
**THE SUBALTERN CONDITION OF WOMEN IN THE NOVEL THE OTHER
EINSTEIN BY MARIE BENEDICT (A STUDY ON WOMEN'S
DISCRIMINATION)**

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Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bentuk-bentuk diskriminasi yang dialami perempuan subaltern yang terjebak di antara berbagai rezim kekuasaan hegemonik yang membatasi akses perempuan subaltern dan menunjukkan bagaimana cara perempuan subaltern menghadapi diskriminasi yang dialaminya dengan segala keterbatasan yang dimilikinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dan menggunakan teori Subaltern oleh Gayatri Spivak. Penelitian ini mengkaji pemeran utama wanita dalam novel *The Other Einstein* karya Marie Benedict. Pemeran utama wanita dalam novel ini adalah seorang perempuan cerdas yang berjuang di dunia sains yang didominasi oleh laki-laki dan asing pada perempuan pada akhir abad 19 dan awal abad 20. Novel ini cocok disandingkan dengan teori Subaltern Gayatri Spivak. Menurut Spivak, semua perempuan yang berada di struktur masyarakat patriarki adalah perempuan subaltern. Perempuan subaltern tidak bisa berbicara dan tidak didengarkan, ketika perempuan subaltern berbicara maka suaranya akan dipelintir atau dihapus oleh berbagai sistem kekuasaan yang menindas perempuan subaltern. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan 21 data yang sesuai dengan formulasi masalah, 3 untuk penghapusan peran intelektual, 3 untuk diskriminasi gender dan geopolitik, 3 untuk diskriminasi sosial, 3 untuk diskriminasi rumah tangga, 3 untuk melawan dengan pendidikan, 3 untuk membuat karya, dan 3 untuk mengambil keputusan untuk diri sendiri. Penelitian ini menunjukkan karakter Marie mencerminkan realitas subaltern yang tidak bisa berbicara dan eksistensinya tidak diakui oleh struktur kekuasaan.*

KATA KUNCI: *Diskriminasi, perempuan, subaltern.*

Abstract

This research aims to identify the forms of discrimination experienced by subaltern women who are trapped between various hegemonic power regimes that limit their access, and to show how these subaltern women deal with the discrimination they face despite their limitations. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method and applies the Subaltern theory by Gayatri Spivak. The research analyzes the female protagonist in the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict. The main female character in this novel is an intelligent woman who strives in the male-dominated world of science, which was unwelcoming to women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This novel is well-suited to be examined through the lens of Gayatri Spivak's Subaltern theory. According to Spivak, all women situated within a patriarchal social structure are considered subaltern. Subaltern women cannot speak and are not heard; when they do speak, their voices are twisted or erased by various power systems that oppress them. The findings of this research reveal 21 data points relevant to the research questions: 3 on the erasure of intellectual roles, 3 on gender and geopolitical discrimination, 3 on social discrimination, 3 on domestic discrimination, 3 on resisting through education, 3 on making independent decisions, and 3 on creating works. This research shows that Marie's character reflects the reality of the subaltern unable to speak and whose existence is unrecognized by the power structure.

Keyword: Discrimination, Subaltern, Women.

INTRODUCTION

Literature, in general, is a sub-discipline of science that explains the evolution of humanity. According to Koentjaraningrat (1986, p.186), this phenomenon occurs because literature is written within a specific historical period that is directly connected to the norms and customs of that time, and the author of the literature is either a part of particular society or positions themselves as a member of society. According to Al-Ma'ruf and Nugrahani (2017, p.15), as a methodology, literature has a series of systematic frameworks for explaining the past, interpreting the present, and predicting the future. Unlike philosophy, literature is considered more complex in logically analyzing human nature. In other words, the output of literature is the literary work itself. Literary works have developed quite rapidly based on their types such as dramas, plays, poetry and novels. In addition to being a repository that encapsulates a culture, literary works are also intended to evoke emotions and souls of readers, enthusiasts and audiences.

One form of literary work that remains popular to this day is the novel. The novel is recognized as the leading literary genre of the last two or three centuries (Choeda., 2019, p.1101). The main characteristic of a novel lies in a set of words that are able to portray a certain reality. As according to Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani (2017, p.74), novels are instruments to explore and represent the reality of society. To the same extent, novels summarize intrinsic knowledge of social, cultural, economic and even politic into a single entity as a theorization of history. Despite the changes in the characteristics of literary works, the novel maintains an independent position as an aesthetic of language. Therefore, the novel not only the reflections of history, but it is also the aesthetic medium that announces the groundlessness of modernity (Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2017).

Among various popular novels, there is a literary work that represents the reality of social society, titled *The Other Einstein*. *The Other Einstein* was written by an American lawyer named Marie Benedict and was published in 2016. The novel is based on Albert Einstein's first wife, Mileva Marić, who was overlooked in the history of Einstein's popularity in the early 20th century. Marić was the only woman in her class when she pursued studies in Mathematics and Physics at the Polytechnic in Munich, Switzerland. Marić often faced various forms of discrimination, both from her classmates and professors. Despite being frequently overlooked, Marić's intellectual acumen made her stand out in class. This attracted the attention of Albert Einstein, who was in the same class, to approach her and make Marić his intellectual partner. This effort eventually created a deep intellectual

connection between the two, two brilliant minds with great ambitions in the world of science. After marriage, Marić encountered further gender inequality. Her role gradually shifted from intellectual partner to a traditional wife. She subjected to the pressures of traditional female roles and forced to sacrifice her own ambitions for the sake of her marriage. This culminated in the disregard and lack of recognition for Marić's early ideas and contributions to scientific concepts, particularly in the development of the theory of relativity. While Einstein received numerous awards and honors, Marić was forgotten by history.

The differential treatment experienced by the main character in the novel *The Other Einstein* can be classified as discrimination. According to Kasim, discrimination refers to differential treatment of an individual influenced by various factors such as race, religion, gender, age, and other factors, often manifesting as harassment, restriction, or exclusion (2022, p.272). Discrimination leads to the neglect of significant roles and intellectual contributions of those affected, as seen with the main character of *The Other Einstein*, Mileva Marić. In the novel, the discrimination faced by the main character is primarily influenced by three factors: her gender (gender discrimination), her Serbian origin (racial discrimination), and her status as a person with a disability.

The discrimination faced by Marić places her in a group marginalized from the social order, which can also be referred to as subaltern groups. Numerous studies have utilized subaltern theory as a reference for feminist themes. According to Spivak, subaltern does not merely refer to the oppressed class but encompasses anything that experiences restricted access, leading to spatial differentiation (Setiawan, 2018). Spivak includes women variable into the concept of subaltern, as in everyday life women can already be grouped as subaltern, particularly within patriarchal societal structures. Women often find it challenging to express their opinions due to a lack of conceptual language, and consequently, their voices remain unheard (Harahap & Adeni, 2021). The term subaltern, as proposed by Spivak, refers to those who lack the freedom to exist and individuals deemed incapable of representing themselves.

Based on this background, this research focuses on a primary aspect: the position of women experiencing discrimination within the novel, as represented by the main character. The reality of women in the novel tends to be marginalized based on their social roles and is identified as a third group in accordance with Spivak's understanding of subalternity. This research will explain the forms of discrimination against women as experienced by the main character in the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict and to describe how the main

character deals with discrimination against women in the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research used in this study is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. According to Subroto (2007, p.8), descriptive qualitative research involves the researcher carefully and meticulously recording data in the form of words, sentences, discourses, diaries, and memorandums. The data source in literary research is works that consist of words, sentences, and discourses as the research data. Based on this descriptive data, the researcher attempts to describe and explain the emerging phenomena without using a hypothesis. The data is analyzed, and the results are presented in a descriptive form, focusing on phenomena that are not in the form of numbers or coefficients regarding the relationship between variables. With this type of research, the goals to be achieved are to describe the forms of discrimination against women towards the main character in the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict and to describe how the main character's deal with the discrimination against women in the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict.

Time and Place of the Study

This research was completed at Bangka Belitung University from the beginning of the writing process of this research until its completion. In addition, this research was completed for seven months, from November 2024 until May 2025. In November 2024, the research data were collected from the sentences and storyline of the novel *The Other Einstein*, which depict discrimination against the main character as a subaltern woman. Then, the data was classified according Subaltern theory by Gayatri Spivak. From December 2024 until May 2025, the data was studied to answer the research questions. The final step of the research, which involved finalizing and presenting the results, was conducted in May 2025

Object of the Study

The material object in this research is the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict, published by Sourcebooks in the United States in 2016, while the formal object in this research is the text or discourse containing the subaltern condition faced by the main character in the novel. The data collection techniques used in this study are the read, observe, and take notes technique. The reading technique is the most important technique used to collect data through reading. The observing technique is a data collection method carried out by paying attention to the use of language.

Reading and observing are followed by note-taking. The note-taking technique is a method of collecting data by writing down or quoting text from the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict.

Data Collection

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Data Analysis

After the research data has been collected qualitatively and descriptively, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 404-412) state that the data will be analyzed using three components of data processing, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is essential in order to select and analyze the data sharply so that it remains relevant to the approach and concepts used, as well as to the focus of the research being studied. The selected data and information are then presented in the form of narrative texts, graphs, and tables that depict the data to ensure relevance with the focus of the research. The last, data selected and information are then presented in the form of narrative texts, graphs, and tables that depict the data to ensure relevance with the focus of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the forms of discrimination experienced by Mileva Marić as the main character in the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict, and how she deals to the discrimination directed at her. The character of Mileva Marić is analyzed using Spivak's subaltern theory to represent women from the 19th and 20th centuries to the present. The erasure of Mileva Marić's name from historical records despite her significant contributions to science underscores how patriarchal power structures have historically silenced women and continue to do so. This section explores the forms of discrimination experienced by Mileva Marić, not only in her personal relationships but also within the broader social and academic systems that suppressed women's voices. Additionally, it examines how Marić expressed her resistance against a system that was structurally biased against her.

A. Forms of Discrimination Against Women Experienced in “The Other Einstein”

Women continue to face discrimination across various aspects of life, both in domestic and public spheres. This discrimination is reflected in unequal access to education, employment, and political participation, as well as in social norms that limit women’s roles. Although numerous regulations and policies have been implemented to eliminate gender discrimination, discriminatory practices remain prevalent, such as wage disparities between men and women for the same work, gender stereotypes, and gender-based violence. This phenomenon not only disadvantages women individually but also hinders the social and economic progress of society as a whole.

Women are often positioned as a subaltern group, a structurally marginalized group whose voices are frequently ignored in social, political, and cultural discourses. In this context, women not only experience gender injustice but also lose the opportunity to represent their own interests and experiences. The dominance of patriarchal values and gender-biased social systems restricts women’s access to decision-making spaces, resulting in their aspirations and needs being inadequately addressed. This condition is further exacerbated by the intersection of other factors such as social class, ethnicity, and education, which reinforce women’s subaltern status.

Based on the novel *The Other Einstein*, Mileva Marić can be considered a subaltern woman, as evidenced by the following general data.

1. Erasure of Intellectual Role

The erasure of women’s intellectual roles represents a form of systemic gender discrimination with widespread implications for social equality. In numerous cultural and institutional contexts, women are often restricted in their access to participate in intellectual spheres, including education, research, and academic and professional decision-making. These limitations not only hinder the development of individual women’s potential but also diminish the diversity of thought and innovation within the academic world. This discrimination persists and is transmitted across generations due to patriarchal stereotypes and norms that underestimate women’s intellectual abilities, as well as social structures that prioritize male dominance in realms of knowledge and power.

Data 1

*My eyes blurry from staring at the minuscule calculations, I smoothed down the cover of the paper: “On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies.” **Our names—Albert Einstein and Mileva Marić Einstein—shone beneath the***

title. The work was largely mine, but I understood that without my degree or doctorate, it must come with Albert's name as well. (Marie Benedict, 2016, p. 207)

As stated on page 207, Mileva Marić played a crucial role in the creation of the paper “On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies.” Marić devoted significant time and sacrificed sleep to complete the paper, which she dedicated to her deceased daughter, Lieserl. **‘Our names—Albert Einstein and Mileva Marić Einstein—shone beneath the title.’** The placement of Albert Einstein’s name as the primary author, preceding Marić’s name in this sentence, underscores the dominance of male authority and the marginalization of women’s intellectual contributions. Although Marić was the primary contributor to the paper, her name appears as a secondary author in the very theory she created and developed, thereby diminishing her role in her own work. Moreover, this portrayal reflects power dynamics, particularly within both society and the domestic sphere, where formal recognition is disproportionately accorded to the husband. Consequently, developments related to the research were consistently communicated and confirmed through Albert Einstein.

The statement, **“Most of the work was mine, but I understood that without an academic degree, Albert’s name had to be included as well,”** illustrates that Marić could not solely list her name on the paper she authored due to her lack of academic credentials. Despite having studied Mathematics and Physics at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic, a highly selective institution, Marić was still compelled to include Einstein’s name, whose academic qualifications would lend credibility to the paper. Marić accepted and understood this condition, as her scientific partnership with Einstein provided a sense of fulfillment for the void she felt due to her inability to achieve the professional career she had aspired to since childhood. After it was confirmed that her theory would be published in a prominent journal, Marić once boasted that her husband, Albert Einstein, would gain fame from the paper. Marić’s actions and decisions reflect the limitations she faced, as publishing solely under her own name would have significantly reduced the likelihood of her theory being accepted by the scientific community. Supporting Einstein became Marić’s only strategy to ensure her theory’s survival and recognition. This situation illustrates Marić’s lack of access to power and influence, aligning with Spivak’s assertion that the subaltern faces significant limitations regarding access.

2. Geopolitical and gender discrimination

Geopolitical and gender discrimination are two interrelated phenomena that significantly impact individuals' access to and participation in various fields, particularly in the sciences and professional sectors. Gender discrimination is rooted in patriarchal systems and social hegemony that subordinate women, limiting their access to education, academic recognition, and strategic positions. Meanwhile, geopolitical discrimination further exacerbates global gender inequalities, as women in different countries encounter distinct barriers shaped by local political, economic, and cultural contexts. Countries characterized by negative stigma and prejudice intensify the marginalization of women, limiting their access to education, employment, and societal contributions.

Data 2

“The Miss Marić from Serbia or some Austro-Hungarian country of that sort?” he asked without glancing up, as if there could possibly be another Miss Marić in Section Six, one who hailed from a more respectable location. By his query, Weber made his views on Slavic eastern European peoples perfectly clear—that we, as dark foreigners, were somehow inferior to the Germanic peoples of defiantly neutral Switzerland. It was yet another preconception I would have to disprove in order to succeed. As if being the only woman in Section Six—only the fifth to ever be admitted into the physics and mathematics program—wasn’t enough. (Marie Benedict, 2016, p. 13)

The dialogue is delivered by Professor Weber to Marić upon her entry into the classroom. Mileva Marić, the only woman in her class, is subjected to differential treatment by her classmates. This different treatment is not solely due to her gender but also to her Serbian origin. In the early 20th century, discrimination based on ethnic background and gender was strongly experienced by immigrants from Eastern Europe, including Marić, who came from Serbia. **“The Miss Marić from Serbia or some Austro-Hungarian country of that sort?” he asked without glancing up, as if there could possibly be another Miss Marić in Section Six, one who hailed from a more respectable location’.** Weber’s cynical attitude regarding her origin reveals a perception of inferiority associated with immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian region, who were considered less respectable compared to those from Western Europe who dominated the hegemonic space.

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toward Marić exemplifies the social prejudice commonly directed at Eastern European immigrants, who were often regarded as “illegal immigrants.” This underscores how racial and ethnic biases based on her origin shaped the treatment Marić received in the classroom. The differential treatment Marić experienced can be understood through the lens of intersectionality, a concept that highlights the overlapping oppressions based on both gender and geopolitical origin. The way Marić was treated was influenced by patriarchal social norms that constrained women’s roles within academic and professional spheres, as well as by geopolitical factors that impacted access to education, employment, and social recognition. This resulted in significant social and professional barriers for Marić, a woman from Serbia, within an academic environment dominated by men and Western Europeans. It also underscores how the field of science at the time was primarily shaped by Western intellectual authority, with individuals from the periphery, like Marić, lacking equal access to and recognition within intellectual circles. As a subaltern, Marić faced restricted access due to her gender and minority ethnic background, compelling her to constantly prove herself and work twice as hard to gain acknowledgment.

3. Social Discrimination

Social discrimination refers to the phenomenon in which individuals or groups are treated inequitably or differently based on specific social characteristics. This form of discrimination can manifest across various contexts, including educational settings, workplaces, and access to public services. Structurally, social discrimination is rooted in value systems and normative frameworks that construct social hierarchies, thereby positioning certain groups as superior or inferior. Consequently, marginalized groups face systemic barriers in accessing equal opportunities, such as quality education, fair employment, and legal protection, ultimately reinforcing social inequality and perpetuating poverty. The impacts of social discrimination are not only confined to individuals but extend to the collective, as they can impede broader social and economic development. Furthermore, social discrimination contributes to the marginalization of minority groups and reinforces negative stigmas associated with them, creating a cycle of injustice that is difficult to break.

Data 3

*Had Albert really written such upsetting lines? Didn't he know that it would torture me to know every detail of his mother's dramatic reaction when he told her we planned to get married? **The image of his mother throwing herself***

down on her bed, crying hysterically at the news, and then hurling insults about me—that I would destroy his life and that I was entirely unsuitable for him—was almost unbearable. I knew now his parents wanted a Jewish wife for him or, at the very least, a Germanic one who would coddle him like his mother always had, but I didn't think either one of us expected this sort of tantrum. Her prejudices against me were many: my Orthodox Christian upbringing, my intellect, my Slavic heritage, my age, and my limp. Everything I suspected the first night I met her and more. (Marie Benedict, 2016, p. 122-123)

Marić reads a letter from Einstein. Einstein informs his parents about the progression of his relationship with Marić toward a more serious commitment. As expected, Einstein's parents—particularly his mother—strongly opposed their relationship. Marić is perplexed by Einstein's seemingly untroubled and detailed depiction of his mother's dramatic reaction in opposition to their marriage. Marić hopes that Einstein would have refrained from providing such detailed descriptions of his mother's reaction, as it would only serve to further wound her emotionally. **'The image of his mother throwing herself onto her bed, crying hysterically upon hearing the news, and then hurling insults about me—that I would ruin his life and that I was entirely unsuitable for him—was almost unbearable.'** This statement illustrates that Einstein's mother perceived Marić as an inferior figure. This perception is rooted in the stereotypes associated with Marić's various backgrounds. Marić is not recognized as an autonomous individual but is instead reduced to a representational object by the dominant group. Consequently, Marić is deprived of agency in defining her own identity, as she is confined to the stereotypes imposed upon her. It is due to her perceived inferior background that Einstein's mother asserts that Marić will destroy Einstein's life.

'Her prejudices against me were many: my Orthodox Christian upbringing, my intellect, my Slavic heritage, my age, and my limp'. This statement contains several reasons why Einstein's mother rejected Marić as a daughter-in-law. Einstein's mother desired him to marry a woman of Jewish or German heritage, whom she believed would be more appropriate and socially comparable to Einstein. Marić failed to meet the social and cultural expectations set by Einstein's parents due to her Slavic descent, which at the time was regarded as that of a "illegal immigrant" of lower status compared to individuals from Western Europe. Furthermore, the prejudice against Marić was also rooted in her religious

background as an adherent of Eastern Orthodoxy, which was viewed as ‘foreign’ or ‘other’ within the cultural hierarchy of Western Europe at that time. Marić’s age, which was four years older than Einstein’s, also contributed to why Einstein’s mother considered her unsuitable as a wife for him, as she was perceived to be past her prime. Additionally, Marić’s limp was viewed as a form of “imperfection,” further serving as a reason to discredit her. Einstein’s mother also deemed Marić physically unattractive, preferring a younger, more conventionally attractive Jewish-Germanic daughter-in-law. Consequently, she perceived Marić as a woman full of deficiencies, deeming her incompatible with Einstein on multiple levels. Marić herself was aware of and anticipated her inferior and vulnerable position within a patriarchal society. This reflects how intersectional discrimination—encompassing ethnicity, religion, gender, and disability—creates overlapping layers that reinforce her status as a subaltern, limiting both her social acceptance and individual opportunities within social and familial contexts. The treatment of Marić by Einstein’s mother serves as an example of how Marić lacked a voice and place within the dominant social system. She was unable to defend herself or represent her own identity, instead being judged through the lens of the dominant social narrative, that of Western Europe. This highlights how Marić was marginalized for not meeting the class, race, religion, and physical condition standards deemed ideal by the dominant group.

4. Domestic Discrimination

Domestic discrimination is a form of injustice frequently experienced by women, arising from patriarchal social and cultural structures that position women in subordinate roles. Within patriarchal societies, women are assigned the responsibilities of domestic labor and child-rearing. In many cases, the burdens placed on women remain uncompensated, while their opportunities to access education, employment, and personal development outside the home are severely limited. This condition fosters women’s dependence on their husbands and renders them more vulnerable to household injustices. Women who seek to transcend traditional roles and enter the public workforce often face a dual burden, managing both domestic and public responsibilities. This is largely due to the perception of women’s domestic roles as static and permanent. In addition to role and opportunity limitations, household discrimination often escalates into physical, psychological, and economic violence against women and children. Such violence not only affects physical well-being but also inflicts emotional trauma and impedes the socio-economic welfare of women as victims.

Data 4

Hands and arms flew until I felt the force of his hand fully upon my face. Like a slap. Whether accidental or intentional, I didn't know. All I could think about was the pain. (Marie Benedict, 2016, p. 254)

When Einstein is caught having an affair with his own cousin, Elsa. Marić is devastated after discovering a letter that serves as evidence of Einstein's infidelity. Her last hope is shattered—the belief that although Einstein was no longer her scientific partner, he would at least remain her husband. Subsequently, she confronts Einstein about the affair. The sense of betrayal she experiences intensifies when Einstein expresses no remorse for his actions. Instead, he feels relieved that he no longer has to conceal the affair between himself and Elsa. Furthermore, he shifts the blame onto Marić, saying that she is the reason the affair occurred. Unable to accept such an accusation, Marić begins to scream and attempts to distance herself from Einstein, but he responds by using physical force to restrain her. **'Hands and arms flew until I felt the force of his hand fully upon my face'**. Einstein's attempt to restrain Marić from leaving culminates in a slap to her face. Marić collapses to her knees. For her, the pain from the slap is nearly as intense as the pain of childbirth, making her nearly incapable of breathing, let alone crying. The slap is so forceful that blood flows from her cheek. According to Spivak, subalterns often find themselves only able to speak through their bodies, with pain serving as a visceral expression of their experiences when their voice is silenced. The physical violence inflicted by Einstein not only instills fear in their two sons but also underscores the dynamics of power, repression, and silencing exerted over Marić. This scene illustrates the assertion of male dominance within the domestic sphere, revealing that Marić is not only marginalized in the academic realm but also within her own household. Moreover, the act of violence occurring in the presence of their sons emphasizes how power is asserted even within intimate, private spaces, reinforcing the division between the one in control and the one silenced. Thus, the scene encapsulates how physical violence functions as a mechanism for erasing the voice of the subaltern, rendering Marić's suffering both a bodily and symbolic manifestation of her systemic disempowerment.

B. The Main Character's Acts of Resistance Against Discrimination

The resistance of women against discrimination is a crucial form of struggle in the pursuit of gender equality and social justice. Through various social movements, educational efforts, and legal advocacy, women actively challenge patriarchal norms and discriminatory practices that restrict their rights, freedoms, and opportunities in areas such as education,

employment, and politics. Women's resistance is not only expressed through protests and campaigns but also through achievements in academic, professional, and leadership spheres, which challenge stereotypes and pave the way for future generations of women. Additionally, women's resistance can strengthen solidarity and collective awareness to transform unjust social structures, fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity.

Discrimination against women is extremely complex and rooted in patriarchal social, cultural, and economic structures that prioritize men. Women often face various systemic barriers, such as gender stereotypes, social norms that restrict their roles, as well as discriminatory policies and practices across multiple sectors, including education, employment, and politics. Additionally, gender-based violence and the lack of access to resources and legal protection further exacerbate the inequalities experienced by women. Efforts by women to resist discrimination and achieve equal standing are also hindered by resistance from groups seeking to maintain the status quo, as well as by the lack of awareness and support from the broader society.

Based on the novel *The Other Einstein*, Mileva Marić, as a woman categorized as a subaltern, engages in the following acts of resistance.

1. Resisting Through Education

Education is one of the primary tools women use to resist discrimination and advocate for gender equality. By gaining access to proper education, women can enhance their knowledge, skills, and self-confidence needed to enter professional and social fields traditionally dominated by men. Education also provides opportunities for women to understand their rights, develop critical awareness of injustice, and strengthen their bargaining power within the family and society. Various studies show that educated women tend to be more economically independent, more active in decision-making, and better able to challenge discriminatory social norms.

Furthermore, education plays a crucial role in changing societal perceptions and attitudes toward women's roles. Through inclusive curricula and gender equality education programs, stereotypes and prejudices that have long restricted women can be gradually reduced. Education also fosters the emergence of a new generation that is more aware of the importance of equality and human rights, thereby strengthening social movements that oppose gender discrimination.

Data 5

Begun? The class was not designated to start for another fifteen minutes. Were my classmates told something I wasn't? Had they conspired to meet early? I wanted to ask but didn't. Argument would only fuel the fires against me. Anyway, it didn't matter. I would simply arrive fifteen minutes earlier tomorrow. And earlier and earlier every morning if I needed to. I would not miss a single word of Weber's lectures. He was wrong if he thought an early start would deter me. I was my father's daughter. (Marie Benedict, 2016, p. 13)

This scene takes place when Professor Weber states that the class had already started before Marić arrived, even though, according to the information Marić received, the class was supposed to begin fifteen minutes later. This indicates that certain information was deliberately withheld from Marić. The intent behind this act was to undermine Marić's confidence, as she was perceived as presumptuous for daring to consider herself equal to her male classmates. The discrimination Marić experiences becomes an additional challenge she must face beyond academic demands. Marić's feeling of being excluded from important class schedule information reflects a socially exclusive dynamic and serves as an attempt to erase women's presence in academic spaces, thereby reinforcing male dominance and diminishing women's roles. **'I would simply arrive fifteen minutes earlier tomorrow. And earlier and earlier every morning if I needed to. I would not miss a single word of Weber's lectures'**. Realizing the possibility of being deliberately excluded, Marić chooses not to directly confront the situation, as it could potentially worsen her position. Instead, she plans to arrive earlier in the future, opting to adjust her approach in the classroom and shift her mindset from being a victim to taking control of the situation. Marić strives to reclaim the space and time that others attempt to deprive her of, asserting her right to equal access to education despite being treated unfairly. **'He was wrong if he thought an early start would deter me. I was my father's daughter'**. In this sentence, Marić reasserts herself as a form of resistance against efforts to diminish her as a woman. She affirms that she is her father's daughter, emphasizing that she has inherited her father's resilient and determined nature. By doing so, Marić challenges the stigma that women are weak and easily discouraged.

2. Creating Academic Works

Women's resistance against discrimination is often expressed through the creation of works as a form of self-expression and a demonstration of their capabilities in various fields,

including art, literature, science, and technology. By producing meaningful and impactful works, women not only assert their existence and contributions but also challenge the stereotypes and social norms that have historically restricted their roles. Women's works often address issues related to discrimination, injustice, and their struggles, serving as educational and inspirational tools for the broader public to understand and address gender inequality. Through their creations, women can gain professional recognition, enhance financial independence, and strengthen their bargaining position in various social contexts.

Data 6

*There it was. The new rule was so simple and natural. Newton's laws about the physical universe only applied to inert objects. **No one needed to be bound by the old rules anymore.** Time was relative to space. Time was not absolute. Not when there is motion.* (Marie Benedict, 2016, p. 196)

This scene takes place after Marić and Einstein's first child dies. Marić, who had vowed not to return to Bern without her daughter Lieserl, is now forced to return empty-handed. She sits at the station, waiting for the announcement of her train's departure to Bern, filled with regret and 'what ifs'. Marić wonders whether Lieserl would still be alive if she had not left her to go to Bern for Einstein. She also imagines how different her life would be if she were not pregnant again — she would not have to return to Einstein, and her future could have taken a different path. Marić wishes that God would allow her to go back in time, that the laws of the universe would permit her to stop or alter time. Then, she recalls Newton's rigid laws governing the universe. A new idea forms in her mind — the thought of uncovering God's hidden rules using the language of physics. Marić thinks that if a train could move faster than the speed of light, time would run backward — a new, simple, and natural law that simultaneously challenges Newton's laws of light waves. In that moment, Marić claims her intellectual space without hesitation. '**No one needed to be bound by the old rules anymore**'. This sentence asserts that the old rules are no longer relevant through her new theory that time is not absolute. Marić breaks through the intellectual boundaries that have long been defined by men and rejects the patriarchal structure within the scientific world. She dismantles the singular narrative established by men and creates space for new ideas. By boldly claiming her intellectual space, Marić asserts that her theory is just as valid as those produced by male scientists. Through her new theory, Marić articulates her own voice — she speaks through her work and is heard through it, a work born from the suffering

of losing her daughter. Marić's theory is not solely about science, it is also a manifesto of resistance against the invisibility imposed on women.

3. Decision-making for Herself

Women's resistance against discrimination is often expressed through the act of making decisions for themselves as a form of empowerment and autonomy. By taking control over vital choices in their lives—such as education, career, marriage, and reproductive health—women assert their right to determine their own destiny without interference or pressure from discriminatory and patriarchal social norms. This exercise of independent decision-making becomes an effective strategy in resisting patriarchal structures that have long restricted women's freedom and mobility. Additionally, making decisions for oneself plays a crucial role in challenging and reshaping social norms that have traditionally positioned women as subordinate. When women make choices about their own lives, they create a space that not only strengthens their individual positions but also fosters broader social transformation toward greater equality and non-discrimination.

Data 7

*But all wouldn't be well when—or if—he returned. At Helene's urging and Madame Curie's example, I had awoken my strength. **I would not endure humiliation at Albert's hands again, whether personal or professional.** If Albert didn't appreciate the meek helpmate I had become in our latter years together—the failed physicist from whom he could pilfer ideas at will and the wife bendable at his beckoning—he positively loathed the return of the old Mileva in Berlin. **And that was precisely who would greet him at the door when he returned from his cowardly flight to his lover, Elsa.** (Marie Benedict, 2016, p. 276)*

This scene occurs when Einstein leaves Marić and their two sons without any news for six days. Having previously met with her close friend Helene and the renowned female scientist who defied gender stereotypes in science, Madam Curie, Marić realizes that Einstein has treated her extremely unfairly. Helene, comparing Marić to her former self, asks where the sharp and intelligent Marić who was ready to confront anyone has gone. Helene urges Marić to fight back, while Madam Curie reminds her that new choices will always be available. **'I would not endure humiliation at Albert's hands again, whether personal or professional'**. Marić, realizing that she has been treated not as a wife but more as a servant, takes control of herself and refuses to be dominated by Einstein any longer. She asserts her right to be respected as an equal individual. By reclaiming her former

identity, Marić claims her right to be herself without any restrictions, especially from Einstein. This act affirms Marić's existence as an autonomous individual who is free to make her own choices. By reviving her old identity, Marić resists the patriarchal narrative that seeks to control women by confining them to the role of obedient and powerless wives. **‘And that was precisely who would greet him at the door when he returned from his cowardly flight to his lover, Elsa’.** This sentence illustrates how Marić, as a subaltern figure, refuses to remain powerless and invisible. She asserts her agency by reviving her former self—a strong, brave woman who challenges domination and refuses to submit to anyone.

C. Theory Analysis

To this day, women continue to experience oppression in both its forms and impacts. Politically, women are discriminated against by the state through policies that are unfriendly to women and inherently masculine. State policies tend to marginalize women, hindering women's development and self-expression. This is due to the lack of female perspectives in policy-making, as women's voices in patriarchal societies are still dominated by men and gradually silenced or rendered invisible. Meanwhile, policies that disadvantage women leave them without the resources to enter the political arena and develop policies that fully emancipate women.

The oppression experienced by women often begins within the first social circle that serves as the place where every individual learns about life: the family. In patriarchal societies, each gender has traditional roles that are taught to them from a young age. Men are assigned the responsibility to earn a living and lead the family, while women's traditional duties are limited to domestic roles. This is exactly the reason why women are often constructed merely as reproductive tools, sources of satisfaction, or possessions of men. The stereotypes attached to women restrict their access to fundamental rights such as education, employment, and others. Women who are seen as inferior within the social system are vulnerable to various forms of gender-based violence. Meanwhile, women who want to break free from their traditional gender roles must bear a double burden.

The persistent injustices faced by women have sparked a desire to attain justice, where women can obtain equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources across various areas of life. This has led to the emergence of women who not only voice their aspirations but also inspire others to break free from the shackles of patriarchy and the stereotypes imposed on them. Women's emancipation seeks to achieve a state where women can

participate in politics, socialize, receive education, and work on an equal footing with men. The collective movement of women striving for emancipation has given rise to feminism.

Feminism is a collective movement that seeks to eradicating gender inequality and advocating for women's rights in all sectors of life to achieve equality with men. Feminism highlights various issues related to women and criticizes the patriarchal system that places women in a subordinate position. Feminism emphasizes that gender equality is not only about women but also about social justice as a whole. Feminism itself manifests in various waves and ideologies with different approaches, such as activism, advocacy, education, and more. Despite these variations, all streams of feminism share the same goal, to empower women and resist all forms of gender-based oppression.

Subaltern is a concept introduced by Spivak, referring to individuals or groups who lack a voice in social, political, and economic spheres. In her influential essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", from 1988, Spivak questions whether the subaltern groups can speak under the dominance of those in power. In the context of women, Spivak argues that all women belong to the subaltern group because they are politically oppressed by policies that disadvantage them and socially oppressed by the patriarchal system. Spivak illustrates how women's voices are often distorted or even erased by those in power. Ultimately, Spivak is not only questioning the subaltern's ability to speak but also their capacity to be heard and understood without being distorted by dominant power structures.

In the novel *The Other Einstein*, the main character, Mileva Marić, was born in Serbia, where, in the late 19th century, government policies prohibited women from pursuing higher education. Since access to education for women was extremely limited in her country, Marić decided to attend university in Switzerland, where education was more accessible to women. Despite studying in a country that was more welcoming to educated women, Marić struggled to gain recognition in the scientific community solely because she was a woman. Additionally, Marić faced various forms of discrimination, as Swiss universities, although accepting women in education, were still dominated by patriarchal systems in practice.

Mileva Marić faced multiple forms of social discrimination due to her gender, disability, and nationality. These layers of discrimination made her university life challenging, as her academic environment was unwelcoming. Ultimately, Marić was unable to complete her studies because she was expected to marry and have children. After getting married, societal norms demanded that Marić become the perfect wife and mother, making it extremely difficult for her to pursue her dream of becoming a professional scientist.

Moreover, her works and theories were repeatedly appropriated by her husband, Albert Einstein, causing Marić to gradually lose her passion for science. Einstein also treated her disrespectfully, subjecting her to psychological and physical abuse, as well as infidelity. The novel concludes with the couple's divorce and a reflective internal monologue from Marić.

Subaltern is not merely an elevated term for the Other, referring to individuals or groups perceived as foreign or marginalized. Rather, subaltern is a more specific category related to structural powerlessness within the context of power relations. Fundamentally, all subalterns are the Other. In this case, Marić is positioned outside the dominant group, unable to speak for herself, even when her scientific theories and works are appropriated by her own husband. Marić is regarded as an inferior woman in the eyes of her husband, her social environment, and her country. Patriarchal power structures determine who is allowed to speak and whose contributions are recognized. As both the Other and a subaltern, Marić is excluded from such recognition, and her name is erased from history. She is remembered solely as Albert Einstein's first wife, not as a brilliant female scientist who contributed significant theories and intellectual insights.

Marić had to bear multiple burdens on her own, including the double burden. While Einstein was able to complete his studies, Marić, who was pregnant at the time, was unable to do so. She had to return to her hometown to conceal her pregnancy and give birth, while Einstein continued his life in Switzerland without visiting her even once. Women who have become wives and mothers are expected by the social system to bear the responsibilities of the domestic sphere. As a mother, Marić no longer had options within the dominant patriarchal discourse. She was forced out of the academic world and a professional career. Marić lacked the space, time, and support to continue her academic pursuits. Despite being the one who worked extensively on the scientific work, Marić had to stay up later than Einstein to care for their children. Even though she could not be credited as the primary author of their scientific works due to her lack of a degree, Marić nonetheless found fulfillment in her contributions, as becoming a scientist was her lifelong dream since childhood. However, her dream was ultimately shattered by Einstein, who removed Marić's name and took credit for their scientific works, effectively erasing Marić's name from the field of science.

According to Spivak, women are caught between various regimes of hegemonic power. Spivak asserts that in the context of colonial production, the subaltern lack a voice and a history, and in the case of women as subalterns, they are even further relegated to the

shadows. In the context of the novel, Marić is entrapped within mechanisms of political power (through the state) and social power (through culture and social constructs), which are manifested as oppressive regimes. This dual oppression further distances women from accessing their own voices. In simpler terms, feminist movements often detach the object of their struggle (women) and are instead represented by only a few women. However, emancipation is inherently a process that must move from an individual-to-collective, not a collective-to-individual.

Marić's failure to achieve emancipation in asserting her individual status can be observed in her passive resignation, which itself becomes a manifestation of women oppression. In post-colonial perspective, women who are trapped in various oppressive situations often experience confusion, leading them to remain silent. This phenomenon is referred to as the subjectification of the object (woman as object) into the subject (the silent woman). When women remain silent, they inadvertently allow the oppression of other women to persist. Furthermore, imperialism, which emphasizes systemic and conservative structures, undermines the core principles of the feminist movement. For instance, feminist discourse is often dominated by Western feminist frameworks, despite the fact that the forms of oppression varies across contexts. Thus, the strategies to address these oppressions must align with the specific circumstances faced by women in different settings. In the case of Marić, her state of confusion exemplifies the condition in which women become reluctant to resist, further reinforcing their subjugation.

The concept of subaltern in relation to Marić can also be examined through the novel's title, "The Other," which signifies that the main character is not considered a significant part of the narrative at all. The distinction between subaltern and subordination is noteworthy. While subordination refers to being placed in a secondary position, subaltern goes beyond that. As illustrated in Figure 1, the superordinate group is dominated by the state, which holds power over its citizens, including women. Subsequently, the subordinate group in this context comprises society, including academics, who are positioned as secondary. The intersection between the superordinate and subordinate groups remains political, operating through mechanisms of hegemony. Meanwhile, the subaltern represents the "other" group, those who are largely overlooked and gradually marginalized. In this context, Marić represents the subaltern, experiencing dual oppression. Politically, the state has yet to explicitly accommodate women's interests. Socially, women are still perceived as being inferior to men, even when they are academics, as is the case with Marić.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This research aims to identify the forms of discrimination against women experienced by the main character in the novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict, as well as how the main character deals such discrimination. Data were collected from words, sentences, and discourses found in the novel *The Other Einstein*. The data were then analyzed using three components of data processing: data display, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. Based on the collected data, a total of 21 relevant data were found that correspond to the two formulation of problems.

Based on the discussion presented, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the Forms of Discrimination Against Women Experienced in *The Other Einstein* include the Erasure of Intellectual Contributions, Gender and Geopolitical Discrimination, Social Discrimination, and Domestic Discrimination. A total of 12 data were found in the Forms of Discrimination Against Women Experienced in *The Other Einstein*, consisting of 3 data related to the Erasure of Intellectual Contributions, 3 data related to Gender and Geopolitical Discrimination, 3 data related to Social Discrimination, and 3 data related to Domestic Discrimination. Second, regarding the Main Character's Efforts to Resist Discrimination, these include Resisting Through Education, Creating Works, and Courage to Make Personal Decisions. In the Main Character's Efforts to Resist Discrimination, a total of 9 data were found in the Main Character's Efforts to Resist Discrimination, consisting 3 data related to Resisting Through Education, 3 data related to Creating Works, and 3 data related to Making Personal Decisions.

From a theoretical analysis, the main character, Maric, belongs to the subaltern group and experiences double oppression. Politically, the state has not openly accommodated women's interests. Socially, women are still considered inferior to men, even though Maric is part of the academic community. As a subaltern, Maric is not only unable to speak as a female scientist but also as a woman within a patriarchal societal structure. This research shows that Maric's character reflects the reality of the subaltern—unable to speak and whose existence is unrecognized by the power structure, as evidenced by Maric's name being erased from history.

Suggestion

This study discusses "The Subaltern Condition of Women in the Novel *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict (A Study on Women's Discrimination)." This study

analyzes the forms of discrimination experienced by the main character in the novel *The Other Einstein* and examines how the character responds to the discrimination she encounters, using Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern.

Several suggestions can be considered by future researchers who wish to apply the same theoretical framework. Future researchers could analyze the forms of discrimination against women and examine how these women respond to the discrimination they experience in other research objects such as books, films, speeches, and other mediums.

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