



# Commodified Motherhood and the Politics of the Female Body: A Revisionist Reading of Mahasweta Devi's *Breast-Giver*

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**Abstract**— *Motherhood has continually been contextualized in the cultural discourse as the place of purity, sacrifice and emotional abundance. These idealizations, nevertheless, tend to mask material and ideological ways in which the maternal identities are manufactured, disciplined and consumed. This article presents a revisionist feminist interpretation of the story of Breast-Giver by Mahasweta Devi that the text challenges the sacrificialized notion of motherhood by revealing its intimate alignment with labor, stratification of classes, as well as paternalism. Although the previous academic research on the story has been productive in terms of discussing not only subalternity but also female misery and the exploitative nature of the body, it has failed to consider enough the aspects of lactation as an extractive labor or motherhood as an ideological framework by the dependence of the economy. Methodologically, the research takes a qualitative, textual and theoretical form that is premised on revisionist feminism, feminist materialism, postcolonial criticism, intersectionality, and womanist intuition. The paper reveals how the maternal body is turned into a place of use-value, biology capacity redefined as a social and economic activity through a close analysis of Jashoda as a wet nurse. The physical aging and ultimate desertion of Jashoda is a gradual process that discloses the expendable nature of the system of mythifying motherhood but forecheseably overloading women who give birth to babies. The pivotal contribution of the paper is to rebrand Breast-Giver as a rethinking of sacred motherhood. It suggests that Devi does not just depict the ailing mamma; it questions the social and political framework that transforms the motherhood nurturing into marketable commodities. Through this the study will contribute to existing arguments on reproductive labor, feminine embodiment, as well as politics of care in the postcolonial and global feminist debate.*



**Keywords**— *Commodified Motherhood, Revisionist Feminism, Female Body Politics, Maternal Labor, Postcolonial Feminism, Subaltern Motherhood*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Motherhood has traditionally held a lofty place in the cultural, religious and literary conversations. It is recurrently invoked as the utmost symbol of self-sacrifice, perseverance, motherhood, and nurture as well as unconditional love. But this exaltation frequently is based on a disturbing abstraction. The mother becomes an ethical ideal, only after being disconnected of the material body

that works under her taking-in, creating, sustaining, and wearing down the body (that is the body) in the care process. This sentimentality uplifting has continually been confronted by feminist thinking, which demands that motherhood as such is never an exclusively biological state or feeling. It is also an institution of history which is shaped by ideology, organized by labor and mediated by imbalanced power distributions. What is perceived as

natural may be, in most cases socially constructed and imposed by the culture.

This is exactly the conflict between purification and consumption that renders the *Breast-Giver* by Mahasweta Devi a very disturbing reading. The narrative rejects the redemptive discourses whereby motherhood is typically redeemed and instead forces the reader to acknowledge the maternal body as a place of production, exchange and loss. In the character of Jashoda, a woman, the lactating body that feeds off of an upper-caste family, Devi deprives motherhood of its idealist wistfulness and repatriates it to the exchanges of class and dependency, patriarchal usefulness, and bodily extraction. Jashoda is glorified as the mother just as long as she is productive. When her body starts failing, piety is replaced by indifference. The story becomes thus a perverse irony: when the maternal body gets devoured, it is glorified.

The present paper will argue that irony in that light by using a revisionist feminist lens. The term revisionism in the context does not essentially imply providing a fresh meaning of a well-known text. It refers to the questioning of the ideological underpinnings that seem to render some meanings so natural, everlasting and unquestionably morally right. Read in that manner, *Breast-Giver* is not just a work of maternal suffering; it is an attack on the cultural script which desires to have such suffering which is noble. Devi throws the door to motherhood open to debate by revealing the mechanisms by which the commodification of the female labor of reproduction is carried out and by which that commodification is masked in the name of responsibility, nurture and ladylike virtues.

Even though *Breast-Giver* has received significant criticism, much of the available academia has focused on the notion of subalternity or caste-class domination or symbolic violence perpetrated towards the female body. The following lines of inquiry can in no way be dismissed, but we will find them frequently unsatisfactorily analyzed: how, then, does Devi appeal to motherhood itself, in order to make it an object of revisionist criticism? The lactation of Jashoda, in most of the readings, does not constitute a separate kind of gendered labor but seems to be a continuation of her victimhood process which joins the body and the economy and ideology. Likewise, the productive and extractive aspects of the maternal body are underexplored with most of the time this body is seen as being in the form of a metaphor of suffering. This is not the gap between scholarship and lack of scholarship on the issue of oppression, but the gap between a lack of a continuity of critical approach to the matter, in which motherhood is understood as a form of commodified labour

and the female body is understood as a politically controlled port of use of value.

It is this gap which creates the core issue that the current study tackles, which is that the idealization of mothering masks the processes by which maternal abilities are usurped, made natural and used up in disproportionate social formations. In *Breast-Giver*, the sustenance turns ritualistic, procreation turns into means, and self-sacrifice turns into compulsion. It is not merely that Jashoda is at a disadvantage, but the fact that it is her suffering that is culturally transformed into virtue. The truth is such a form requires a reading that can sustain gender ideology, labor extraction, hierarchy up to classes and bodily politics without diminishing the text to either allegory or social documentation.

This paper accordingly works towards achieving three objectives which link with one another. To begin with it analyses the ways in which Devi subverts the sentimental and sacred symbol of motherhood by putting a spotlight on its economic and ideological underpinnings. Secondly, it examines the female body within the text as a control zone, production field and an abandoned site in the end. Third, it shows that a revisionist interpretation of *Breast-Giver* broadens existing discussions on breast-giver motherhood by placing the issue of maternal identity in the context of overlapping forces of class, masculinity, and postcolonial social relations.

The relevance of this study is that it tries to reposition *Breast-Giver* in the context of continuous arguments in care, reproductive labour and the commodification of the women body in the society. Devi has a new urgency at a time when feminist scholarship is more concerned with the invisible economies of care work and inequality of the display of bodily labor. This essay would contend that *Breast-Giver* preempts most of these anxieties by demonstrating how motherhood, or these institutions of extraction, can be used not as place of power, but as an institution of extraction in the cases of class dependence, and patriarchal demand. It adds to the study of literature, feminist theory, and postcolonial studies by advocating that motherhood is to be read as not a universal category.

In this paper, it is thus argued that *Breast-Giver* is a significant revisionist experience of busting down the mythical construct of motherhood and revealing maternal labor as a commodified experience and female flesh as a negotiated territory in which gender, classes and power merge in a very disheartening way. By following the life of Jashoda, Devi demonstrates that motherhood, instead of being an immortal moral subject, is a materialized, and

ideologically controlled phenomenon, the sanctification of which often hides the violence.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research takes place within an interdisciplinary framework, which unites revisionist feminism, feminist materialism, postcolonial theory, intersectionality and womanist thought. They are not understood as being alien theoretical adornments; indeed, they operate against each other so as to help shed light on how *Breast-Giver* constructs motherhood as an ideological, economic and physical construction.

Revisionism is the main interpretive prism of the paper. Revisionism is more than re-examining a familiar subject in a new light in feminist literary criticism. It involves deconstructing the assumptions that have led to the appearance of natural, permanent and moral sanctity of cultural categories such as motherhood, femininity, and sacrifice. This revisionist mythmaking formulation created by Alicia Ostriker is of particular significance as this author shows how literature can difficulties established structures of symbols by rewriting the discourses that can authorize the gendered identities. Even though *Devi* is not updating an archetypal myth in any literal way, *Breast-Giver* is a very radical gesture. It explodes one of the most persistent culture myths of patriarchy the sacrificialized mother.

The feminist materialism reinforces this revisionist paradigm, it is now feasible to interpret maternal labor, not as a personal sentimental act, but as a socialized work. The lactation in the story of *Devi* is both not biological and somewhat not symbolic. It turns into value-producing labour. It is no whistle of praise to the maternal body and this, it is arranged in order to be productive and worn out. The language of feminist materialism thus provides the conceptualization it is the language which motherhood can be interpreted as labor masked behind the ideological terminology of care, devotion and sacrifice.

There is equally need to have a postcolonial structure since the story is born out of a socialized world of class stratification, caste laden relationships and domestic dependence. Postcolonial analysis enables the paper to transcend abstract feminist arguments, and pay attention to the particular historical order of power that renders the body of *Jashoda* appropriable. In this respect, the work by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak can not be ignored anyhow. Through her theorization of the subaltern woman, we can understand that only the roles of various functions that the bodies of such women are designed to play make them become socially visible.

The intersectionality and womanist thinking are also borrowed by the study to prevent treating and defining woman as a universal category. The intersectionality of Kimberlé Crenshaw proves helpful in demonstrating that the exploitation of *Jashoda* cannot be traced to gender per se; her frailty comes about in the intersection of gendered duty, economically precarious circumstances, and social stratification. As much as womanism discussed by Alice Walker has a historical ground based on the experience of the Black women, it is still hints that it is attentive to the survival, endurance, and lived experience of marginalized women. These frameworks serve to shed light on the differences in the ways motherhood in *Breast-Giver* is organized based on power with an eye to read comparatively and with care.

Combined, these approaches to theory enable the paper to make an argument that *Breast-Giver* is not merely a narrative on maternal suffering. It is a literary and ideological deconstructing of divine maternity and the way that the labor of the mother is naturalized, the value of the body is associated with productivity and that the mother is found useless when her labor is no longer useful.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

As long as scholarship on Mahasweta Devi has used the *Breast-Giver* as a way to understand how gendered exploitation refers to it, the story has been viewed as an expression of such exploitation which has been discussed disproportionately across its various political registers. Postcolonial feminist and subaltern studies have reacted to form the foundational readings which provided a precursor of the question of representation; as *Jashoda* becomes visible to the social order, it is not her body, but her become-worldly functions of reproductive and affective care which makes her visible. The formulation of the work of *Devi* by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has been particularly important in the shift of focus away the personal suffering to the historical and ideological formations whereby the subaltern female body is reconfigured as labor, duty and symbolism. But these readings though clarifying mediation and marginality are not always able to maintain a different analysis of motherhood as a historically constructed institution. Motherly body is not completely theorized as a place where care is translated to extractive labor, even though it is usually subalternized.

*Breast-Giver* has come under a related body of criticism addressing *Breast-Giver* via Marxist-feminist as well as materialist approaches. Such studies have been useful towards making cases to support the argument that the wet-nursing of *Jashoda* makes motherhood an economic activity and the underpinning of patriarchy, class

dependency, and social hierarchy. The latter is a significant aspect of such work, which proves that lactation in the text cannot be merely a sacred instinct but work. However, a large part of this criticism is still more than conceptually wide. It recognizes exploitation, but not necessarily delves into the ideological processes that render exploitation noble, even natural, and even culturally desirable. Consequently, the culturally sacredized language that is actually what justifies extraction motherhood is frequently under scrutiny.

More recent criticism has made the purely victim-centered approaches to reading slightly more difficult: it focuses on the politics of breastfeeding being both ambivalent and ambiguous. The work by Morgan Richardson Dietz is important in this respect as it does not see the need to apply one symbolical role to breastfeeding in the Indian literary text. Dietz conflates it with hunger, nourishment, embodiment and social power to provide a more referenced interpretive area where intimacy and coercion can both be experienced in the case of breastfeeding. This is significant intervention as it allows Jashoda to cease being a flattened symbol of submission with passive suffering. Simultaneously, there is excessively heavy-handed emphasis on ambivalence that can make the structure of the critique of *Devi* soft. Contradiction in *Breast-Giver* is not an existential contradiction but a socially constructed contradiction. Not just caught in the paradox; the body of Jashoda is forcefully implanted into an economy where the productivity of the maternal body is given a reward and the body is earlier disposed in the same way when that productivity becomes low.

The other more recent study of the body politics in the greater oeuvre has also helped to further enrich the field to demonstrate that women bodies in her fiction are battlegrounds dominated by violence, power, and resistance. It is on the basis of such studies that one is enabled to understand that the suffering of the body in *Devi* is never absolutely personal. Nevertheless, there are reproaches against the inability of surveys across a range of texts to discontinue the classification of such a category as that of the female body, without specification of the motherly body. The breast could be talked about as a symbol, torn lesbian, or injury, but not very frequently as a tool of labor, which is implanted in a continuous system of extraction. Such a difference plays a crucial role in the current paper, because *Breast-Giver* is not just a piece about physical harm; it is a way in which creative power becomes transformed into an enduring tool of social capital.

At this juncture, revisionism is significant indeed. The theory of revisionist mythmaking by Alicia Ostriker provides a very promising approach since one of the most common cultural narratives of the patriarchal culture, the

sacred mother, is undone by the story of *Devi*. Such revisionism is not merely the reinterpretation; it is a disclosure of that which culture has made self-evident. *Breast-Giver* defrocked motherhood of sentimental halo and brought her into historicity of her place of work, of hard work and material disparity. But surprisingly, the criticism of the story has not always put revolution in the classification of interpretations to the forefront. Scholars may refer to the irony or inversion in *Devi* about treating Jashoda, however, the studies do not show how the text is systematically rewritten about the ideological presumption of treating motherhood as a selfless, natural and morally transcendent phenomenon.

The intersectionality, womanism, and Black feminist thought are comparative frameworks of feminism that provide additional conceptual sensitivity. The intersectionality as explained by Kimberlé Crenshaw can be employed to explain why the vulnerability of Jashoda can not be gendered; it can be exploited when gendered need combines with class vulnerability and deep-rooted stratification. The work by Patricia Hill Collins on motherhood and organized inequality also questions universalizing descriptions of maternal identity in its demand that the motherhood should be constructed through labor, social stratification and power. The even survival and lived female resilience of Alice Walker is yet another suggestive prism through which a negotiation of surviving without romanticization by the marginalized female can be viewed. But in a large part of modern criticism such frameworks are called out merely gesturally. Their quotations are given as hypothetical indicators and not completely translated into the caste-specific and postcolonial particularity of the world of the narrative of *Devi*.

Of particular interest to this distinction is that between motherhood as lived experience and motherhood as institution, which is set forth by Adrienne Rich. Rich makes it possible to observe that it is not a critique of maternal feeling, but the institution that lays claim to care, naturalizes the obligation, and sanctifies the depletion, which *Devi* is criticizing. The criticism which has been in existence has swung between the two insuffices: on the one extreme she has been sentimentalized into being the ultimate sacrificial mother and on the other she has been understood as merely a victim of patriarchy. There is not enough in either of the accounts. The institutional capture of capacity to mother, so that mothering turns into labour, labour then becomes identity and identity then becomes disposable after the body ceases to be productive is what *Devi* dramatizes.

The main gap in the current body of literature, then, is not that the issue of oppression is not addressed in *Breast-Giver* but rather the lack of a complex concomitant approach that interprets the story as both revisionism and commodified motherhood, as well as the politics of the female body. The previous literature has talked about subalternity, breastfeeding, ideology and bodily suffering without a sustained discussion on bringing these strands into a continuing dialogue with an aim of demonstrating how Devi defies the sacrificial myth of motherhood as such. The paper fills that gap by positing that *Breast-Giver* redefines maternal hood as a commodified labor and the maternal body as a place of extraction that is controlled politically, the paper sheds some light on how the patriarchal and class structure transforms maternal virtue into social utility.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

To explore the theme of a critique of commodified motherhood and politics of female body as portrayed in the work of Mahasweta Devi, the current study follows a qualitative, textual and theory-driven approach to analyzing *Breast-Giver* by Mahasweta Devi. Instead of the empirical data and quantitative models, the paper is based on close reading and critical interpretation. The literary text is viewed as a thick cultural entity where the relations between gender, labor, classes, ideology and embodiment are generated and challenged. That kind of methodology is particularly suitable, since the key point of the paper is not about gauging social conduct but about looking at how the narrative structure, the characterization, the images, the organization of the themes reveal the underlying maternal logic of the materials and the political logic.

The analytical paradigm consists of an interdisciplinary approach based on feminist critical, womanist, postcolonial, and revisionist reading. Feminist criticism helps the study to analyze the institutionalization of motherhood and patriarchal subjectivity of the feminine body. Womanist thinking builds on this analysis by highlighting the issue of survival, work, perseverance and the reality of the lived life of the marginalized women. A postcolonial treatment places the experience of Jashoda into context of the contemporary realities of the stratification, dependence at home, and historical based disparity. Revisionism serves as the key interpretive practice of the paper, because the work aims at demonstrating the processes of destabilization of the perfected version of motherhood by Devi as she demonstrates its economical and ideological basis.

The paper methodologically approaches a precise analysis of the chosen narrative scenes, repetitive imagery

and the changes in social status of Jashoda. The representation of lactation, reproductive labour, bodily depletion, illness, and abandonment deserve special attention, as these aspects shed light on how the maternal identity is turned into labour and the body of value that becomes dependent on the productivity. It is thus thematic and theoretical analysis. It neither finds motifs in the text, but interprets the motifs as to the issues of reproductive labor, commodification, body politics, and maternal ideology.

The reason behind the choice of this methodology is due to the nature of the research problem as such. As the paper aims to comprehend how a construct of motherhood is culturally constructed, politically controlled and exploited materially in the story of Devi, a qualitative and theoretical approach offers the deep insight and interpretative option. The ideological tension, symbolic density, and narrative force the *Breast-Giver* disturbs the sacred concept of maternity would be inadequately studied using a purely descriptive or sociological approach. The approach, along with its stratified approach to reading, employing tools such as close reading and feminist, womanist, postcolonial, and revisionist theory approaches, allows bringing a multi-layered interpretation to the text and deliver on the larger claim of this paper, namely that motherhood in Devi is not natural, sacred, it is a space of contest and labor and inequality.

#### Critical Analysis

##### Commodified Motherhood

*Breast-Giver* is a dismantling of the sentimental fiction of motherhood by Mahasweta Devi, who thrusts it into the realm of exchange. The pregnancy of Jashoda is not presented as one in itself as a personal emotional state; it gets transformed into a kind of labor where the value of labor is in its ability to provide others. Her body comes in handy as much as it can be mobilized in a repetitive way to be used in the nourishment, and the nourishment is turned into a social and economic activity. What is revealed by Devi, however, is not just suffering of the mother but the commodification of maternity itself. Being a mother is a life that is not lived by chance but structured, digested and formalized. Value of the maternal body is only provided as long as it is productive.

The novel needs to be read then as an antithesis to ideology misrecognition. Jashoda is worshiped as mother, although this worship veils the truth that her reproductive and lactating abilities are being acquired as labor. The religious words about maternity serve as a cultural and cultural veil which does not allow the exploitation to manifest itself as such. What appears to be natural feminine generosity, is actually work that ideology has made

invisible. This is the most prominent insight of Devi: the aspect of motherhood that is most easily commodified is the aspect of the motherhood that is the most highly sanctified as, in such a way, labor is not called labor.

### Politics of the Female Body

It is not the female body that is oppressed in *Breast-Giver*, but rather politically administered. Devi uses the body of Jashoda as a place where the social power is applied by exploiting, controlling and abandoning it, eventually. They are not treated as breathing body parts which have weariness, finite and thirst; her breasts are turned into productive organs which value is quantified in action. It is the politics of the female body which is exactly this conversion of person into instrument.

An intersectionality influenced reading elucidates why Jashoda is never exploited in an abstract sense as woman. She is a clear cut exploitation of a poor lady placed in a chain of dependency and deprivation. No, it cannot be attributed solely to gender. Her physical body is exposed to be used up since the patriarchal demand comes up against the economic vulnerability and social hierarchy. The story of Devi is therefore an indication that female embodiment is valued differently. Consumption is not womanhood, but rather the working body of the socially precarious woman.

### Revisionist Deconstruction of Sacred Motherhood

The most radical power of *Breast-Giver* is its destruction of the myth of elements of sacred motherhood as a culture. Devi does not merely present an image of a suffering mother, she challenges ideological script that glorifies maternal suffering. The good mother figure of the patriarchal culture proves to be the one who is always giving, self-sacrificing and has a morally uplifted attitude through sacrifice. Devi makes this script topsy-turvy. The better Jashoda is acting in ideal motherhood, the better she is devoured by this ideal. Her sanctification lacks in giving out dignity; it gives out exhaustion.

It is at this point that revisionism comes in. Devi is not a re-write in the classical sense of the word of the myth, but of one of the most persistent models of symbols of culture the holy mother. *Breast-Giver* takes the transcendental prestige out of motherhood and puts it in the realm of toil, subordination and physical loss. The mother is no longer the symbol of just nurture; she is the place itself where political brutality is shrouded in the language of moralism. The strength of the intervention of Devi is due to the fact that it is no anti-motherhood of a simplistic kind. Instead, it is the opposite of mystification which is anti-mystification. It unveils: the idealized official motherhood has been reliant on the depletion of the bodies of women and ideal quietness.

### Motherhood and Capitalist Patriarchy

Even though the world of *Breast-Giver* cannot be narrowed down to the scope of modern corporate capitalism, the text can be completely readable within the logic of capitalist patriarchy. The maternal labor by Jashoda is not industrialized as such but it definitely is productive. It maintains a family, ensures continuation and procreation of lives of others. Devi thus displays that patriarchal economies are dependent not only on visible wage labor but hidden instances of reproductive and care labor. The maternal body becomes an individual machine of social reproduction, which generates value without becoming structurally acknowledged.

Capitalist patriarchy is an effective concept in this situation since it actually gives the meeting of the ideology and material power its name. Patriarchy provides the moral grammar of the feminine responsibility; a stratification of classes defines who does the caring and who gets the care; economic rationality defines the value of the woman as bodily useful. Jashoda can only be revered when she is productive. Her work cannot be done away with but her personality takes a back seat to her role. Maternal idealization and economic exploitation do not oppose each other in the text, but they support each other.

### Agency vs Survival

To read Jashoda more carefully entails going beyond such facile opposition between victim and agent. Devi does not give her her full autonomy or passivity. Jashoda cajoles, copes, compromises, yet these behaviours fall more within the domain of existential survival than the sovereign freedom. It is not her implication of liberated choice that she engages in wet-nursing; rather it is her reaction to structural precarity. What matters is not the question of whether she has agency in the abstract, then, but what the options of agency are when the aspect of survival is based upon bodily availability.

The use of a womanist approach is also helpful in this case as it highlights the endurance without manipulating romanticism. Jashoda lives, but at a high price. It assures continuity to the detriment of the body, and ultimately, of selfhood. Devi is offered two things to accept and she rejects both: she glorifies endurance as empowerment and erases action by reducing Jashoda to total victim. In place of that, she provides a more challenging and honest character—one whose actions are actual, but limited; one who is active, but determined by overdetermination.

### Disposable Motherhood

Among the most heart-shattering revelations in the story is the deep-seated reality that, commodified

motherhood, is expendable. Only so long as her body can bear is Jashoda needed. When another factor stops working--the sickness--the halo of reverence around her starts to dissipate. This driftage of glorification to abandonment disclose the conditional character of the maternal value. She is not venerated in the sense of the permanent morality; she is venerated in the sense that she is a useful woman.

This structure is called by the name disposable motherhood. The mother is glorifying when in usable condition and is discarded when not in usable condition. Devi is thus able to unveil the violence concealed in maternal glorification. Believing in culture does not guarantee reciprocity, protection and dignity. However, the opposite is usually true since it hides the fact that maternal body has been relegated to dispensable labour. What dies down in the sickness of Jashoda is not merely her health, but the ideological fantasy of motherhood, which promises honor.

### Class and Subaltern Motherhood

The condition of Jashoda can not be interpreted outside of the class. She is not just a mother, but a poor mother, whose motherly abilities are usurped in a rank household structure. *Breast-Giver* does not criticize motherhood as something universal, which is experienced by all women. It portrays that motherhood is hierarchical. Another dependent body is the spending, the physical sacrifice, of a socially disadvantaged woman keeping the other household comfortable and continuing. Devi in this way reveals the inequality of the reproductive load of a stratified social structure.

Subaltern motherhood category is thus very important. Jashoda is not left out of being a mother; she is overwhelmed by it. Maternity is overloaded with her identity, and yet, she is denied structural protection that would render motherhood dignified as opposed to being extractive. The latter is one of the most piercing political observations made by Devi: denied the right to be a good mother, marginalized women are ensnared in the most exploitative type of motherhood. their work keeps others alive, and their own susceptibility is not assuaged.

### Concluding Critical Position

Combined, these dimensions indicate that *Breast-Giver* is not a just a story of female suffering. It is a critical assessment of the political organization of motherhood in terms of labor, discipline and disposability. The revisionist strength of Devi is showing the shadowed worlds of extraction that bear the sacred motherhood. The body of Jashoda is the place of convergence of cultural sanctification and material violence. It is through this convergence that it is possible to take the story as a challenge to revise the idea of motherhood as a historically

contingent formation, and a formation at stake, politically, morally.

This uniqueness of the reading is that it demands the central insight of the text is not the fact that women are victims of the patriarchal institution, but that even the very ideal of motherhood can be used to mine the resources of women bodies slaves to patriarchal and even class power. Jashoda is not merely a representation of sacrifice. She unveils the institutionalized violence disguised in celebration of maternal virtue.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper has suggested *Breast-Giver* by Mahasweta Devi requires a more strict and historically authoritative perspective of motherhood by revealing their comprehension with work, order, and loss of the human flesh. The suffering of the one woman is not what is made visible of the text, but the ideological and material process on which is built, was borrowed, and is exhausted the production of maternal identity. The path of Jashoda confirms that not all motherhood is the contrary of exploitation; to some circumstances, it is one of the most acceptable ways to become exploited.

This paper has endeavored to transcend generalized arguments of suffering that befall women by introducing revisionism, feminist materialism, body politics, postcolonial and intersectional insight into a lasting conversation. Its most important contribution is that *Breast-Giver* does not just have to be read as an account of subaltern suffering, but is a form of revisionist critique of the figure of sacrificed maternity. The paper has revealed how lactation is made a labor, transformation of the maternal body into a use-value and how motherhood can be commodified and turned into a disposable commodity. By so doing, it provides a more combined system to view maternity, social hierarchy and political economy of care in relation to each other.

There are consequences to this argument which are not limited to literature. Devi is narrated with unparalleled urgency in the Indian context where women have yet to overcome the culturally ingrained and unacknowledged care labour that remains uneasy to change though motherhood is still culturally revered. It sheds light on the paradox between symbolic dignity and material disregard, particularly in the life of the economically disadvantaged women whose efforts and energies keep families, legislations, and communities in existence yet they are not given equal protection. The story also reflects the contemporary discourses of reproductive work, surrogacy, domestic economies of care, dispositions of the body, and feminization of sacrifice, at the global scale. *Breast-Giver*,

therefore, comes out as a lasting contribution to the discourse of the way in which the bodies of women are valued, controlled and consumed over disparate social formations.

Concurrently, the research paper presents a few research directions in the future. Further comparative work can include the exploration of the representation of motherhood as labor via the writing of South Asian, African and diasporic women. The other fruitful lineage would be to read *Breast-Giver* and the current arguments about reproductive justice and the neoliberal care economies, and the medical exploitation of female bodies. The connection between caste, class and maternal embodiment in Indian literary works can also be studied in more specific ways in further studies. These questions would enrich the discussion that this paper opens by proving that motherhood is never a single or fixed category, but a historically moving landscape which is informed by ideology, survival and resistance.

In the end *Breast-Giver* survives as it does not consent. It will not permit motherhood to be an idealised abstraction not bound to the body which works beneath her. Rather, it adheres that the maternal body be viewed in all its political and material reality. By doing so, Devi challenges, in an unsettling and yet very needed way, what culture holds most sacredly: one of the most finely tuned systems of women-exploitation that culture practises.

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