

## **Silent Revolts: Gendered Agency and Domesticity in Tagore's The Wife's Letter and The Broken Nest**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper examines *The Wife's Letter* (Streer Patra, 1914) and *The Broken Nest* (Nastanirh, 1901) by Rabindranath Tagore through the lens of gender studies to foreground how women's voices—both spoken and unspoken—articulate resistance to patriarchal domesticity in colonial Bengal. These narratives represent two distinct yet intersecting registers of female subjectivity: Mrinal's deliberate articulation of dissent and selfhood stands in stark contrast to Charu's silent interior revolt against emotional neglect and gendered confinement. By engaging with feminist theoretical frameworks such as Simone de Beauvoir's concept of woman as "the Other," Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's theorisation of the subaltern voice, this paper critically analyses how Tagore exposes the tensions between colonial modernity and indigenous patriarchy. The stories reveal that education, intellectual cultivation, and modern reform movements failed to translate into genuine gender emancipation. Instead, women remained bound within the affective and symbolic economies of the household. Tagore's nuanced female protagonists, far from being passive subjects, become sites of critique, resistance, and emotional agency. This study argues that these texts prefigure later feminist discourses by situating womanhood not merely as a social category but as a lived negotiation of power, desire, and selfhood.

### **Keywords:**

Colonial Modernity, Female Subjectivity, Feminist Resistance, Gendered Agency, Patriarchal Domesticity.