

## GENDER POLITICS AND SELF-IDENTITY: A FEMINIST COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FAHMIDA RIAZ AND ADRIENNE RICH

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### ABSTRACT

*This research investigates the aspect of gender politics and women's self-identity through the comparative study of Fahmida Riaz' collection of Poems Four Walls and a Black Veil and Adrienne Rich's selected poems. Jacques Derrida's concept of Binary Oppositions in deconstruction theory is the basic framework to conduct the study under feminist perspective. Since the construction of female gender, issues of women identity and their relevance with opposite male gender have raised many questions. The works of these Eastern and Western poets respectively encounter the universal truth of their subjugation as dependent creature in political and social dogmas where females have been assigned fixed gender roles of motherhood, sexuality and partisanship in undesirable pursuit. This classification of the binary assertions can be challenged and re investigated through various contextual lenses. The problem of gender politics and self-identity has been examined under the feminist perspective against structural binary of male/female as the fundamental viewpoint. This research raises questions ;how Fahmida Riaz and Adrienne Rich dismantle their dogmatic beliefs, which tools they practice to reject fixed binary oppositions (bisexuality) and rethink feminism, and how concept of transcendence is deconstructed in Eastern and Western literature through social, cultural and political shifts. This research finds out the real practice of gender politics and women identity in both contexts with dissimilar and also a homogeneous approach of the writers in certain aspects.*

**Keywords:** Gender Politics, Self-identity, Binary Oppositions, Feminism, Social Dogma

### INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century brought revolutionary change in the field of science, politics and literature. This change also challenged socio-economic systems, philosophical theories, religious beliefs and issues which are concerned to sexuality and gender. Among those theories and frameworks, the concept of 'binary oppositions', a rhetoric discourse defies the universality and reconsiders traditional practices. This approach crafts questions related to feminist viewpoint about the gender and identity issues in a political perspective. "Gender and politics as a new robust field has been analyzing gender inequalities since 1970s." (Matthews, 2019, p.2). Binary opposition is a controlled way to interpret texts subconsciously. The binary pairs, present in a text are developed through influential strata of meanings and further reinforced by the society or governing philosophies of a particular culture. Levi Strauss and Barthes' ideas are taken and analyzed further by Jacques Derrida, recognizing the unequal status of 'binaries', which were never identical. But the presence of each binary pair culturally evaluates one half highly privileged and dominant on the second half. Derrida illustrates one example of the traditionally significant binary pair of masculine/feminine. According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory, historically, man's 'presence' is positive recognition in the society, however, a woman has been anticipated negatively 'absent'.

Feminism refers equality for men and women. Though feminist beliefs, approaches and methods can vary according to the foundation of the patriarchy in a particular culture. However, all

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feminists agree that female is not a sex to be subjugated and subordinated. Feminism was established as a political movement that tended to gain social, economic and political equity. The idea behind this movement was to explain women's unequal position in the society. So, Hines (2020) thinks that the concept of cultural, biological and gender difference between both sexes was central to second wave of feminism. Now, in the postmodern era where every reality is reconsidered incredible, tends to rethink the construction of the binary oppositions. Fahmida Riaz and Adrienne Rich are two contemporary writers, who bearing Eastern (Pakistani) and Western (American) contexts respectively invoke reconsideration and deconstruction of fixed gender roles. Thus, selected poems of Adrienne Rich and Riaz' collection of poetry *Four Walls and a Black Veil* are the momentous writings to discuss the issues of gender politics and self-identity.

Fahmida Riaz is a Pakistani progressive poet, iconoclast and human rights activist. She has been paying the price for defying the descriptions and suppressive military establishments. She addresses love of life, love of desires for a beloved. She also openly seeks to nurture the subdued sexual awakening. In Pakistan, feminism was an unnoticed term in the sixties, and the themes of female sexuality, sexual politics and religion. She questioned those taboos and ironically criticized social duplicity regarding women's social status. Similarly, Adrienne Rich is an American female poetess. She shares the status of contemporary belonging to same era in her work. Her works deal with staunch progressive and liberal vision. So, these both poetesses resist and challenge this act of binary construction and work on the scheme of making female gender positive, conscious of her own existence in a revolutionary manner.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In both Western and Eastern perspective, a very detailed research and texts have been published on the issue of female identity and gender politics. The researchers have reviewed different works of both Eastern and Western writers with feminist aspect. The comparative study of these two dissimilar contexts may vary in their expressions. If it is observed in the Eastern context, the emergence of the poetry of protest based on; the issues of sexuality, identity and political status of the women, its period begins from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Where According to Parasher (2016), The relationship of patriarchal society and the state which supports control over woman, fundamentally strengthens intemperate philosophies and established practices. The female poets of the Eastern countries; particularly developing countries e.g. Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Afghanistan and Middle East region reject dogmatic and stereotypical roles assigned on the pattern of binary opposition male/female. Thus, women's writings in these strata of the patriarchal societies have intimate relation with the countries' politics. These writings prove the tough time for the privileged male chauvinists and transcend the boundaries of gender politics and their identities designated to the respective sexes. According to Hekman (2016), mostly critics in identity politics consider fixity of the identities unavoidable, but she illustrates that how at geographical level, diversity in social conditions gives rise to change in identities and reconstructs them.

Forbidden and prohibited discussion on women sexuality has been criticized by many writers as it is an element for women to be part of political sphere and to run the state. Jamal in her work *Gender, Citizenship, and the Nation-State in Pakistan: Willful Daughters or Free Citizens?* (2006) has compared two gender stereotypes of women; westernized and Eastern especially Pakistani woman. She finds Western woman independent, confident and self-evident in her performance while a Pakistani woman is bound and supposed to perform the roles assigned by the society. She states,

In contemporary Pakistan the women who try to achieve their true identity by breaking the traditions of their tribe, sect or religion, they are thrown out as "pure women" with an arrogant space.

The edifice of 'willful' woman that is convalesced through the discourse of Islamization seems to intermingle with another strategy of "westernized woman" who is a right demanding individual being and that has conventionally functioned as a trope to enable the narration of virtuous woman. (Jamal, 2006, p.04)

In Pakistan the emergence of Fahmida Riaz, KishwarNaheed, Ada Jaffary, Parveen Shakir, Zehra Nigah, Azra Abbas, Sara Shagufta, and other poetesses for the prospect of poetry led the Urdu literature in truly different approach. In Urdu Poetry, these female writers repelled fixed taboos for identity of women; as beloved with remarkable beauty nevertheless she possesses an erratic besides insensitive emotions and temperament. This disapproval in counter to mistreatment of female gender in a duplicitous society became a strong cause to reconsider the role of gender binaries of male/female.

Madhu Singh (2011) in her article "Crossing thresholds: Radical notes in women's writings from contemporary South Asia" refers that it was discovered by Journalists like Zaib-un-Nissa Hamidullah, a columnist for Dawn, if women write about political issues, they would lose their jobs. Therefore, they should stick to their assigned domestic liabilities and not interfere in dogmatic state matters.

Another Eastern, Pakistani feminist and radical Urdu poetess, fighting for the women's self-identity and their political status with respect to gender is Parveen Shakir. Her poetry is also true depiction of woman experiences as an innocent 'girl', beloved, wife and mother. These associated practices and familiarities make to analyze her part and identity that where her 'self' is lost fulfilling these assigned roles. Her translated English poems like "It Has Been Written..., What Will Happen to Flowers? Obstinate, Who Then Had the Time to Meet Herself" are her beautiful poems. These poems portray her complete and confident personality. In the poem *Obstinate* her ego and her 'self' does not allow her to make a call to her lover in the monsoon. Monsoon weather, the symbol of love for the union of two lovers. Shakir defies the ritual of passivity and obedience nominated to her as a 'woman'.

A well acknowledged Indian Poetess, Kamala Das' poetry also identifies woman as a unique and complete identity. She confesses the strength and the valor of the manly characteristics. However, Western (European and American) poetry in feminist perspective with respect to gender politics and self-identity contributes vital insights and understanding of the practices in contemporary milieu in different settings. As Americans focus to develop their perspective by examining prudently from the political, economic, and political perspectives.

However, Western (European and American) poetry in feminist perspective with respect to gender politics and self-identity contributes vital insights and understanding of the practices in contemporary milieu in different settings. As Americans focus to develop their perspective by examining prudently from the political, economic, and political perspectives. From these contexts a wide range of philosophies and thoughts are originated. It permits us not only to improve and deconstruct the existing and orthodox views in the organized societies. Those thoughts are fixed traditionally in the Western discussion about women politics. Western female writers explore the political dynamic forces of the changing dogmatic beliefs about self. In the early 1970s, when the investigation about the European women's history and beginning of their movement started, it was found in crudeform and simplistic forthright approach. The concern of the movement was attainment of the equal political, social, legal and economic rights for the progress of women and their acknowledged position against privileged male gender.

The perception of the women identity and equality before 1970 in American women's movement was made forward. As feminism in a more effective way began in 1848 at Seneca falls. In western and American traditions, the males were privileged authentically. These traditions were developed on political theory where the male was the standard of the political and religious norms. Therefore, the purpose of feminist movements was to seek rights of property and vote for women so that they can own their political and social identity and they also have professional acknowledgement in male dominated society and institutional hierarchy. As, "in American political discourse, attitudes about the social, economic and reproductive rights of women and sexual minorities...as discrete poles in a cultural war" (Yang & Charles, 2021, p.131). The legalization of these representative issues was the basic objective behind the feminist uprisings.

Moreover, Struggle and loss of identity has also been discussed and written by other Western authors like Maya Angelou, Alice Walker and Sylvia Plath. Identity "is a product of ourselves or it is a product of our social context" (Whitebrook, 2014, p.6). The poem of Maya Angelou, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and Alice Walkers' "Be Nobody's Darling" are the true representation of women freedom, independence and their particular identity and they want to escape from political and social chains of the society. These poetic works show discontentment against the status-quo and established cultural norms.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework depends upon the model of 'Binary Oppositions' discussed under the Feminist perspective with reference to Derrida's *Differance*. The concept of 'binary oppositions' earlier defined by two structuralists, Barthes and Strauss that meanings can be understood through the recognition. In Derrida's observation that meaning and understanding of each concept is not genetically developed but, it is learned and socially constructed from others. So meanings are not independent. Derrida agrees to these views of these two structuralisms, but the problem arises on the concept of the signifier and the signified. Where the meaning of these signs are considered arbitrary and conventional

as Saussure believes in the idea of deriving meanings from the differences of these signs. Derrida borrows this concept from Saussure as a key point to devise his own idea to challenge the fixity of the signs or binary oppositions. Gender formation is originated through the internal features of the 'personhood' and that personhood defines the identity of male and female genders. These identities are only intelligible through the respective culture and personhood. Derrida rejects the continuity of the concepts; stabilized by cultural exercises as Peter Barry (2002), in *Beginning Theory* quotes Helen Cixous that, it is not possible to understand practice of writing by female authors and this impossibility is unable to be coded, theorized and enclosed. It is beyond that discourse which considers male dominancy. It can only be understood in those areas which are not subordinated to philosophical and theoretical supremacy of the male gender.

Derrida, considered this idea of the binary oppositions unequal. It illustrates Derrida's view point that According to him, First and upper side of each binary is considered more valuable, honored and positive. E.g. in our social, cultural and political systems of the existing societies there are opposites like white/black, west/East, wealth/poverty, old/young, male/female. Bressler in "Literary Criticism An Introduction to Theory and Practice" (1994) further elucidates Derrida's thoughts that Western metaphysics is developed through some concepts which occupy a central position like truth, essence, God, being, reason, beginning of humanity self-etc. The desire for center which Derrida termed it as logo centrism establishes a belief that there is particular and ultimate truth and reality which serves as base for all our actions and thoughts. Derrida (1997) in his "Of Grammatology" mentions his complex and different idea of understanding about woman (the second in binary pair) is of powerful, true and completely recognized personality.

A common binary opposition mostly discussed is that of rational/emotional. In our society specially in the whole world men are considered rational and women as emotional beings. So ideally, the rationality occupies a higher position than being emotional. Rationality is more related to authenticity whereas emotional feelings are attached to sensitivity of female gender. More a person is rational more he is benefitted.

## ANALYSIS

The material construction of the gender due to repetitive performances of the 'words, desire, gesturers and acts' is the power used by the feminists especially female writers to challenge and deconstruct the fixed notions of the identities assigned to the female gender. The reversal of the power roles and self-identity is found in the Eastern and Western contexts both, though the style of expression differs.

Fahmida Riaz and Adrienne Rich are the representatives of the Eastern and Western cultures respectively. Both are contemporaries. In 1960s both in Pakistan and America number of political changes were taken place. Pakistan had dictatorial rule. Riaz also ran the campaign for Balochistan Liberation Movement being a female and revolutionary poet. At the same time America was also indulged in Vietnam War and was the victim of civil war. It was the time when radical feminists sought to find new theological beliefs as according to them, religion supported women suppression. Being part of that historical period these both writers write through their own personal experiences. Their personal experiences gain political implication, therefore, their personal experiences actually are political efforts done to designate their self-identity. As Aamer Hussein in the foreword of this book comments on Riaz' work, he finds out that Fahmida Riaz has presented her personal experiences in a political aspect as her Western contemporaries such as Adrienne Rich and Margret Atwood in their works. So it was common issue and topic of discussion for the female writers of that time. The same viewpoint about the poetic expression of Rich is discussed by Mary Eagleton (2010) in "Adrienne Rich, Location and the Body" that, location of her presence is the main subject and this has become a speculative debate of the present time. This is the problem of noun 'I'. The letter 'I' itself presents a strong independent personality with her own opinions and ideologies. This consciousness of the 'self' makes one a complete individual, irrelevant to any established notion of social, religious and political belief.

*Four Walls and a Black Veil* is the collection of thirty-eight poems, written in the political and religious context. It addresses the suppression of the female desires within the boundary of the house. The poems can be analyzed through multiple layers in the Eastern context. Whereas Adrienne Rich's selected poetry is analyzed in the Western context. The themes of female sexuality, her bodily desires, self-identity and gender politics are evident in both females' written expressions. The comparative study with respect to Eastern and Western perspectives distinguishes the style of the expression on the same issues practiced by Riaz and Rich.

Riaz and Rich's Antithetical Approach towards Social Dogmas of Sexuality: Riaz' poem *Tongue of Stone* is the true depiction of the women loneliness and their adherence to the traditions fixed for centuries. In this poem she points out the difference and binary relation created between her and her mate. She finds herself lost due to quietness and stillness. He is symbolized by height which is built on the behalf of stone's sincerity and loyalty that she has been practiced since her birth. Whereas her own life is colorless and isolated. She faces in her surroundings the difficulties and problems for the completion of her promise she has done. Riaz expresses the difficulties as stone, wild wind, and rocks. All these words truly represent the game of politics played by the powerful players of the field. She writes, that she is clung to the stone of customs and traditional practices which are like a rock to suppress and shatter her beliefs and ideas. She expresses, "My dress rent and flapping in the wild wind/Your breath tangled in my torn shawl" (Riaz, 2004, p. 2).

Her rent dress shows the loss of identity which dies with the passage of time as the social and political norms continue from one generation to another generation. The continuity in this state creates a worn personality which turns into a wanted figure by the dominated individuals (males) of the society. She becomes a flower which provides fragrance fighting the pointed powerful thrones. She converts from stone to 'ruby' to enhance her mate's show and strength. The new binary construction of stone/ruby gives the hope to the stone to become a ruby one day. This shows destabilization of the language and fixity of the signs. Bressler presents Derrida's view that, "by such a reversal, no longer can we posit a transcendental signified. No longer is there some absolute standard or coherent unity from which all knowledge proceeds and develops". (Bressler, 1994, p. 79). While, on the other hand, if we observe in the Western context Rich deals with the traditional sense in her poem *In Those Years*, Rich (1992) mentions the transformation in the understanding of meanings which paint a collective picture of we and us. It also depicts a collective struggle of American women against subjugation and repression. Her awareness and realization of 'I' develops a new understanding which seems terrible, ironic and senseless. This identification of the lost track designed by patriarchs is truly challenging and revolutionary which can prove dangerous for her 'self' where she absorbs different identities into 'one' as she declares, "we found ourselves/reduced to I" (p. 22). It shows loss of engagement and connection. The whole world resonates around her 'self' and promotes sense of Individualism.

The affirmation that the individual 'was the main life/we could give testimony regarding' is promptly assaulted by 'the considerable dull feathered creatures of history' which, definitive and unconcerned, attack our own climate. The "I" that finishes the sonnet sounds nostalgic and melancholy, in risk of getting to be insignificant in the event that it neglects to interface with "we" and "you" in the development of history. They were going elsewhere yet their noses and traps drove along the shore, through the clothes of mist where we stood, saying I. Here, we watch that Rich discusses her deviation from the conventional demonstrations of feminine characteristics. Her feminine attribute is distracted from the 'we' to 'I'. But she is conscious of this realization of her identity. She identifies the customs and traditions with dark birds who continue to hover around the female bodies. "Assuming that women are oppressed because of their association with motherhood is an incomplete picture of how women are subordinated by the multifacets of patriarchal power" (Frost, 2019, p. 15), Riaz's poem *Tongue of Stone* does not openly dare to resist against the traditional balance of a male and female. Though, she suffers the same soreness but, ambiguity lies in her expression. She mentions the pain, but still agrees to embrace the presence of his opposing partner nevertheless, Rich excludes him and finds her feet with 'I'. Her 'self' is satisfied. This manifestation of rebel thoughts makes her stand the true depiction of Western beliefs.

*The Soft Fragrance of My Jasmine* by Riaz is the poetic expression that poetess describes the delicate and positive aspect of her sexuality. She is soft like the flower of jasmine and cool like a breeze. She wants to feel herself free like a wind but the fragrance of the jasmine is curled around her body. She is unable to set herself free. The chain of the restrictions does not permit her to search for the identity. All around her are dark images like fogging night and darkening cold. Riaz presents, "The soft fragrance of my jasmine/Has curled around my wrists, /My arms, my throat. /It has woven chains about me" (Riaz, 2004, p. 4).

It can be found here the desire of the woman for the hetero-sexuality and search for love, which she needs having a human nature. She lacks love. Only her binary pair can satisfy her sense of unity. The absence of the other haunts her. But it does not that she reserves her 'self' to other. Her desire has become her handcuff against her freedom. She discovers herself slave or a prisoner who is bound in the cage by law where she is unable to feel the delicate and refreshing atmosphere of this world. Her

aspiration to disassociate herself from the union of male and female gender is politically and ideologically restrained. This also presents a cruel images of the society where she is enslaved and helpless and dependent on other 'half' to complete herself and get free from socio-political chains.

On the contrary, Rich's body counterattacks against certain acquainted creations of women bodies. According to her female body is not an anticipated body, a piece for men's sexual pleasure and delight, or it is not a body distinguished as a holy, very spiritual and visual portrait. This body is also not desirous. That sensuous body is coded at in the references to certain physical parts, 'vulva and clitoris and uterus and breasts' (p. 215), she does not find herself restricted to heterosexuality, but clearly picturizes the act of homosexuality/bisexuality in her poem *My Mouth Hovers Across Your Breasts*. She writes,

My mouth hovers across your breasts  
in the sort grey winter afternoon  
in this bed we are delicate  
and touch so hot with joy we amaze ourselves. (Rich, 2012, p. 28)

These thoughts by Rich show the transcendence and de familiarizing herself from her established identity as a female. She makes herself *The Stranger*, as the title indicates this poem reflects the confession of her androgynous feelings. She claims that, she represents androgyny. No one has the language to describe her. The language itself is completely dead to speak of her feelings and existence free from restriction of any gender.

Rich identifies herself with confused identity perceptions. She muddles the concept of her sexuality which actually is her identity. The mixed feelings and attraction to both male and female objects is the disturbing attitude examined by the patriarchs. The politics, cultural and ethnic identity come into collision. The selection of the identity is questionable in a very traditional society, while this choice of the identity stimulates from an American nationalist and Jewish upbringing. She does not hesitate to write her feelings in a valiant and audacious style. In the following line she abandons all the imposed burdens of the ethnicity, sexuality, and color. She deconstructs all the affiliations to social setup. She writes in "Split at the Root: An Essay on Jewish Identity" that, it will be more convenient to throw and reject the established identities as gentle creature, a woman of white Christian race. She wants to push away her inheritance of woman and call herself a lesbian, a Jewish lesbian. Moreover, she wants to escape from the liability of a gentle woman. She only wants to be called herself through her mother, but she considers her desire specially being a lesbian seems outsider and unconventional. Heterogeneity in Adaptation of Religious Cum Political Beliefs: The converging of religion and governmental issues and its impact on women can be analyzed by forced dynamic viewpoint. The triangle of governmental issues, religion and sexual orientation shows the illogical concept of isolating the governments out of the societal ideas from the political, the private from general society. For ordinary life it is not correctly wrapped into independent spaces but rather flows unreservedly. Since the method in which they did so is best illuminated through their poetry itself, at length from Riaz's hard-hitting 'Chaadar aur Char diwari': *Four Walls and A Black Veil*,

What shall I do, Sire, with this black veil?  
Why do u bestow on me this great favour?  
I am not in mourning that I should wear it. (Riaz, 2004, p. 94)

Here in these lines Riaz questions the political authorities where women are forced to adapt a specific dress code on the basis of their gender. Challenging the traditional politics was the biggest reason that Riaz was enforced into exile in order to escape arrest for rabble-rousing piece of writings. Open political contentions are much of the time induced by ladies' activities in what are portrayed as social, instead of closed minded cosmoses and, just as, political theses affect the regular life. Rich's poetry is also the response to the politics as the result of the awareness of that "my inner and outer life was threatened by the politics of arrogance and cruelty ... that sense of danger and disturbance began to enter my poetry" (Spence, 1999, p.63). In *Snapshots of Daughter in Law* Rich writes that,

Well,  
She's long about her coming, who must be  
more merciless to herself than history.  
Her mind full to the wind, I see her plunge  
breasted and glancing through the currents. (Rich, 2012, p. 44)

Riaz's poetry deals with the emotions and feeling of a woman, which she is unable to express in front of the world. Only the darkness of night, when she lies to sleep provides a sympathetic space o

remember someone she loves. In the complete silence of the night, the moving leaves with the light breeze sets her thinking about 'him'. But his absence changes into her disappointment, no one is there to value her pain and her tears which she shed. Then, she satisfies her 'self' dreaming him and feeling his presence. This pleasure of his presence gets her into the valley of sleep. In the poem *When Sleep Fills the Eyes*, she says,

Half waking, half asleep,  
I repress the ache, I hold back  
Tears certain to fall on dust.  
I open my eyes, I shut my eyes and he comes.  
He comes and says 'you are pleasing to me.'  
Half asleep, half awake  
I laugh quietly.  
Quietly I laugh  
Drifting back to sleep. (Riaz, 2004, p.6)

This state of half sleep and half-awake shows the pain, suffering and suppression of desires. Her tears drench into the mud. They are no use to shed. She weaves pleasing dreams and when they are not fulfilled, she again dreams about the superficial presence of 'him'. This predicts that she is habitual of these woven and broken images. She is hopeful that someday these will come true and she will have a sound sleep. The time is unlimited. That sound sleep may be her death when she will be waiting no more. The metaphors of open/shut, awake/sleep and laugh/tears show her supreme desire to be loved. She appreciates this phenomenon. Her loneliness is sustained, but faith is still maintained.

Moreover, *Aqleema*, *Surah-e- Yaseen*, and *O God of Heaven and Earth*, these poems reflect the religious manifestation of an Eastern woman. In the poem *Aqleema*, The religious aspects and divinity are the common themes prevailing between the lines. The religious fears are dominant through the introduction of myth and legend. The references from the Quranic and Biblical verses evidently describe the depiction of a woman oppression since the beginning and creation of the world. In this poem through the Biblical reference sister of Abel, Aqleema is identified sacrificing an animal. Riaz presents her image as a veiled virgin. Her veil shows lack of identity. As in the following lines she complains to God for her lower status and different body structure from a man.

Here, Riaz in poem "Aqleema" is doubtful of her identity, vision and spirit. She wants God to address her so that she can understand the value of her existence. She presents herself to ponder upon her meanings of creation. She is the symbol of sacrifice who only sacrifices her body. But her soul is restless. Though she is the mother of the whole universe. All the men are born through her womb. She nurtures them, please them but is denied of the wisdom. Therefore, she wishes that God must pay attention to her and value her in the eyes of her supposed mentors born out of her womb. She writes, "Let God speak to Aqleema sometime/and ask her something" (Riaz, 2004). The connection between God and her desire of acceptance as a normal complete individual makes her belief strong. This relation between God and her is beyond the established patriarchal values and political affairs of the physical world. Her spirituality for the recognition of her completeness rejects all the boundaries of the physical world where she can claim of her wisdom and sanity.

Nevertheless, Rich does not limit her body to fulfill the desire to be loved. For her the body is a biological device. The phrasing of the body is logical and it is learned here, in her work, the tendency of female body and its ability to perform in ideal situations. For Rich, her physicality which has hereditary capacities however it is not constrained to her genetic adaptations and behaviors. In spite of the fact that Rich notice soreness, purification, operations, this is not a medicalized body. Generally, she has that physical form on which happenings of the specific time have deep impact. engravings have experienced medicinal intermediations but, still not weakened assemblage which has conventional psychiatric treatment, nor the group of vitalities, powers, and poundings in any case, rather, an assortment of the substance full of bodily material having bones, teeth and skin. As a maturing body and a harmed body it is feeble, not the body 'at the middle', strong and legitimate yet nor is it the post-present day body, versatile, basic and transformative in her equivalent representation. It is the body bearing pain the pain she only can feel. It is the physical pain through which she describes the inner pain. She brings that pain into a material form so that the readers can feel the sense of soreness and distress.

Dear Adrienne,  
I feel signified by pain

from my breastbone through my left shoulder down  
 through my elbow into my wrist is a thread of pain  
 I am typing this instead of writing by hand  
 because my wrist on the right side  
 blooms and rushes with pain  
 like a neon bulb. (Rich, 2012, p.94)

The description of pain into speech is less visible in the form of words. It is another's pain which is ostensible in expression but, not understandable. When Rich reveals this poem she expresses that she is showed by the pain. She points out many impressions and appraisals which are summoned to describe her pain and that is her distinction. Her pain signifies her. She is only the referent. She is "I". She conventionally claims silence, unspeakable reality in the form of discomfort and agony take her over and she makes the 'inward' to 'outward' through her writing though her body does not support this writing but suffering is like a neon bulb which is brighter and sharp as she continues to describe her feelings. This process liberates her body from pain while she imagines the internal scenery.

The significance of that pain is that it provides her power in a broad-spectrum. she marks this pain accurately. and thus such restrictions cannot ascertain its sign. The detailed biological flow of pain in the whole track reflects its intensity where all the relevant body organs are involved to tell her the cruelty of the real word but, she still makes it to hold all the fragments together. As she clarifies that her writing by typing instead of physical touch. It creates a distance and dislocation of the conventional style of writing. She is more mechanical as well as natural as the neon light, blooms and bulbs indicate some hope as apparatus of her writing disconnects her from established facts and she easily can lay down her grief which has affected her whole nervous system.

Depiction of Identical Female Stature and Identity in Eastern and Western Contexts: *The Doll* by Riaz gives the complete picture of a woman's image and position in the society. It is a political suppression of female figures on a collective scale. The symbol of doll represents the image of woman as an inferior creature, an ornamental piece to play with. This picture shows the lifelessness, emotionlessness and absence of a woman in the active paradigm of the real world. Riaz Writes,

Small...  
 So small...  
 .....  
 Play with her as you will  
 Or,  
 When you wish,  
 Shut her up in the cupboard.  
 Display her on your ornament shelf.  
 There is no thirst on her small lips. (Riaz, 2004, p.8)

This static and inhuman representation of an Eastern woman describes her inferior status in the patriarchal society. All the features of the negativity are attached to her physical appearance like pouting lips, reddened cheeks, her thirst and blue eyes. These all are sexual attractions which a woman uses to attract her opposite gender. Riaz also points out the incapability and powerlessness a female experience. She endures a sense of an object in a male power circle. This portrayal of her body and her treatment in an insensitive way prepares a ground for a man who can play freely according to his own wish. She enquires how women are assigned domestic roles and forced to play love-games. A woman is more sexually desirable if she acts like a doll. Any woman of this idealized perfection of being dumb and beautiful forces her to live in male oriented standards of the woman life. So, the woman class and power is inferior as Healey (1999), in an article "Gender, Power and The Ambiguities of Resistance In Malay Community of Peninsular Malaysia" rejects this act of women submission. He considers that class and gender power cannot be detached from sexual control over girls and women bodies. There is a need to reevaluate the Malay communities's ideologies in respect of religion, gender and politics where complicity and resistance are in terms of disputed territory and cultural disturbance is in war with new wave of women independence and identity irrespective of all the associations to social strata.

Thus here, the whole image created is of a dumb, lacking intelligence and human qualities. Therefore, the description of the gender cannot be separated from the sexuality and woman sexuality is considered lower with negative attributes. This created image operates in the whole Eastern region. Whereas, Riaz here works on the concept of globalization. She personifies this act of measuring female



bodies a universal stigma of a woman. Rich also this presents this idea of her controlled body by the force she is unable to release herself from. Like *Doll* she cries for freedom in *Implosions*.

All wars are useless to dead  
My hands are knotted in the rope  
and I cannot sound the bell  
My hands are frozen to the switch  
and I cannot throw it  
My foot is in the shawl

.....  
I'll have done nothing  
Even for you? (Rich, 2012, p. 20)

In the above lines, we observe that Rich's concept of her confinement is clearly close to the image of the doll presented by Riaz. In the above mentioned lines, she describes herself as a dead body which can be taken and carried anywhere. Her 'hands knotted in the rope', her hands frozen to the switch, her 'foot in the shawl' are the metaphors used by Rich to illustrate the restrictions imposed by the society to control the female body. There are so many shackles and deceptions to control a living body. Stubble of blistered flowers, mouths with staring eyes crushed blue arteries are the signs of the death of a living body. It means here, the freedom of expression is grasped from the hands of a weak woman whose hands are tied in traditional practices. Her other "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" accurately is the portrait of the limitations and afflictions made-up through the wedding contact. She describes that a woman's bravery is suppressed as she expresses, "The tigers in the panel that she made. /Will go on prancing, proud and unfaired".

Here, the tigers show the male power exercised in the wild world, where they are free to move and fulfill their hunger in the form of lust. This entertainment is achieved by the force thrust upon a creature signified as weak and inferior in her creation. She is so weak that she is unable to pull a needle from the delicate and soft wool. Moreover, the burden of unhappy wedding proves very heavy for that weak figure. It weaves sense of fear and terror in the form of embroidery. She ironically describes the death scene of her body that after her death, she still has to wear handcuffs of the unpleasant experiences of the oppression. For Rich, the power dynamic of heterosexual marriage is the cause of suppression, but her death will create no difference for the autonomous bodies. The tigers will continue their pacing, their proud conceit will forever. So, here it is observed that there is direct link between the individual and the norms of society, where a woman struggles to fight against repression in a high pace. It depicts how a woman casts away all the cultural, social and political constraints. Her personal life becomes political as she draws the individual's life in political practice, carried by husbands for thousand years.

Thus the new cargo is the freedom of a woman achieved through the breakage from the history. For Rich 'snapshot' runs like a common thread which connect women with the stereotypical roles and male domination controlling the females physically and mentally.

## CONCLUSION

"Four Walls and a Black Veil" by Fahmida Riaz and selected poems of Adrienne Rich deal with the multiple common issues of sexuality, motherhood, their cultural practices and their power in the political perspective. The common experiences of these issues by the poetesses in the specific culture lead them to the aspect of globalization. Both resist against the patriarchal chains. The detailed study of their poetry enables to distinguish phases of their personal life and that personal life affects their writing expression; as the outcome is the shifting of the personal sexual identity and its impact on the world politics. Though both writers are living in different contexts but they experience same phase of a lover; a young woman appreciating man love and questing for that love, then its shift to motherhood where their children are more important as their possession. But as these phases are over, they come to recognize themselves, but unable trace their 'self'; lost in performing the traditional roles of lover, wife and mother.

Moreover, the researchers conclude that Riaz and Rich's personal experiences and suffering are collective in nature but, way of expressions slightly are different which locate their cultures. Riaz describes her experience as a young female using delicate and soft images of an appealing heterosexual moods and spirits. A picture of a passionate Eastern woman lover emerges as she describes those feelings of love and hatred using the images from the nature. She provides the Quranic and Biblical references to make realize her significance in the universe. She resists the political oppression done by

the dictatorial rule. But that resistance results in her exile. It demonstrates the difference that while challenging imposed religious concept, her survival becomes difficult while on the other hand Rich being the part of the scientific Western society uses various scientific devices to raise the voice of the identity. She uses the concept of the multiple identities. At a time she is the heterosexual as well as homosexual/ lesbian. She does not hesitate to express this shift of her identity. On the other hand, she openly expresses her American and Jewish ethnicity. While Fahmida Riaz being the part of an Eastern culture is not confident to her association with definite dogmatic beliefs. Moreover, it can be concluded that Rich escapes from her own 'self-identity'. Instead of protecting her previous sexuality fighting against the patriarchal norms and rules, she discovers protection in a new identity which is more challenging than maintaining previous status of a female.

Therefore, the researchers conclude that identity of male/ female is not a stable binary pair. It may change whenever circumstances like dogmatic and political bounds provide space to individuals. Women can be affected more from this new constructed self-identity as they are more deprived of their human rights. Moreover, it is found that Fahmida Riaz has directly opposed the political insurgencies in a bold and open manner. In her poetry she has highlighted all the political roles played by dictators. She has condemned social and cultural issues discussed under political influences. While Rich does not seem directly involved in power politics. She just symbolically raises her voice against the political changes occurred in the society in a general way. Rich only has focused on the gender issues and gender transformation in a feminist political perspective. Moreover, both writers are unanimous raising voice for the self-identity of women and their power roles across the universe.

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