



Corporeal Reclamation in Vivek Shraya's Art: *Asserting the trans woman*

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Abstract

Women's writing as a field of study emerged to include marginalized narratives into mainstream consciousness. The definition of a woman, however, is complicated and subjective. With the emergence of gender queerness, the rigid gender binary distinction is insufficient in capturing the essence and experience of being feminine. Through this paper, we will strive to redefine the idea of a 'woman' by studying the narrative of a trans woman¹. This questions the implicit assumption of femininity being associated only with womanhood. The primary aim is to arrive at a more inclusive definition of being feminine and of being a woman. This paper will trace Vivek Shraya's oeuvre to redefine the notions of gender identity and subconscious sex through the reclamation of the feminine by repossessing the body. Vivek Shraya is a prolific artist who has dabbled in the fields of music, visual arts, films, theatre, and writing. Shraya describes herself as a trans, bisexual, person of colour, and identifies with the pronouns she/her. The works being studied primarily are: *I'm Afraid of Men*, *The Boy and the Bindi*, *Part-time Woman*, *God Loves Hair*, and *Trisha*. The question is: Is it possible to construct a gender-fluid feminine identity and redefine womanhood through corporeal reclamation as illustrated in Vivek Shraya's work? As authors of this paper, we acknowledge the fallacy of studying the reclamation of femininity by the trans identity, without identifying as trans. However, our attempt is only to construct a more comprehensive definition of womanhood by sincere understanding and effort.

Keywords: trans woman, sexuality, woman, corporeality, gender studies, Vivek Shraya, feminism, transfeminism

¹ This paper primarily focuses on trans women. This does not imply the exclusion of other trans narratives. Our aim is to include those who identify as a woman in women's art and literature and redefine womanhood by dissociating it from ideas of femininity and masculinity. We recognize the fluidity of gender and support the same.