NO WOMAN'S LAND: THE FEMINIST VIEWS OF SULERI IN THE MEATLESS DAYS AND BOYS WILL BE BOYS

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Abstract

The present article seeks to present a critique of Suleri's feminist views in her twin accounts which are written in the backdrop of her personal memories and experiences in Pakistan. Using Suleri's paradoxical claim as a point of departure that "there are no women in the third world", the present analysis is informed by Mohanty's theorization about categorizing women into such simplistic, monolithic and a historical form ationsuch as Third-world women. It not only tends to undermine the historical and cultural specifics which constitute women as subjects within and outside Pakistani culture, but also demonstrates a flawed perspective of Pakistani women by declaring them complacent with their actual or imagined marginalization – hence positioning them in a sisterhood of oppression instead of uniting them in a solidarity of transformation and resistance.

Key words
Third-world women, Marginalization, Historical and Cultural Specificity, Subject and Non-being

In her excellent analysis on the feminist scholarship focusing on Third World women, Chandra Talpade Mohanty analyzes the hidden or manifest contradictions in describing women as "homogenous sociological grouping" characterized by their subordination and powerlessness by calling it "too little and too much at the same time".[1] Mohanty also objects to the feminist view that reduces "women as a category of analysis" who share one commonality across cultures and times – the fact of their oppression and subordination – and does not view them as "material subjects of their own history".[2] In this way, the feminist scholarship, in Mohanty's view, is prone to "appropriate and colonize the constitutive

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complexities that characterize the lives of women"[3] in many third world cultures and communities.

Mohanty's perspective informs my argument and discussion about Suleri feminist views that she expresses in her memoir *Meatless Days* (1989) as well as in her elegiac narrative *Boys will be Boys*(2004). Thus, when she confronts the question by one of her students for not including women writers in her course of third world literature, she answers it by saying "there are no women in the third world".[4] The statement has certain implications about the definition of women in the theoretical worldview of Suleri as well as its relevance with the position and status of women in Pakistani culture. The fact that she comes from a place where the "concept of woman was not really part of an available vocabulary" as the cultural norms of her society seldom enables her to think of herself as woman except in "some perfunctory biological way".[5] Hence the fact of woman remains a "hugely practical joke…hidden somewhere among our clothes" and beyond that to pin down its definition is "as impossible as attempting to locate the luminous qualities of an Islamic landscape".[6]

It is in one breath that Suleri tends to cast doubt about the possibility of definitions of both womanhood and nationhood in a bid to declare them too luminous to be located and locatable in reality. I argue that Suleri's theorization about the non-being position of third-world women is problematized in the backdrop of her own distinct subjectivity as well as a lot of women characters in her discourse. Thus, her inability to locate the existence of women in Pakistani culture collides and clashes with the presence of a lot of women characters who constitute a web of relations in and outside her family. From an overbearing and preposterous Dadi to the quiet sobriety of Mama, and from a showy and shallow Shahida to an assertive and mystical Iffat, Suleri's narrative is filled with the tales and travesties of women and problematizes and questions the validity of her claim to see no women either in Pakistani culture or the third-world literature she teaches to her American students.[7]

Question of Women and Pakistani Culture

With regards to her feminist views vis-à-vis Pakistan, Suleri's discourse portrays her as an empowered and self-willed woman, who is above and beyond the cultural norms and values of Pakistani society which she considers as suffocating and stultifying. This feature situates her in an obvious binary to the general grain of women in Pakistani culture including *Shahida*, Auntie *Nuri*, and sometimes even her own sisters. In a manner which is sweeping yet indirect, Suleri unmasks her

views about women in Pakistani culture via her mother and sister's subjective memories and life stories.

Pip and Patriarchy go together

As against the presentation of her Welsh mother with a kind of "melting adoration", she exhibits her explicit distance and discord from her father with his chauvinism and rigid certitude.[8] Thus, she defies the strict and authoritarian control of her father and raises an eyebrow to see the continuing influence and interference of parents/elders in the lives of their children regardless of their age and social position.[9] Her voice embodies her emotional distance and dissonance from her father and his cultural makeup that she considers as unfair and says that though Pip is very "upright in politics but not quite so upright with his children".[10] She also criticizes his enormous political engagements by saying: "Papa thought it was highly unreasonable of his children to distract him from his proper duty by behaving as though they had lives".[11]

Likewise, she rejects and strongly defies the overbearing outlook of her Pip when he reads some of her amorous letter and declares them as "porno". The act, according to her opinion, is a breach against privacy – "something that Pip cannot understand".[12] In another instance, she narrates the times of her youth in Lahore, when in a "fit of misery for some careless sexual exploit"; she leaves her house and on her return, receives a gentle reprimand from her mother when she says: "you should not have, Sara. It is not dignified".[13] However, contrary to her mother's response, Suleri's voice is overwhelmingly disapproving when she rejects her father's point of view by saying "you would have ranted and raved, cited chapter, verse, and para of every ethical lingo, and…would have locked [her] up in [the] bedroom", and asserts with an unsubdued sense of rebellion: "you really had a very strong urge to lock up your daughters, Pip, and look what good it did you".[14]

Emotional/Psychological Discord with Pip

By expressing her distance from her father, his Pakistan, his version of history and its concomitant cultural norm she even calls him "preposterous" over-furnished, "cluttered with ideas"[15] and says: "to mock him would be too simple: he demanded to be mocked".[16] In all such expressions, she declares many of her father's gestures as patriarchal and unfair and unmasks her emotional distance from the specific nuances of Pakistani culture that she has not internalized at all.

Unlike her mother's sense of some "filial obligation" towards the memory of her Welsh father in her act of playing piano and

singing[17], Suleri, with a characteristic sense of indifference, refers to the seating positions around the dining table with each of her siblings trying 'to find places as far away from Pip as possible'.[18]Likewise, in the entire discourse about her Pip, she either remains in outright inconformity or downright clash with all that he symbolizes and believes in, personally and collectively. Thus, Pip's relationship with his children in general and his daughters in particular remains quite ambivalent and strained as he does not attend his eldest daughter's wedding who, too, does not want him to attend the wedding or when his second daughter Ifat decides to marry a "polo-playing army man" who in his view knows nothing "about the genesis of Pakistan".[19] Paradoxically despite the authoritarian and controlling demeanor of Pip, Suleri and her sisters have been enough liberal and self-willed not to comply with his version of history or life style and never let him use his authority to veto their independent decisions.[20]

She also chastises him for his obsession with history when he treats his children as a "respite after he has dealt with the day's true significance".[21] Even the times when he was staying in England as foreign correspondent, his fascination for history remains constant and the fear that his children might "become totally possessed by someone else's history" eventually makes him get back to Pakistan.[22] The most explicit reference to her sense of history clashing with Pip's "historical posture that prevailed heavily on [their] home"[23] comes when she refers to her father's reaction to 1971 war. Hence the dismemberment of Pakistan's East wing is a point of intense grief for her father who weeps for the "mutilation of a theory"[24] whereas Suleri expresses her indifference by saying that she is "not sorry if Bangladesh is in place.[25]

Thus, Suleri criticizes him for his obstinacy to "retain his version as the only form of history" which, obviously, does not match with her perspective and personality.[26] Earlier, she chastises him for his capacity to "switch his allegiance" as manifest from his shifted association from his biological father Karim Baksh to his historical father Jinnah and from his first wife-cum-cousin of Pakistani origin to his second wife by forgetting the "ten years of his life" he spent with her.[27] In portraying him as unscrupulous and guiltless, Suleri obliquely rejects the patriarchal culture of Pakistan where men including her father have not been burdened with any sense of guilt and loss of all their misdoings and mishandlings which are eventually carried by women as their sorry and unwilling scapegoats.

Her decision to leave Pakistan is the ultimate point of parting for her, not merely from her Pip and the "abundance of his company", but from his dominating and overbearing version of history as well.[28] This is

further intensified when after her mother's death, Pip adopts a daughter named Shahida that she ironically calls as Pip's "brand-new daughter".[29] The act, according to Suleri, once again signifies that Pip, like Pakistan, is good at forgetting old things and memories by 'clearing the family stage of his mind and ushering a new one in'[30] without feeling slightly moved by any sense of guilt or remembrance. Thus, she alleges her father to be as prone to that amnesia that she purportedly sees in the collective memory of Pakistanis and refers to his ability to quickly 'forget' and 'switch allegiance' as one vital part of his collective cultural personality.[31]

Pakistani Papa and Welsh Mama: The Most Unlikely Pair

Another explicit and most obvious representation of Pip's patriarchy comes when Suleri refers to the contrast between her father and mother in a metaphorical way – by terming him as the "most demanding man" as against her mother being the "most reticent woman".[32] She views her parents as the "most incongruous union" the "most unlikely pair" when "history" – a metaphor she uses for her father weds silence which is synonymous to her mother – an "un-talking"[33], "always looking down, gravely listening" to the "Papa's powerful discourse".[34] Such sight fills her with an impression about the absolute incompatibility between her parents as she deems her mother "a creature of such translucent thought that [her] father could not follow".[35] Many a times, she presents her mother as far too polite and courteous to react against his "doggedness, his committedness" for politics and his profession and is always willing to give him his "daily necessity for sympathy" – be it a little comment on his newspaper articles – "it reads well, Zia".[36] At times Suleri compliments her mother for "enduring" her father with all his vain and glib discourse and reflects as if her mother, despite all her reticence and patience might have tried to change him but it was of no use as she "tried, until she could not try".[37] There are occasions where Suleri even reprimands her mother for the mismatch she makes with her father and says: "it was most incongruous, most perverse of you to take to Pip" – something that her mother listens to with slight smile by saying "you must not minimize my affection for him".[38]

In order to highlight the innate difference between her father and mother, Suleri sees a strange congruity between her mother and the Punjabi Folklore female heroine Hir. Thus Mama, in her view, shares the pathos and melancholy of Hir on the score of being married to and "living in a stranger's village" but misses her passion and love for Ranjha as she comments: "…but in my mind, she is linked to the gravity of Hir's posture: surely she would be familiar with that trick of mind with which Hir told the world that she has become someone else's name and now was Hir no longer".[39] For Hir's volunteer act of renouncing her name for her beloved Ranjha takes a self-abnegating color in case of Suleri's mother, surviving in a patriarchal culture that has engulfed her subjectivity and denied her little portion of her humanity by treating her as a mere shadow of a man.

Unsettled Connection between Mother and Motherland

It is interesting to note that the arrival of Suleri's mother in Pakistan and her conversion from Mair Jones to Surraya Suleri coincides with the end of British rule in the year of 1947 – showing the strange and unsettled congruity between mother and motherland. Thus, her mother's act of marrying a Pakistani man burning with the fire of patriotism is analogous to the end of Empire in the subcontinent making Suleri exclaim "did she really think that she could assume the burden of empire that if she let my father colonize her body and her name she would perform some slight reparation for the race from which she came?".[40] And then she repudiates her father's patriarchy which is paradoxically connected with his choice of marrying an English woman in a culture where "there were centuries' worth of mistrust of Englishwomen" and his "desire for her [which] was quickened with empire's ghosts" implying as if "his need to possess was a clear index of how he was still possessed".[41] She also refers to her mother's abnegating capacity which was crucially required in order to get her settled with a preposterous Pip and his patriarchal culture. That in transforming herself from Mair Jones to Surraya Suleri, her mother "had to redistribute herself through several new syllables, realigning her sense of locality" and putting "behind her every circuit of familiarity she has even known" before coming to Pakistan.[42]

Besides her mother, it is in the episode of her sister Ifat and her marriage with Javed that Suleri seems to express some of her most lasting yet fixed feminist convictions. Thus, Ifat's life becomes a metaphor for the non-existent and subordinate position of Pakistani women – to the conclusion that Suleri draws rather hastily right at the very outset of her memoir by declaring "there are no women in the

third world".[43] The narrative makes direct comments on the existential dilemma of what is means to be a woman in Pakistani culture. Apparently, there is nothing problematic here, unless one realizes that the discourse Suleri creates out of Ifat's life is emblematic of her mistaken understanding of the traditional family system in Pakistan. Thus, she ignores the complex diversity of Pakistani culture when she reduces it to one man's life – Javed – with his alleged misogyny and bizarre love for polo and ponies.[44]

Being ill-at-ease with the idea of womanhood within Pakistani culture, Suleri refers to Ifat's remarks when she says: "the only trouble with being female in Pakistan is that it allows for two possible modes of behavior – either you can be sweet and simple, or you can be cold and proud".[45] At another point, she refers to Ifat's remarks which are a general comment on the position of women in Pakistan when she says: "men live in homes and women live in bodies".[46] In saying so Suleri in fact refers to the innate sense of estrangement that Ifat feels in her husband's place as well as in her parents' and her desperate attempt to feel at home in either of the two. At another point, she quotes Ifat's words when she once again comments on the existence of woman in the metaphor of body and home: "a woman can't come home… Oh, home is where your mother is, one; it is when you are mother, two; and in between it's almost as though your spirit must retract…. must become a tiny, concentrated little thing, so that your body feels like a spacious place in which to live".[47]

Subverting and Defying the Ideal Femininity

In a series of repeated events, Suleri presents her father to be a thorough and tough patriarch in whose presence family women are left with little possibility of "…rebellion like ghosts in every room".[48] It is as if her present posture of an empowered and self-willed woman has an obvious reaction against Pip's excessive authority and his constant attempts to teach his children the ways to become part of Pakistani culture that she calls rather scornfully as 'Paki.[49] This is evident in her defiance and refusal to a marriage proposal from Pip's friend Dr. Sadik for his son as she is most pleased to "seeing the ritual of centuries being perverted into such threadbare obstinacy".[50] Thus, Pip and his friend Dr. Sadik embody the patriarchal spirit of their culture in an act of asking her formal consent as a "frivolous ritual of finality" with a "diamond ring" for the little girl "who would be appropriately shy, and the marriage would be as good as consummated".[51]

However, Suleri attempts to subvert the stereotypes by rebelling against the cultural norms, be it her decision to get settled in

America or marrying a non-Muslim above and beyond the will of her father.[52] Thus, contrary to the subservient and complicit existence of Pakistani women, Suleri locates her own feminine subjectivity in the metaphor of rebellion as suggested in the implicit disembodiment of Eve from the rib of Adam in Islamic tradition. By questioning the prophetic tradition that declares woman to be born from Adam's rib, she refers to her own attempt to "hold the Adam" in her, "the one who had attempted to break loose. It is a rib that floats in longing for some other cage, in the wishbone-cracking urge of its desire".[53] In saying this, her voice constitutes a peculiar feminist sensibility that defies the religious view of Eve as a derivative of Adam by viewing it as misogynist and oppressive. Seen from a broader cultural angle, in positioning herself in an obvious binary to the other women who subscribe to the ideal model of femininity – shy, coy, submissive and obedient – Suleri views these traits rather contemptuously and exhibits her (in) difference from their normative value in traditional Pakistani culture.

As part of her feminist convictions her discourse situates her in outright clash and discord with the moral and cultural norms of Pakistani society and a more akin to western ideals of emancipation. She evokes the binary of good and bad woman and refers to her relationship with Tom which was viewed rather disapprovingly by her Pip and siblings. Thus, Tillat advocates the "stringent graces of monogamy" in advising her "Sara, you must learn how to settle now".[54] Even her brother Shahid who is shown to be relatively liberal and frank against her Pip, does not approve her life style and asks her: "what have you got out of this? But contrary to their expectations of a more "sheepish response" Suleri never follows their advice by saying: "this is not the cup my skull requires"[55] and admits that she has "never been particularly good at heeding that piece of advice, happy instead to *let life and body go grazing off* to their own sweet pastures"[56] (italics mine).

This binary becomes most explicit when she refers to her personal experience of having a pregnancy test during one of her visits to Pakistan. Having known fully well that "unmarried women are not supposed to be in any need of a pregnancy test in Pakistan"[57], Suleri's comments situate her in sharp opposition to the other women in Pakistan and sufficiently illustrates the brand of feminism she subscribes to and whose fulfillment she can hardly find in a conservative Pakistani culture. On the other hand, in narrating such experiences she not only rejects the patriarchal morality that tends to control woman's conduct and choices but also dismantles what Hussain

has elsewhere referred as the "uncompromising and overtly paternalistic monotheism" of Pakistani culture[58] that leaves woman with two options – of either being "housebound or hell bound".[59] The kinds of choices that she makes in terms of her personal freedom embody what Hussain has postulated as following:

> Within the Islamic schema [then] the "good" woman is not the one who denies her sexual desire, but the one who consciously limits it by remaining within *prescribed notions* of the feminine. For it is only by remaining within the limits enjoined on her by divine edict, not only in thought but by a *faithful observance of the codes of conduct* set up to differentiate the masculine from the feminine, will she safeguard the harmony of the universe[60] (italics mine).

I argue that the subjective angle of feminism that Suleri subscribes to does not represent and correspond to the cultural and existential reality of Pakistani women. Instead her outlook not only presents her in contrast to the average Pakistani woman but also underscores her choice to portray herself rather proudly as a bad woman with her defiance and liberalism.

Biology as the Destiny of Woman

The agonies of gestation, childbirth, lactation and feeding are some frequently probed aspects when it comes to viewing Suleri's twin accounts from a feminist lens. That her own preference for life is so radically different from the average Pakistani girl, including her own sisters who become complacent wives and mothers at quite young age. Thus Ifat gets married to a soldier even at a tender age without knowing that marrying Javed would signify "a complete immersion into Pakistan".[61] Likewise, Suleri sees her younger sister Tillat, sitting on the throne of motherhood at the age of twenty seven "with comparatively little fuss"[62] and has virtually become a "baby factory".[63] In a parallel development, she criticizes her father with his unlimited desire to have as many children as possible without any regard for the health and well-being of her mother and refers to her mother "at twenty-nine carrying Shahid at six months" to see her father in Karachi jail, when she is "there all the time, fetally speaking, as a very carefully folded thought" and remains there "for roughly the period of [her] gestation".[64] In all such accounts, there is an obvious proclivity on the part of Suleri to present Pakistani men as the true product of patriarchy who consider their women nothing more than a means to fulfil their insatiable desire for infinite sex, bodily comfort

and more and more children without sharing with them the burden of child-bearing and rearing.[65]

Perils of Motherhood

Despite her mother's enormous domestic responsibilities and successive pregnancies Suleri refers how each child leaves "beautiful wearing [on] her face, around which fatigue would register only as the burden of intelligence".[66] The perils of motherhood are rather celebrated in case of her mother who always considers it something very natural by saying: "one's aesthetic changes once one has a child".[67] However, her remarks situate her in stark contrast to the feminist ideals of her daughter with her obvious disdain for the biological obligations of a woman's life. Contrary to this, her mother expresses how her subjective experience of being a mother entails its relevant score of pleasure and pain, fatigue and achievement when she refers to her children as the embodiment of her many fascinations which she has achieved or yearned to achieve. Thus Ifat is her mother's "lost obsession for beauty, Shahid, her nostalgia for the good", Tillat her obsession with "strange patience" and Suleri herself "her need to think in sentences".[68]

Not only this but in presenting her parents' mutual relationship, Suleri seems to base her assumptions on her mother's subordination and silence without considering the fact that despite being the most reticent woman, she possesses a strange capacity to influence her husband and children in ways which are subtle and inexplicable. The overwhelming score of affection and influence that she has had upon her children underscores the vital significance of women as mothers in traditional Pakistani culture as Mohanty puts it rightly: "the distinction between the act of mothering and the status attached to it is a very important one one that needs to be stated and analyzed contextually".[69]

However, instead of seeing any promise in the act of mothering, Suleri over-emphasizes the biological obligations of women and describes Ifat's pregnancy and lactation in a manner which subjugates her in the crippling and troubling business of mothering without any share of comfort and pleasure. Thus women in Pakistan are shown to be burdened by the enormous weight of mothering and its compelling obligations which at times become near pathological in their character never letting women "empty into peace".[70] She refers to the agonies of motherhood that Ifat experiences when she is "large with Ayesha" and tells Suleri: "do you know what it is like to have something kicking at you all the time and realize that you can never kick it back?".[71] In another point she narrates how Ifat suffers from

engorgement in her breasts after her first child was born, "surrounded by such instrument of torture as breast pumps and expressers" with which she "set about relieving her body from that extraneous liquid [with] her face… as white as in labor". In spite of her mother's constant advice to bear the pain of motherhood patiently in her plea "don't fret", Suleri'stone is more akin to the trauma of being a woman with the compelling ovarian obligations that she imagines dreadfully, hence presenting an oppressive and largely reductive fact of biology as the destiny of women.[72]

Seen critically, her aversion for the maternal aspects of her sisters and mother's life echoes a reactionary and reductive feminist version where a woman's anatomy is her most adverse enemy. Far from seeing any pleasure and pride in the fact of being women, this view inevitably confines women in the crippling limits of her biology where conception is viewed as the "result of failed contraception; pregnancy a time of morbid pathologies; and birth traumatic".[73] From a feminist angle such view entails that a woman's anatomical peculiarities "imprison" her in her subjectivity by turning her into someone who thinks with her glands and is thus unable to transcend the oppressive biological limits of her existence[74] something Suleri has ironically referred as 'a huge practical joke hidden underneath our clothes'.[75]

This reductive view of woman's existence is further highlighted when she describes her niece Heba – Tillat's daughter and her remarks about her anatomy as against her brother which shocks and elevates her simultaneously as in them she sees an affirmation of her own feminist convictions. This comes in the narration when Heba tells her by "confidently saying that her brother Omi has a penis, but she has blood" and this secret about her own anatomy is discovered and shared by her when she tells Suleri: "I looked inside to see". And this is something that makes Suleri "glad for the little girl who has "had such introspective courage to knock at the door of her body and insist it let her in". Her manner of self-assertion and confidence gives Suleri the feeling that she "need not worry about her, that child who was busy adding herself to the world and would not rest until it had made her properly welcome".[76]

And what do these remarks signify in the context of Suleri's feminist outlook? Do they reduce the woman by defining and confining her in the intricate and humiliating mystique of a penis envy or do they suggest the possibility of a discourse that could transcend the bodily contours in a bid to become woman without withdrawing from her humanity? Situating my argument in feminists' critique on Freud's

psychoanalysis, I postulate that that an undue emphasis on the biological fact of being a woman is too crippling and compelling so as to allow woman to be something else beyond the determined and even oppressive fact of her bodily configurations.

In her interesting critique to Freud's psychoanalysis the American feminist Friedan (1963) subverts this feminine mystique that declares woman as a "lack" or "void" – whose morbid fulfillment she seeks in her secretive envy for penis.[77] Hence her biology or the so-called lack that the little girl discovers in her being overshadows and over-determines her existence in a way that she can hardly transcend or question. By accepting the subjugation of women as a given fact, this view eclipses the possibility of locating and understanding the question of woman beyond the humiliating and horrifying contours of her body and biology. Moreover, it tends to de-historicize the experience of women's existence by ignoring "the particular historical, material and ideological power structures that construct such images".[78] Hence the very idea of seeing woman in the crippling limits of her biology strips her of any sense of distinction about the fact of her being a woman with pride and conviction instead of sheepishly trying to betray her sexual identity in a bid to become man or man-like.

A Reductive Discourse of Womanhood

A discourse that reduces the fact of being a woman in the anatomy is indeed a declaration of the feminist version where biology is deemed as a woman's destiny by making her agency subservient to this given fact and by ignoring the rather complex dynamics of culture. I argue that in presenting such ideas Suleri inevitably unmasks her incapacity to see how mothering and familial obligation add to and constitute the identity of woman in Pakistani culture. Similarly, her insistence on the biological existence of women combined with their non-existence in Pakistani society is itself counter posed when one views it in the context of many women characters with their distinct identity and subjectivity. One pertinent example is her mother who is entitled to exercise her independent will and choice above and beyond the dominating control of patriarchy and remains such an influential and excellent teacher with her distinct subjectivity and agency before her students and children. Hence Suleri's portrayal of her mother as well as other women in Pakistani culture, does not analytically demonstrate the problem of women's identity and agency with the framework of various socio-cultural and historical contexts. Instead it tends to "deprive women of self-presence, of being" by reducing them

to be a non-historical categories and by foreclosing the possibility of change as argued by Lazreg.[79]

On a related note, the transition from a feminist to a female sensibility as theorized by Showalter (1979) enables and empowers women no to feel ashamed of their distinct biological identity as women. Rather it is only by coming to terms with the fact of being woman with pride and self-esteem that feminism can redeem the oppressive cultural view that identifies woman with either lack or absence, and fails to acknowledge her womanity and humanity as complementary and compatible instead of conflicting and contradictory. Instead of viewing women's subjectivity in such binarisitic fashion, what is required is a complex reworking of these binary oppositions by negotiating a more nuanced and empirically grounded explanation of women's life and subjectivity in diverse cultural background.

It is precisely with a similar perspective that Mohanty contends against the idea of making broader generalization about the given subordination of third-world women by making them non-existent and argues that "the category of women is constructed in a variety of political context that often exist simultaneously and overlain on top of one another".[80] Such "simplistic formulations are [not only] historically reductive; they are also ineffectual in designing strategies to combat oppressions" by reinforcing binaries between men and women and by essentially reducing them into their biological givenness without any escape and exception.[81] On the other hand, in expressing her feminist views within a strictly binaristic formation, Suleri shows her inability to include the diverse and complex experience of what it means to be a woman in Pakistani culture. Her desire to free herself from the oppressive control of patriarchy results into the consolidation of these binaries that Mohanty views as simplistic and counter-productive. Hence categorizing women in a broad and generalized class of third-world women is likely to undercut the specific historical and cultural determinants/variants in the construction of women's subjectivity.

If feminism has to become a revolutionary practice for social and cultural transformation, it must change itself into what Mohanty has termed quite forcefully as the "most expansive and inclusive vision of feminism [which] need(s) to be attentive to borders while learning to transcend them".[82]

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[58]Neelum Hussain. "Women as Objects and Women as Subjects within Fundamentalist Discourse." In *Locating the Self, Perspectives on Women and Multiple Identities*, ed.Nighat S. Khan, Rubina Saigol and AfiaShehrbano Zia (Lahore: ASR Publications, 1994) 115.
[59] Ibid.,120.
[60] Ibid.,112-13.
[61] Sara Suleri. *Meatless Days* (Delhi: Penguin, 1989),153
[62] Ibid.,23.
[63] Ibid.,113.
[64] Ibid.,101.
[65] Ibid.,130.
[66] Ibid.,183.
[67] Ibid.,183.
[68] Ibid.,182-83.
[69] Chandra Mohanty. *Feminism without Borders* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003),26.
[70] Sara Suleri. *Meatless Days* (Delhi: Penguin, 1989),39.
[71] Ibid.,38.
[72] Ibid.,38-9.
[73]as cited in Ruth Robbins, *Literary Feminisms* (London:Macmillan,2000), 195.
[74]Simone D'beavoir. *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshely (London: Vintage, 1949) 2.
[75]Sara Suleri. *Meatless Days* (Delhi: Penguin, 1989),1.
[76] Ibid.,45-46.
[77] Betty Friedan. *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. 1963).
[78] Chandra Mohanty. *Feminism without Borders* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 28.
[79]as cited in Mohanty, ibid.,29.
[80] Ibid.,32.
[81] Ibid.,31.
[82] Ibid.,2.