

# Voice of Subaltern as Depicted in George Ryga's *Ecstasy of Rita Joe*

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## **Abstract**

This research article at the outset, explores the outcome of the voice of the subaltern in society during colonization. This paper neatly brings forth the issues that the voice of subaltern is rejected, especially not even heard by the colonizer during colonization. Colonizer cornered the subaltern and denied to accept them even as a thing. Those colonizers started to infuse all sorts of crimes and problems on subaltern. This research article sharply conjoins the voice of subaltern *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* by George Ryga. This play had explored the issues like ignorance, elimination, rejection through the characters Rita Joe and Jamie Paul as there are subalterns. Their agonizing subaltern state is the voice of subalterns are destructed and burnt to ashes as it is evidenced through the characters Rita Joe and Jamie Paul because they both were murdered by the colonizers.

**Keywords:** Colonization, subaltern, ignorance, survival, destruction.

Literature is the mirror of our life; it reflects life of every individuals. Literature is the reflection of the society. The novel *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* is based on the post colonialism and imperialism, which focuses on the woman problem of the colonized people and their lands. The term subaltern coined by Antonio Gramsci, according to him the word subaltern known for the people who all are treated as a scheduled people, and the people who are socially, politically, and geographically outside the hierarchy of power of a colony. *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* is the novel about two subaltern whose voice are destructed and killed finally. The subaltern is projected through the characters Jamie Paul and Rita Joe.

When Rita Joe enters into the city, she was infused by the crime like snatching money. She was arrested by the police who accused her. She enters into the city, she feels so hurt because of the road.

*Magistrate: I know your face. It  
Wasn't in this courtroom  
Or was it?  
Rita: I don't know...*

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After arresting her, she was taken to the court before the magistrate and the police make her to stand in front of the judge at that time, she exposes the innocence but judge never lend his ears to her. They just infused some more accusation on her. This play wright uses a memory mode technique to highlight the play. George Ryga has exposed the state of subaltern in the society during colonization. During colonization the colonizer occupied the place of the natives, and they restricted a point for the natives. Because of this action Rita Joe came out of the boundary and she enters into the place of settlers. There settlers consider as low and they conformed the peoples like Rita Joe and Jamie Paul as subaltern or scheduled so the settlers hate them. They project Rita Joe as a untouchable creature.

All those colonizers consider Rita Joe as a chubby creature. They titled Rita Joe as a thief, prostitute, drug addict, road wanderer. She was forced to be tabbed because they consider her as a nomadic. On the other hand Jamie Paul is another man in the same situation as Rita Joe. Rita Joe was imprisoned for several time, for the first time her imprisonment when she taken in front of the magistrate the psyche of Rita Joe is extremely abnormal she doesn't respond to the present and she reacts to past, here the technique memory mode play is cleverly used by George Ryga. Rita Joe reacts abnormally in front of the judge and she explores the state of her sister, Eileen Joe in the society and she also says that she return back to the same place where Eileen comes next to Rita Joe thinks of her friend, Jamie Paul who also moved to the city along with Rita Joe and he eventually lost his job and also becomes a drunkard.

Rita Joe also thinks about her father, priest, teacher and Miss. Donohue. Rita Joe was taken to the magistrate several times, in each time she addresses the magistrate as Mister. She is a poor innocent girl who doesn't have even a knowledge to speak with magistrate. Rita Joe and Jaime Paul were imprisoned nearly for 30 days. During that time priest and teacher of Rita Joe meet her. She psychologically affected a lot by the cruel settlers, this makes her to ask cigar from the priest in the state of unconsolable depressed mind. Her sense is not working why because her truthfulness to the untrustworthy settlers people. When priest leave the prison, Rita Joe says the priest.

*Rita: but I want to be free again.*

*Priest: we learn through suffering, Rita Joe.... We will be only be free*

*If we become humble again,*

*I'm going back on the 4 '0' clock bus.*

*Rita: you go to hell*

*(Priest turns sharply)*

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Rita Joe asked the priest to say to his God, that to keep trying to hurt her, priest moves very fast, Rita Joe is in the sad state and also in the angry state. The three witnesses just openly lie about Rita Joe they just accused Rita Joe openly.

Rita I have no money this line shows that Rita Joe doesn't have any money she is financially weak which also shows that Rita Joe says enters into the city to earn some money and to live a normal life. But all her dreams distrusted. When the court releases Rita Joe come out of with Jaime Paul at that time. Rita Joe and Jaime were surrounded by two murderers and those two murderers killed Rita Joe and they abused the dead of Rita Joe which was proved by the lines.

*“Rita Joe’s head tolls over sideways, the murderers stare at her and pull back slightly”*

*Murderer: we hardly touched her (Thickly rising off her twisted broken body, shift she is dead)*

*After the incident they ran away from there.*

*Eileen: No! No! No more!*

These lines show that the Eileen is praying to God that the suffering are unbearable, so she prayed for an enlightened life. Finally the lines,

*“When Rita Joe first come to the city she told me... the cement made her feet hurt”- Eileen*

*But not only the feet of Rita Joe hurt, the heart and mind and the feelings of Rita Joe was hunted by the colonizers.*

From this play, the voice of subaltern ended in death not only during colonialism, it still continues.

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#### Work Cited

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