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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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GENDER IDENTITY IN KISHWAR NAHEED'S AND KAMALA WIJERATNE'S SELECTED POEMS

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ABSTRACT

The strongest and most prominent feminist voices are known in their countries as Kishwar Naheed and Kamala wijeratne, in their poetry, they convey thoughts and issues remarkably about the social status and identity of women in society. This paper is trying to Provide a distinctly feminist perspective like how women identify themselves as a mother, daughter, and wife and she is struggling a lot in society under the name of religion. If power is in the hands of women they lead their life without fear. The biological and social roles of humans are the same but sometimes it is changed because gender is different than sex. Women's identity in society depends on their gender expression, dress, religion, language, and behavior. The object of this paper is to understand and analyze the selected poems of Kishwar Naheed and Kamala Wijeratne whether they are capable of bringing in a new perception of the common experience of women in Pakistan and Srilanka.

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INTRODUCTION

Sex and gender are coextensive. Here Gender Identity played a vital role in the nation, gender identity of men and women is not their natural or biological, it is culturally constructed. While it is easy to take the identity of male or female from birth, it is hard to maintain, without an alienated identity. It is a self-presentation of men and women in society as masculine and feminine with their appearance. Culture is a controlling factor that restrains in the human body, it is one of the simplest things to shows the cultural impact on the body. Early socialization to a little girl and boy gender insists on such a bodily element and expression of emotions, all these things shows as regulations including the socialization process of very small children. Beyond the socialization, they continue to be a wide range of regulations and restrictions to bodies of persons to follows this way human got there identity. Identity is indirectly affected not only by society but also by various reasons that are a partition of India and Pakistan, a war between two ethnic groups in Srilanka, immigration from one country to another country. Gender identity is the co-existence of human being expression and expectation from the world or society.

Srilanka gave equal importance to both sexes, in politics, education, religion but still women are suffering to make their own identity in Srilanka, even in Pakistan also.

It shows that the eastern countries how male and female leading their social role under religion, war, and fear.

In the Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender article written "From ancient Greek until the late 18th century female and male sexes were not seen to be distinct categories with specific traits; Instead a one-sex model and that males/females were members of the same-sex category, females genitals were thought to be the same as males but simply directed inside the body; ovaries and testes were referred to by the same term. Masculinity/feminine are thought to be products of nurture: how individuals are brought up: they are causally constructed. Social forces either have a causal role in bringing gendered individuals into existence or shape the way we are women and men. However, in the late 17th century scientists had begun to think of female and male anatomies as radically different moving away from the one-sex model of a single-sex spectrum to the two-sex model of sexual dimorphism".

Gender Identity: Gender identity is the focal concern in the literature on feminism, particularly in Pakistan and Srilanka. The feminists explained the body as socially and economically constructed. Gender is also not a biological word it is a socially constructed word as Simone de Beauvoir said in her *'The Second Sex'* "One is not born but becomes a woman".

I trust the word gender and sexual identity objecting to the ideas of natural and fixed identity and implicitly elaborate on the criticize mind and body dualism. Identity is a civilized phenomenon characterized by drastic changes in etiquette and more precisely, in attitudes, how people would become follows their food and others embody. The appearance, manners, and attitude of women in the society show the social roles of women in the society, women's experience of society is not the same as men's. Since the nineteenth century, when women were deprived of educational opportunities and the right to higher education, possess property, vote, and women's rights have grown considerably, despite substantial advancements, there are still some alarming gender deficiencies in Pakistan and Srilanka in the male-dominated society. *Sir Patrick Geddes and John Arthur Thompson* argued that in *'The Evolution of Sex'* 1889

"Social, psychological, and behavioral traits were caused By metabolic state anabolic and katabolic women conserve energy and this makes them passive, conservative, sluggish, stable, and uninterested in politics. Men expend their surplus energy which makes them eager, energetic, passionate, variable and thereby, interested in politics and social matters. These biological facts about metabolic states were used to explain behaviorally difference between the sexes and to justify the social and political arrangements".

The question of women identity in a patriarchal society, used in *'We sinful women'* by Kishwar Naheed and *'A soldier's wife weeps'* by Kamala Wijeratne said, today, women still try to emphasize models of femininity focused on predominantly male conceptions of morality, ethics, childbearing and domestic life. In *'We sinful women'* poem, how a wife crying for soldier husband and truly follow the religious way of life and no power in the family or the society, lived with fear, shows there are no changes of women status in Srilanka. Both are two different religious countries in the early modern era. Naheed's poem *We sinful women* is a landmark in both a novelty and an explosive one. It is a statement of liberation for women who have not acceded to the rules of society and culture. These stereotypes of work assigned to women from patriarchal society by constraining, so for the most part, if not even more, still exist in Pakistan today. Women identity treated as deferent female sexuality or object but men is subject, Naheed wrote in the poem *'We sinful women'*

"It is we, sinful women
who are not awed by the grandeur of those who wear gowns
who don't sell our lives
who don't bow our heads
who don't fold our hands together".

According to social learning thinkers, a wide variety of factors socialize us as men and women. For example, parents often unintentionally perceive their males and females children differently; boys are described as powerful, responsive, and organized, while girls are described as small, gentle, and dainty. Some social interaction is more advanced: kids are frequently suited up in societal gender clothing and colors, and parents are more likely to purchase these products. They often tend to perpetuate those desirable behaviors. They are socialized into inferior social positions, learning to be passive, oblivious, submissive, psychological helpmeets for men.

Naheed begins to pose the problem in her poem, that all women are sinful, that all women wanted to be treated this way, which is not true, of course. Throughout the entire poem, she uses humor to highlight the argument that this is not the women themselves who would like to be accepted like this. Women in Pakistan are treated as sinful because the normal wife gave respect to her husband, do household work, no

power, no salary, treated as a slave. Even in the contemporary world, women's social role never changes, they want to wear gowns forcefully, sell their bodies, always bend themselves in front of their husband, they either work as a wife or prostitute.

"It is we, sinful women
those who sell the harvests of our bodies
become exalted
become distinguished
become the just princes of the material world.
It is we sinful women.
Now, even if the night gives chase
these eyes shall not be put out.
For the wall which has been razed
don't insist now on raising it again".

According to Naheed Women's identity in Pakistan is fulfilled by male desire, women-only sells her body, male harvested their bodies, now she is an object for sex to the male, so she is called a sinful woman. Women don't raise their voices against this, all happened within the wall. In Srilanka also women identity never change Kamala wijeratne wrote in her *'A soldier's wife weeps'*, poem

"On Wednesday when the crow cried on the dead branch
And the sky-colored over with the color of charcoal
I had no fear, I knew you were safe
I had your horoscope read and there were no malefic"

When people live in modern society by using technology very excellently but the Srilankan Women did not follow science, they still believe in astrology. How a soldier went to war but a typical wife waiting for husband believe in horoscope told by Buddhist priest that her husband will come. A widow wife lamenting for dead husband without marry, the identity of women become widow, this is not applicable for men not to become widower but only as a man. In Kishwar Naheed's poem, *'I am No that woman'* how in eastern countries the concept of men and women or their social role.

"Remember me, I am the one you hid
In your walls of stone, while you roamed
Free as the breeze, not knowing
That my voice cannot be smothered by stones",

Here women are unable to endure male exploitation, She raised her voice against a world dominated by men and she no longer continues conventional hurdles, traditions. Women compare themselves to the light, how we placed a light inside four walls that we confined her but men roam like a breeze since she is like a floral fragrance, men do not confer on women like a light within four walls.

"I am the woman
Whom you bought and sold
In the name of my own chastity
Not knowing
That I can walk on water
When I am drowning.
I am the commodity you traded in,
My chastity, my motherhood, my loyalty".

Naheed said women is a slave according to patriarchal society, She's the one who had been marketed and she was a target of the dialectic materialism process. All these quandaries made her drown herself in society. Women are the products sold by men, he sold women celibacy, womanhood, and steadfastness in a patriarchal society. Naheed in *The grass is like me* poem compares women with grass and explains that how the lawn needs to be domesticated and trimmed by people who walk on this all the time on the ground. She wrote

"The lawnmower,
Obsessed with flattering it into velvet
Mows it down again.
How you strive and endeavor

To level woman down too!
 But neither the earth's nor woman's
 Desire to manifest life dies.
 Take my advice: the idea of making a footpath was appropriate
 Those who cannot bear the scorching defeat of courage
 Are grafted onto the earth.
 That's how make way for the mighty
 But they are merely straw
 Not the grass
 The grass is really like me”.

If grass would go through the water and the sun and grow in any way, it was killed by the lawnmower and cut down, and no one can see who it is and not be able to lift the head. They are also not permitted to explain what they are and what they can do, then women also defeated by men in the family, women don't have a place but they try and grow like grass, they want to prove what they are to the world.

Powerlessness and Fear: The power discourses and body addresses a single intellectual project as flow and shifting the power of knowledge and human body generally a shifted from producing historically called the discourse of analysis of social arrangements and practices when Michel Foucault uses this term intellectually not just as simply the language can describe the world the discourse itself a broader phenomenon of order. Foucault told the power and pride are interrelated, here he talks about biopower the term refers to the institutional authority which encompasses all aspects of life that influence person and social bodies. This means the entire population and sexual discourses a prime concept of understanding the operation of biopower.

The wax palace built for Pandavas by Duryodhana and Shakuni to kill Pandavas, how Duryodhana tries to kill Pandavas, like in the patriarchal society, women without knowing to try to live but they lived without power and always fear. The women feeling are explained in Kishwar Naheed's poem '*A Place of Wax*'. Kishwar gives a unique feeling to the act of eloquence, which in her writing has a big impact. For the refute practice of the male opinionated society, women lead their life in fear because they don't have power, this act of eloquence is very essential. The poem discusses a girl saying her mother's account of bad dreams and subsequently her visions. Naheed wrote

“That night she lightning
 killed our buffalo and my fiance.
 Then one night my mother slept
 And I stayed up
 Watching her open and shut her fist
 She was trying to hold on to something
 Failing, and willing herself to hold on again.
 I woke her
 But she refused to tell me her dream.
 Since that day
 I have not slept soundly.
 I moved to the other courtyard.
 Now I and my mother both scream
 through our nightmares”.

A mother had a dream one day, but she did not yell. She told the poetess that she had seen that end of something and that she had saved her. That night, their buffalo and her fiancé were killed by lightning. The dichotomy between buffalo and fiancé illustrates the absolute extraneous role of men in nature's eyes compared to the above assigned to them by society, this is her dream but she refuses to tell me after this poetess also can't sleep properly because she is going take mother position in the family, now both were lived in a patriarchal society with fear and powerlessness.

The powerlessness and fear of woman and man in Kamala Wijeratne poems common because men in Srilanka, wants to work in outside of the house example as a soldier, then women do domestic work, women did not have the political power to go against the government,

they are frightened about an ethnic group. It shows that how war and violence-affected society, astoundingly how is the social role or identity of men and women in Srilanka, we can study from Wijeratne's poems '*Musical*' and '*Monuments*'. In "*Musical*" poem she wrote

“Those troops of youths
 In their green
 -brown uniforms.
 Happy they seemed
 As they drummed their hands
 And sang their songs
 Their voices drowned the noises
 In the street
 The trucks trundled to the north”

She speaks about the perplexity of the troops heading towards the war field, but she also points to the fact that peace probably lasted for a short period because soldiers are going to war. The troops' blaring music slowly and vanishes because they will die in a war field. This also reminds us that there isn't eternal youthfulness. In the *Monuments* poem, she expressed the lamentation of the young soldier's parents for the untimely death of men and how wives or dirge for death shows the identity of women and men in socially constructed, how women can't enter the war field like men because they don't have power and fear about the society. Man is a Powerful and dominant character in Srilanka, the woman always powerless and exploited by man. When we heard a military word we will come to know that the profession only for men not for women in a gender-based society that they think men can do more work compared to women, this shows how gender identity is given to women in Srilanka.

War

Three poems by Kamala Wijeratne, "*A Soldier's Wife Weeps*," "*Musical*" and "*Monuments*" are written about the war in Srilanka, how it is affected people. She depicts the miserable situation in which a grief-stricken wife and her mindset after the husband's death in "*A Soldier's Wife Weeps*". She felt bad for the brave soldiers heading to the northern war front in the poem "*Musical*," and in "*Monuments*," she says, of the young soldiers killed unexpectedly during the civil war.

The poem "*Monuments*," starts with its narrator explaining how she is going from stop to stop on a bus. She saw a monument of one type or the other to a missing son at these stops. There are many of these accounts that the casualties are almost like a "myth." The next part of the poem talks about the life that men might have had since they're not abandoned to the North. Like their brothers, they should have been paddy farmers and warmed themselves up in the family's heart. Closing lines consist of the countless images that emerge as she looked out into the distance to the speaker. It includes statues of a man and a woman who from the past years have suffered a lot. Their faces are serious, and they don't whine.

Kamala Wijeratne's poem '*To A Student*' due to the ethnic war with the two groups of Srilanka people called Tamils and Singhalese, the entire island is split into bits. Torn pieces of human flesh hanging from trees and bushes, pieces of disunited bones, and the roads spouting human blood are also some of the pitiful and frightening scenes that the writer sees everywhere including his students in the classroom not ready to listen only they heard bomb sounds.

Religion

A Sri Lankan poet, Kamala Wijeratne, clearly explains the emotions of a married woman when her military husband died in "the separatist movement was prosecuted by the militant unit the Emancipation Tigers of Tamil Eelam". After the funeral of her dead husband, this verse shows the woman's painful and pitiful thoughts. Her post-death pattern of conduct, her emotions, passionate love, care, gratitude, and

her genuine care for her companion shows in the poem 'A soldier's wife weeps'

"Last Saturday when you went back from leave
I watched until you disappeared over the bend,
And long after, my breast gave a great heave
And lit the lamp before the Buddha and prayed no end."

I watched you before you disappeared "The woman's true feeling for her husband is mirrored in her genuine love towards him. Her religious performances "Lit the lamp before the Buddha" acknowledge her reverence for her husband, evoking the typical Lankan woman's faith in religious beliefs and astrophysical prediction."

Conclusion

Gender is such an elongated intertwining of biology and ideologies but Judith Butler says gender is performance. A privileged gender identity, it is based on some different cultures and is dependent on certain social conditions. Identity and space both are inseparable from body politics, social differences are the object of gender theories or very specific in feminist theories because body politics was essentially discussed in these feminist theories and for the construction of the different place and embody of a different identity.

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