental philosophical tradition, Spivak envisages a 'postcolonial turn,' which is a turn towards a political materialism. By problematizing the question of representation, especially representing the rhetorical space of the subordinated other, Spivakian postcolonial deconstructive (feminist) epistemology attends to the difference and alterity of the subaltern voice, which is im/possible for any kind of colonial program of 'worlding' and 'othering.'

The most significant contribution of Spivakian epistemology is that it invites all colonial discourses, whether cultural, political, economic, historiographical, feminist or theological, to deconstruct the assumed positionalities and to stop locating 'the other' from their own privileged subjectivities. The Western academia that homogenizes and essentializes its colonized others is invited to *learn to learn from the subordinated*

other in order to reimagine their own otherness. In other words, the subordinated other—the non-essentialized, engendered, and non-fixed rhetorical (non)space interrogates any kind of representations of subordination and marginalization. The Spivakian notion of planetarity further legitimizes the process of the uncloseting of subjectivity, otherness and transcendence.

The Spivakian notion of the *detranscendelized sacred* signals a de-ontological notion of divinity as it overcomes the onto-theological constraints to conceiving God as *she/he/it*. The body, conceived as meta-psychological where we feel and live in a radical alterity, and the notion of a 'deconstructive embrace' of *planetary love*, point towards a post-humanist deconstructive philosophy and theology. *Learning to learn from below* re-positions ourselves and invites us to live with ethical responsibility where our ethics, theology, and politics interface and interrogate each other. The significant contribution of Spivak to theory, philosophy and theology is that it unties the notions of God, self, and other from its rigid locations of certainties and enclosures, and exhorts us to listen to the silence through which the 'subordinated others' speak or unspeak. Thus, Spivakian 'subordinated other' offers a theology of 'immanent Divine' through which the dichotomy between transcendence and immanence and the dialecticality between the self and the other is denied. Contrary to the 'hyper transcendentalist' philosophies of the Continental tradition, the Spivakian 'subordinated other' signifies a theology of God and the other which is 'transimmanent' and non-dualistic.

The Spivakian 'subordinated other' signifies a counter pedagogy through which the relationship between teacher and student, educator and educated, and the intellectual and the subaltern is reconfigured and reimagined. This counter pedagogy is training in the imagination by which the rural poor are invited to recognize the power structure implicated in a social democracy that prevents them from effective participation in the political process. At the same time, it invites human right workers and social justice activists to recognize the inability of civil rights to reach the subalterns and to realize the 'subordinate cultures of responsibility' toward the subalterns. This is the politics of 'deconstructive embrace' and the epistemology of 'planetary love.' The ontology is located here in the political practices of love in which God is detranscendelized and the other is de-othered.

Engaging with Spivak, Mayra Rivera offers a postcolonial theology of God in the Latin American context.[1] In critique of the 'transcendent

Other,' Rivera offers a postcolonial theology of 'relational transcendence.'[2] Rivera places the question of transcendence in the multiplicity of relations. For her, it is in the flesh of relations that transcendence happens. Denying the transcendentalism of Continental philosophy, Catherine Keller argues that 'hyper transcendentalism' inherits a 'closed transcendence' and a 'static immanence.' On the contrary, Keller proposes a notion of transcendence that immanates itself and an immanence that transcends itself.[3]

Wonhee Anne Joh tries to theologize the Korean concept of *jeong* in order to signify the Spivakian notion of planetary love that dismantles the dichotomy between the self and the other and offers a postcolonial theological anthropology of mutuality and difference. According to Joh, *jeong* is a counter practice of love that affirms justice and equality in social life. In critique of the Western notion of transcendence, Kwok Pui-lan describes the theology of 'correlative immanence.' Pui-lan focuses on non-European cosmologies in order to substantiate her notion of radical transcendence in which the God incarnate shares the same stuff with the other creatures.

In his interaction with Spivak and postcolonial theology, Vitor Westhelle connects a theology of creation with the struggles of the landless people in Latin America. The question of place and no-place in this creation theology offers postcolonial theology a post-ecotheological face as it addresses the struggles of landless people in the postcolonial world. In the same vein, Whitney Bauman arrives at a theology of *creatio continua* in contrast to *creatio ex nihilo*. According to Bauman, the Western theology of *creatio ex nihilo* politically legitimized the colonization of the land and people. Signifying Spivakian planetarity, Bauman affirms that his postcolonial theology of *creatio continua* invites all to have a counter vision of God-earth-human, which opens to a kind of responsibility and newness in relationship.

However, the Spivakian inclination towards the non-dualistic Hindu philosophies like *Advaita* and *Dvaita*, and the subsequent neglect of materialistic philosophies in India complicates her interaction with indegeneity. The indigenous theoreticians like Robert Warrior, a Native American theologian, argue that Spivak is more concerned about the receptivity of the subaltern voice among intellectuals rather than attending to re-presentations of subaltern dances, if not speeches. The Spivakian emphasis on the de-essentialization of subalternity needed to interface with this indegeneity as it is proposed by the indigenous theoreticians and theologians. In order to intersect subalternity and indegeneity, this

dissertation brought Dalit epistemology and theology into the discussion of God and the other.

Dalit theology, as it attends to the question of the transcendence of the Dalit body has been located in between the transcendentalist Western theology of God and the non-transcendent materialist philosophies in India. Following Liberation theology's methodology and epistemology, Dalit theologians alluded to the notions of a 'transcendent God' and 'the excluded other'. This transcendent God, who incarnates into the historical situations of oppression, offered salvation to the 'excluded other.' It is the 'excluded' positionality that signifies the 'beyondness' of God. Dalit bodies are offered transcendence through the sacramental theologies of the Western transcendentalist theology, and this was followed by Dalit theology in the modern period. The dilemma in the Dalit epistemology is that the materialist philosophical traditions like *Lokayata* that denied any notion of transcendence do not sanction any kind of salvation of Dalit bodies from beyond the materiality of Dalit bodies. Addressing this dilemma, this volume offers a Dalit theology of an immanent God—a God free of transcendence.

Lokayata proposes a materialistic philosophy, as in the case of Deleuzian *chaosmos*, which is internally becoming and transforming. It is a counter logic of 'univocity' that is open-ended and internally differentiated. It is not a totalitarian Oneness, but it is located in multiplicity, plasticity, and elasticity. The Dalit theology of God, based on the materialistic philosophy of *Lokayata*, is turned towards 'the plane of immanence' which is non-transcendentalist and political in content. Following the post-Continental philosophical position, the Dalit theology of a de-othering God affirms the poetics and the politics of the Dalit body as it is opened to its own becoming and transforming. The God of Dalit theology, after Continental philosophy, has to be an enmattered, enwombed God, and a multi-God. The Dalit body is reimagined after the Continental philosophy as the spectral subjectivity through which it performs the spectral practices of resistance and hope. The politics of the materiality of the Dalit body envisages new political practices of being, becoming and belonging. It is this political becoming of the Dalit body that determines Dalit philosophy and religion in this postmodern/postcolonial epistemological context.

Dalit theology, as it denies the transcendentalist baggage of Christian philosophy and Theology, becomes an immanent theology. Dalit immanent theology signifies the postcolonial phase of Christian theology through which it goes through *teleopoiesis* and *training in the counter*

imagination to listen to the silences of the subaltern. In this phase, Dalit immanent theology invokes three specific turns in Indian Christian theology and philosophy, viz.: (1) An immanent turn; (2) A theopolitical turn; (3) A Polydoxical turn. It is in this theological context that Dalit immanent theology provokes the Christian Church to turn to the relationality, plasticity, and the multiplicity of life. It is there, the Church becomes 'a coming community' and its liturgy becomes political.

Notes

1. Enrique Dussel, "The World-system': Europe as 'Center' and Its 'Periphery' Beyond Euro centrism," in *Beyond Philosophy*: *Ethics*, *History*, *Marxism*, *and Liberation Theology*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (Oxford, UK: Rowman& Littlefield Publishers, 2003).
2. Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*: *A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).
3. Catherine Keller, "Rumors of Transcendence: The Movement, State, and Sex of 'Beyond,'" in *Transcendence and Beyond*: *A Postmodern Inquiry* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 143.

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Index

A
absolute singularity, 21
absolute truth, 3
advaita, 73, 82, 88, 92, 103, 104, 115, 124
Agamben, Giorgio, 2, 5, 9, 10n2, 29, 35n81, 64, 84n29, 87, 102, 108, 112, 113n1, 118n69, 119n69
agonistic politics, 1, 2, 4, 9, 13, 65, 102, 108, 110
alter ego, 15, 16, 25
alterity, 2, 4, 11n14, 15–17, 35n79, 37–9, 41, 42, 45, 47–9, 51–5, 60n59, 74, 77, 100, 121–3
Ambedkar, 89, 104–6, 117n53, 117n54
anatheism, 106, 118n57
Anne Joh, W., 9, 56, 63, 74–7, 85n52, 85n53, 124
anthropomorphisms, 20
apophatic, 26, 56, 69
aporia, 22, 45
Aron Simmons, J., 3, 11n6
to auton, 15
autonomy, 41, 49
avant-garde, 41
a-venir, 48, 51

B
Badiou, Alain, 5, 11n10, 65, 88
bare life, 2, 29, 102, 108
Bauman, Whitney, 9, 56, 77–81, 86n73, 86n74, 124
bedazzlement, 27, 28, 30, 122
beyondness, 39, 71, 109, 125
bio-politics, 122
Birla, Ritu, 42, 48, 59n26, 60n60, 61n74, 82n3
bodylines, 67, 99
bracketed God, 26
Buddha, 89, 104, 117n50
Butler, Judith, 2, 5, 12n15, 13, 17, 18, 24, 31n1, 32n21, 32n26, 34n57, 108, 118n62

C
Caputo, John D., 14, 20, 21, 23, 28, 31n3, 33n39, 33n44, 33n46, 35n79, 57n6, 65, 83n11, 113n2
cartesian philosophy, 3
carvaka, 88, 103–6, 108, 117n50, 117n51

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caste epistemology, 8, 54, 82, 90–2, 104, 108
causa sui, 24, 25
chaosmos, 68, 104, 109, 125
charity, 27–30, 34n69, 34n77
christian philosophy, 2, 7, 24, 28, 53, 65, 81, 99, 110, 121, 125
christian west, 64
Clarke, Sathianathan, 93–9, 116n31, 116n32, 116n36, 116n37
closed transcendence, 124
colonialism, 6, 19, 29, 38–41, 43, 117n54
colonial modernity, 7, 89, 92, 104
colonized academia, 55
colonized other, 6, 9, 31, 37–9, 41, 46, 52, 66, 77, 122
coming community, 113n1, 126
concrete other, 4, 9, 13, 17, 18, 30, 40, 46, 48, 122
constitutive otherness, 4, 14, 122
contested knowledge, 7, 53, 54, 61n82
continentalism, 39
continental philosophy, 2–9, 10n4, 10n5, 11n6, 11n9, 11n12, 13, 14, 19, 24, 29, 30, 31n4, 37–62, 87–119, 121, 122, 124, 125
correlative immanence, 75–7, 124
counter imagination, 111, 121
counter intentionality, 16
creatio ex nihilo, 72, 79, 80, 86n73, 86n74, 124
Critchely, Simon, 3, 10n5, 11n6

D

dalit
  epistemology, 8, 82, 88, 99–107, 110, 114n12, 118n55, 125
  theology, 2, 7–10, 82, 87–119, 121, 125
dancing methodology, 10, 39
dasein, 15
de-colonized space, 45
deconstruction, 19, 23, 33n46, 33n49, 39, 40, 42, 45, 47, 58n15, 58n18, 118n65
deconstructive embrace, 6, 39, 40, 48, 49, 51, 55, 56, 65, 123
deconstructive feminism, 40
de-essentialization, 124
Deleuze, Gilles, 2, 5, 9, 11n11, 30, 41, 68, 84n27, 87, 88, 100, 101, 116n40, 116n41, 117n42, 118n58
democracy, 23, 52, 56, 65, 104, 111–13, 123
denied transcendence, 39, 73, 91–2
de-othering god, 7–9, 82, 87–119, 121, 125
Derrida, Jacques, 4, 9, 14, 19, 33n34, 33n39, 33n45, 33n46, 33n47, 33n48, 33n49, 33n52, 33n53, 34n55, 118n63
desertified god, 23
detranscendentalized sacred, 2, 6, 9, 68
dhamma, 104, 105
Dharma, 12n18, 50, 53, 91
dialecticality, 1, 3, 55, 65, 70, 81, 102, 123
differance, 19, 20
distant other, 48, 51, 76

E

echo, 45, 47, 60n47, 76, 88
ecofeminism, 6, 8–10, 67
ecotheologies, 67, 70, 80, 82, 110
ego cogito, 24
embodied god, 106–8, 110
embodied transcendence, 7, 8
empire, 41, 65, 66, 82–3n5, 83n15, 83n17, 83n22

enigma, 16, 29, 32n12, 74
enlightenment, 3, 10n4, 69, 74, 77
enmattered transcendence, 8
enwombed god, 107, 125
eschatological transcendence, 70
eschatone, 79
essentialism, 38, 45, 54, 97, 98, 112
essentialist other, 38, 39, 41
ethical intentionality, 18
ethico-political, 4, 52, 53, 64, 68, 74, 104
eucharist, 27, 28
existentialism, 3
exteriority, 17, 31n8, 38, 71, 100, 108

F

failed transcendence, 29, 73, 102
feminism, 3, 11n9, 31, 39–42, 58n18, 59n21, 60n63, 82n5, 83n23, 85n56, 86n78
fluidity, 72
foreclosure, 47, 75
for-give-ness, 21–4, 75, 95, 105, 115n25
Foucault, Michael, 30, 41, 46, 61n82, 88, 113n12, 114n12
Frankfurt school, 3, 4, 32n17, 79
Frantz Fanon, 18
French feminisms, 31, 59n21

G

Gandhi, 7, 12n17, 89, 104
gaze, 16, 21, 25, 27, 78
Gebara, Ivone, 67
gendered subaltern, 31, 40, 41, 64, 76
ghostly encounters, 50, 61n69
gifting, 20, 21, 27
givenness, 26–8, 30, 34n64, 34n72
globalatinization, 23, 33n52
globalization, 6, 33n52, 38, 41, 48, 49, 57n2
god center, 19
Gramsci, Antonio, 43, 59n29, 59n31, 98, 117n53

H

harijan, 7, 12n17, 89
hauntology, 108
hegelian idealism, 3
hegelian totality, 15
hegemony, 24, 29, 40, 66, 77
heideggerian philosophy, 4, 15
hermeneutics, 3, 27, 35n78, 83n5, 117n54
heterodox philosophies, 7, 8, 104
to hetron, 15
holocaust, 19, 31n7
holy ghost, 50, 61n69, 108
Homi Bhabha, 58n13, 63, 75
hospitality, 21–3, 33n45, 33n48
humanism, 69, 95, 96, 112, 115n20
humanization, 93–6, 98, 114n14, 115n21, 115n29
humanization theologies, 98
husserl, 13, 15, 16, 26
hyper transcendence, 29, 38, 39, 50, 55, 57n6, 122

I

icon, 25–7
identitarianism, 45, 54, 64
idol, 25, 29
imago dei, 74, 99
immanence, 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 19, 22, 30, 39, 49, 50, 55, 65, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75–7, 81, 84n24, 87, 88, 99–103, 105–7, 109–12, 113n2, 117n53, 118n58, 122–5

immanent god, 8, 9, 55, 106–9, 111, 125
immanent transcendence, 8, 39, 49, 51, 65, 67, 78, 116n39
immanent turn, 73, 121, 126
immigration, 2, 23
inclusive transcendent, 69
indegeneity, 9, 53–5, 61n81, 61n83, 82, 111, 124
indeterminacy, 5, 19, 20
indian christian theology, 10, 92–4, 96, 107, 111, 114n13, 114n14, 115n16, 115n18, 115n26, 126
indigenous epistemologies, 7, 8, 53–5, 82
indigenous intelligentsia, 54
infinitely impassible, 20
infinity, 14, 15, 29, 31n8
interiority, 21
interstitial space, 66
intuitionality, 26
irreducible singularity, 4, 47
irreducible supplement, 49

J

Jean-Luc Marion, 4, 9, 14, 24–9, 34n58, 34n61, 34n62, 34n63, 34n65, 34n69, 34n71, 34n72, 34n73, 34n74
Jean-Luc Nancy, 2, 9, 101, 117n43, 117n45, 118n68
jeong, 75, 76, 124
judaism, 18

K

kataphatic, 26, 56
Katti Padma Rao, 104, 117n52
Kearney, Richard, 23, 28, 33n48, 33n54, 35n78, 106, 118n57
Keller, Catherine, 1, 6, 9, 10n1, 56, 63, 65, 66, 70–3, 83n11, 83n14, 83n15, 83n17, 83n22, 85n42, 85n44, 86n74, 109, 119n70, 124, 126n3
khora, 20, 23, 33n54, 79
kierkegaard, 15, 22
Kristeva, Julia, 5, 6, 41, 42, 75
kwok pui-lan, 6, 9, 49, 56, 58n10, 60n63, 62n84, 75–7, 81, 82n5, 85n49, 85n56, 86n78, 124

L

Laclau, Ernesto, 29, 35n81, 73, 85n50, 102, 117n47
la meme, 15
l’ autre, 15
l’autrui, 15
Levinas, Emmanuel, 9, 13–19, 24, 27–30, 31n7, 31n8, 31n9, 32n12, 32n13, 32n14, 32n17, 32n26, 32n29, 50, 52, 74, 88, 122
liberation theologies, 8, 11n9, 61n80, 66–8, 70, 79, 83n19, 93–9, 111, 115n19, 115n20, 116n31, 116n32, 116n36, 125, 126n1
lokayata philosophy, 88, 103, 108, 117n50
luis irigaray, 5

M

Malabou, Catherine, 9, 109, 118n65
marginality, 6, 9, 31, 43, 46–8, 56, 58n18, 69, 78, 82, 96
marginalized other, 21, 30, 34n56, 34n76, 38, 46, 47, 48, 60n56, 60n57, 61n71
marxism, 3, 11n9, 39, 42, 58n18, 90, 104, 105, 126n1

mayra rivera, 6, 9, 11n9, 17, 32n20, 40, 45, 50, 51, 56, 58n10, 58n17, 60n44, 60n46, 61n69, 61n73, 61n78, 70–3, 83n14, 83n21, 84n34, 84n37, 123, 126n2
Mbembe, Achille, 2, 10n3, 30, 35n83, 35n84, 92, 107, 110, 118n61, 118n67, 122
McFague, Sallie, 67, 68
messiah, 22, 23
messianicity, 22, 23
missiological other, 7, 110
missionized theology, 7
modern metaphysics, 2–4, 121, 122
Moltman, Jürgen, 70
monism, 15
monotheism, 52, 109, 118n66
Moore, Stephen D., 45, 58n10, 59n27, 60n44, 61n78, 82n5
morality, 21, 104, 105
multiple transcendence, 68
multiplicity, 4, 23, 69, 71, 72, 74, 81, 109, 112, 118n66, 119n70, 124, 125, 126
mysterium tremendum, 20, 21
mystical theology, 26

N

native informant, 38, 46, 60n49
nazism, 15, 16
necropolitics, 1, 2, 4, 10n3, 30, 35n83, 35n85, 122
negative dialectics, 4
new humanity, 94, 95
Nietzsche, Frederic, 3, 100
Nirmal, Arvind P., 93, 96, 107, 118n59

O

offered transcendence, 7, 8, 92–3, 125
omni-god, 66, 73, 81, 109
ontological difference, 4, 25
ontology, 2, 3, 14, 15, 24, 56, 72, 75, 79, 84n29, 88, 90, 91, 92, 108, 110, 111, 121, 123
onto-theology, 4, 24, 29, 80
orientalism, 40, 58n12, 75
orthodox, 7, 8, 69, 73, 90, 92, 103, 107, 117n50
othered selves, 4, 10n3, 29, 30
othering, 4, 6, 12n16, 38, 45, 52, 55, 57n4, 75, 90, 93, 109, 112, 122
other worlds, 4, 5, 10n3, 19, 29, 30, 46, 57n2, 58n15, 59n20, 59n42, 66, 122

P

panentheism, 67
paralysis, 22
pedagogy, 9, 47, 50, 51, 52, 56, 76, 123
phenomenology, 3, 4, 14, 15, 18, 19, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31n2, 32n12, 34n65, 34n72, 34n74, 70, 100
philosophies of otherness, 4, 15
Phule, Jyotiba, 89, 104
plane of immanence, 2, 70, 100, 101, 122, 125
planetarity, 6, 9, 31, 38, 42, 43, 48–50, 53, 55, 56, 60n63, 61n68, 64, 65, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85n56, 85n58, 86n78, 88, 102, 103, 123, 124
planetary love, 48, 55, 56, 58n10, 59n27, 60n44, 61n67, 62n84, 73–7, 81, 83n19, 85n49, 85n52, 86n78, 117n48, 123, 124
planetary theology, 65
plasticity, 109, 111, 118n65, 125, 126
plurisingularities, 72, 73
political becoming, 108, 119n69, 125

political economy, 41
political imperialism, 19
political theology, 8, 10, 65, 110–12, 115n20, 119n69
polydoxy, 85n42, 112, 119n70
postcolonial deconstruction, 39, 40, 42
postcoloniality, 2, 6, 31, 42, 46, 58n10, 64, 74
postcolonial theologies, 7, 9, 10, 11n9, 32n20, 60n64, 61n67, 61n68, 61n79, 61n84, 63–86, 102, 110, 117n48, 123, 124, 126n2
postcolonial trinity, 40, 58n14
postmodern theology, 74
poststructuralism, 3, 39, 42
post-transcendence, 39, 59n6, 88, 100, 113n2
potentiality, 69, 93, 94
proletariat, 43
promise, 20–2, 28, 73, 74, 92–4, 98
pure immanence, 39, 69, 70, 72, 73, 100, 107
pure transcendentalism, 70

Q

quite-other, 6, 40, 42, 51, 74, 77

R

radical alterity, 41, 51, 53, 55, 60n59, 123
radical imagination, 51
radical other, 14, 15, 17, 18, 40, 51
radical relationality, 49
relationality, 5, 39, 49, 69, 73, 74, 76, 93, 111, 126
relational transcendence, 40, 70–3, 124
representation, 6, 38, 40, 41, 44–7, 55, 57n4, 60n47, 104, 106, 122, 123
repressed others, 5, 14
revivifying practices, 111
rhetorical space, 6, 38, 42, 45, 46, 55, 74, 122
rhizomatic radicality, 65
Ruether, Rosemary Radford, 67, 84n24

S

sacrament, 7, 27, 28, 30, 34n72, 95
Said, Edward, 40, 57n7, 58n12, 58n13, 58n14, 58n16, 60, 63
Sankara, 8, 69, 92, 114
sati, 44, 45, 54
saturated phenomena, 26, 27, 29
Schneider, Laurel C., 73, 75n42, 85n49, 109, 112, 118n66, 119n70
Sebastian, Jayakiran, J., 92, 93, 114n15
secret, 21, 22, 24, 27, 45, 81, 88
secularity, 49, 53, 106, 109
self-abandonment, 27
slavery, 19, 117n50
social democracy, 56, 123
Sophia, Jea, 50, 61n68, 85n58
sovereignty, 112, 118n69
spectral practices, 65, 110, 125
Spinoza, 100, 101, 117n42
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 2, 5–8, 12n16, 30, 31, 37–86, 88, 102, 110, 112n62, 122–4
static immanence, 124
structuralism, 3
subalternity, 6, 9, 30, 31, 38, 43–8, 53–6, 57n5, 58n11, 58n18, 59n33, 61n75, 61n81, 61n83, 64, 69, 73, 76–8, 82, 88, 98, 124
subaltern study collective, 59n33
subordinated other, 2, 6, 9, 30, 37–62, 73–5, 77, 81, 122, 123

T
Taylor, Mark Lewis, 2, 10n3, 38, 57n5, 60n66, 63–5, 71, 82n1, 83n7, 84n38, 102, 117n46
tehomic theology, 71, 72, 85n42
teleopoiesis, 48, 51, 76, 111, 125
tension, 17, 22
textures of power, 41
theological turn, 3, 4, 9, 11n6, 13–35, 111, 121
theo morphisms, 50
theopolitics, 6, 64, 65, 102, 111–13, 121, 126
theopraxis, 78
third-world turn, 5–7, 9, 37–126
Thomas, M.M., 93–103, 114n13, 115n18, 116n30
Tillich, Paul, 8, 29, 69, 84n30
totality, 4, 14–16, 31n8, 69, 82, 100
tout autre, 16, 19–24, 30
transcendentalism, 2, 5, 10, 46, 52, 53, 69, 70, 81, 99, 100, 106, 110, 111, 122, 124
transcendent other, 2, 4, 6, 7, 13–35, 38, 67, 73, 74, 77, 88, 97, 98, 101, 106, 108–11, 122
transimmanence, 101, 102, 109
transimmanent turn, 73

U
univocity, 7, 100, 101, 107, 109, 118n58, 125
unspeakability, 44
untouchable, 7, 8, 73, 88–90, 104, 113n8

V
vedic philosophy, 7

W
weak epiphany, 78, 79
weak god, 112, 113
Westhelle, Vitor, 9, 29, 35n80, 56, 64, 66, 77–81, 83n16, 85n59, 85n60, 86n63, 86n67, 124
white theology, 25
wholly other, 14, 21, 24, 35n79, 49, 51, 69, 97–9
worlding, 6, 12, 30, 46, 52, 55, 57n4, 75, 102, 122

Z
zionism, 12n15, 17, 18, 31n1, 32n21
Zizek, Slavoj, 5, 64, 65, 88, 118n64