

MUSLIM FEMINISTIC NARRATIVE IN POETRY: A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF FAHMIDA RIAZ'S POEMS

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Fahmida Riaz was able to articulate precise feminist politics through her voice because she was audible to many women in the Pakistani context. The current study investigates how her writings about the female body were not merely a tool to celebrate or raise the sexual distance, but also influenced a political intervention and shifted the dominant patriarchal structures present in literary as well as other social and political levels. The purpose of the research is to shed light on how a specific poet's voice was able to reach a large audience of women and articulate explicitly feminist politics in Pakistan.

Methodology: The Feminist Discourse Analysis (FCDA), another dimension of CDA, is employed in the analysis. The application of the FCDA model is adapted to examine how textual representations of gendered practices produce and sustain one gender power and dominance over the other. For the study, an operational method based on four models has been developed: the Fairclough Model, the Porreca Model (Porreca, 1984), Halliday's Transitivity Model (1985), and the FCDA (Lazar, 2005).

Findings: The findings clearly demonstrated how power abuse and gender domination are explicitly present in women's literature. The analysis discusses in detail how gender is constructed in these poems, and how this construction gave women a new perspective on life and defined how they are exploited in

the name of social and religious cultures.

Contributions: With the rise of religious extremism in Pakistan, the male-dominated patriarchal narrative is receiving renewed attention. However, based on the findings obtained, greater attention should be paid to the female narrative and the discourse produced by female writers. A similar analysis can be performed on the writings of Kishwar Naheed, another feminist writer, to gain a better understanding of the poetics of Muslim Feminist Narrative.

Keywords: Feminist politics, feminist critical discourse analysis, Porreca Model, Halliday's transitivity model.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Poetry becomes an enabling vehicle during political and social upheaval. The study finds that in the times of Fahmida Riaz, Urdu poetry became a powerful vehicle of feminist voice which resulted in voicing radical protest as well as tender emotions. Slogans like Chadar and Char Divari (the veil and the four walls of the home) from her poetry became part of the feminist propaganda. Fehmida Riaz revealed through her poetry that how political significance is associated with personal choice by the state while completely denying their right. Vintages (2017) suggests that a lot of postcolonial thinkers equalize feminism with the underlying components of liberalism prevailing in the West. They think of feminism as profane. By contrast, feminism has come forth in new kinds in the Muslim world, a kind based on the principles of Islam. The Muslim feminists continue to fight for the rights of women by moving in the circle of their religious principles, by providing new interpretations of Islamic history, based on the Hadith and Quran which lay the foundation of Muslim Feministic Narrative.

The aim of the study is to bring in light how Fahmida Riaz used poetry as a tool at the time when the country was living in the shadow of extremist religious, male-dominated narrative and Islamist militants. She took up firsthand issues of emotions, self, and sexuality in her socio-cultural context and expressed those in her poetry. She was able to articulate precise feminist politics by being audible to many women in the Pakistani context. The current study explores how the writings about the feminine body were not merely a tool to celebrate or raise the sexual distance, but they affected political interference and shifted the dominant structures

of patriarchy.

Gender discrimination and oppression is the most influential and integral part of Pakistani history. According to Bilge (2010), much work is needed to search and analyze the diverse range of personal experiences and attitudes among Muslim women. The silence of Muslim women concludes that they are passive and unengaged. There is very little significant work done on the poetics of Muslim feministic narrative, especially on Fehmida Riaz's work. It is a huge concern that the work of female writers and feminists is neglected. Therefore, the present study aims to reach a large audience of women and lay the foundational stone of feminist politics or feminism in Pakistan. The objectives of the study are addressed as follows: (1) To explore Fahmida Riaz's use of poetry as a tool of enlightenment during a time when Pakistan was ruled by Islamist militants and the country was under the shadow of an extremist religious, male-dominated narrative, and (2) To examine Fahmida Riaz's depiction of forces leading to women's exploitation in her poems.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

To many postcolonial thinkers, feminism, according to Vintages (2017), is equivalent to the fundamentals of Western liberalism. They believe that feminism is completely secular. In Muslim countries, however, many new forms of feminism based on religious principles have emerged. The teachings of the Quran are interpreted, and beliefs and ideals are given new unbiased definitions from the perspective of modern liberal Muslim women. The forms of religion have been ignored by Western feminists, who are more concerned with the principles of autonomy.

Khan (2015) examined the rise of the female figure and how Urdu poetry addressed women's issues. With the help of romance and resistance, feminist thought developed with the socio-political context, in which the writings were inscribed. As poetry reflects the socio-cultural and religious contexts in which it was written, as well as the poets' attempts to change cultural norms; therefore, these poets can help us understand how gender and gender-related issues evolved in twentieth-century Urdu poetry. Women used Urdu poetry for feminist poetry by utilizing the spaces created by earlier poets. It resulted in the authentic expression of women's issues in South Asia, while clearly promoting feminism in patriarchal societies as contrary to the goals of the women's rights movement. It is required in Islamic countries that women's groups had to live within Islam's traditional constraints. Pakistani women recognized the need to reinterpret Islamic texts and identify arguments that benefited them strategically.

The basic demonstration of feminist philosophy is well captured through Hooks (2000)

in her book. She visualizes that Feminism is for everybody, in which she quoted, “Imagine living in a world where there is no concept of domination, the place in which the females and the males are not like each other or not even always equal, but where a vision of mutuality is the ethos shaping our interaction, imagine residing in a world where we can all be who we actually are, a world of peace and possibility” (Hooks, 2000, p. 7).

Silva (2003) argues that Urdu feminist poets' work must be taken seriously because it investigates and exposes the major issues of discrimination that transcend the social and political contexts, and moves towards the empowerment of female potentials. While opposing discriminatory laws like the Hudood Ordinance, these feminist Muslim women revealed that feminist practice can serve as a unifying force in times of social crisis. Women poets' poems were part of the counterattack against the state's sociopolitical and religious hegemony. Feminist poets shifted the patriarchal tradition into a feministic one, thus contributing fully to the evolution of literary production. Women writing for women broke taboos and promoted freedom and self-realization in a land of socio-cultural and religious oppression. Talking about the female body brought attention to it because female bodies are considered the site of moral, religious, and socio-political battles.

Anantharam (2013) provided the examples of feminist agency in Pakistan by examining the work of two prominent Pakistani feminist poets, namely Kishwar Naheed and Fahmdia Riaz. The strong narratives developed by these writers force us to reconsider the framework of feminism and nationalism in South Asia. Both writers' work is informed by multiple examples of community and self, while also reflects poetry as an important component of the feminist critique of nationalism. Both poets' poems defy the hegemony of gender, class, race, ethnicity, etc. The liberal feminist analysis applies to the lives and experiences of women in Islamic states. She says that Islamic traditions serve as a source of social consciousness for women poets. Both writers reached many women, promoting feminist politics in Pakistan.

Naeem (2018) expressed that the poetry writing style of Fahmdia Riaz terrified a few people, but these poems were the clear reflection of far-reaching fluctuations in Urdu poetry. The personality of the poet is different from the traditional poets, that are evident from the selection of such courageous themes. On one hand, the style of the poems and their wording is dignified and gentle. On the other hand, the poems seem like the discourse of a woman going through the stage of self-awareness, who has the courage of expressing her body and life in the form of poetry. Alvi (2018) wrote that the early poem written by Fahmdia Riaz was full of ‘a knowing, in her gendering, that nation and identity are commodities in the strictest sense; that is, something made for the exchange, and women are the medium of that exchange’

Her writing *Badan Dareeda* was the earliest voice of decolonization that didn't exclude females and was not male. In her first collection of poetry, *Patthar ki Zuban* (A language of Stone), Fahmida Riaz, a Progressive Urdu writer, feminist, poet, and human rights activist confessed that she would not compose a poem until it forced itself to be written. She considered stopping writing after three or four years, assuming she would have run out of things to say by then. Her first collection, *Patthar Ki Zaban* (A Language of Stone), depicted early evidence of a feminist perspective that would cut through Pakistan's patriarchal culture six years later with *Badan Dareeda* (Torn Flesh). She stated that she was only writing about women's experiences, and how she felt like a woman, and that there should be no opposition to her writing.

Fahmida Riaz's work defies hegemonic constraints of class, religion, gender, and nationalism. Riaz's artwork aims to raise awareness and outrage about planned and unplanned acts of violence and oppression against women. Riaz, who lives in Pakistan, has refused to adapt to the country's social and cultural traditions. Her response to oppression drew attention to how the state regulates the polices of women's lives.

2.1 Feminist Discourse Analysis (FDCA)

The role of FCDA is to analyze how the textual representations of gendered practices produce and sustain the power and dominance of one gender over the other. The other significant concern of FCDA is those issues that access to forms of discourse, such as particular communicative events and culturally valued genres that can empower women and increase their participation in public domains.

So, the present study is based upon the qualitative analysis of the gender discourse. A significant tool used by Zittleman and Sadker (2002) to demonstrate gender-based ideologies is language. So, analysing language helps us understand gender-based ideologies. Language analysis has many micro and macro features. The macro level analysis includes syntactic features, relationship between constituents of phrases, transitivity structure, etc.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

As the study aims to explore the basis of a feministic narrative in poetry, Feminist Discourse Analysis (FCDA), which is another dimension of CDA is used in the analysis. The focus of FCDA is to bring attention to the construction of gender and representation of gender in discourse. According to Lazar (2005), FCDA is a tool that is used to analyze discourse from the perspective of feminism and to reveal the underlying ideologies in the discourse. He thought that FCDA is a significant tool that can be used to analyze discourse in the light of feminism,

and it explores various dimensions of gender construction and its depiction. The research employed the methodologies of FCDA along with CDA to analyze the language of the poems.

There are various models for the analysis that have been proposed by many theorists, philosophers, and researchers. For the present study, an operational method was developed that was based on four models, which are Fairclough Model, Porreca Model, Halliday's Transitivity Model, and FCDA. These models have been explained below to demonstrate which aspects of these models were at use in the analysis of Fahmida Riaz's poetry.

3.1 Fairclough Model

Fairclough (1992) argued that to analyze a discourse from a gendered-perspective, there are always five main elements that can be observed, which are Ethos, Metaphors, Wording, Interactional Control, and Modality. Ethos depicts how language constructs gendered identities in discourse. The choice of certain words is utilized to make gendered identities of certain groups. The wording and metaphor analyze the vocabulary whose usage results in constructing gender identities of both groups. In the opinion of Fairclough (1992), interactional control reveals which gender takes more turns during a conversation and gets more chances of opening or closing the conversation, and at the same time get opportunities to discuss or change the topic. For instance, according to Fairclough (1992), "Modality" refers to a message's status, authority, and reality, as well as its ontological status and value as truth or fact.

3.2 Porreca Model

To analyze gender representation in any text, Porreca (1984) provided six different categories. These are omission in text, occupation, female exclusive male-generic constructions, firstness, frequency of female nouns to male nouns and types and frequencies of adjectives.

Omission in-text demonstrates which gender is discussed less in comparison with the other gender. The omission of gender illuminates which gender is not worth discussing by highlighting its absence in the discourse. It expresses so much about the position of gender in any society. So, it is considered the foremost thing to be seen in any text. How much visible a gender is in the text? Meanwhile, occupation investigates the kind of occupational roles that are associated with genders to highlight their importance. The distribution of occupation reveals the power structure or hierarchy in any society. Next, masculine generic construction means the inclusion of expressions that are inherently biased, and they intentionally exclude women. We also tend to have female-exclusive generic constructions that marginalize women to a further extent.

Further, firstness means which gender comes first in discussion. The gender which is mentioned first is more important than the other one. Frequencies of both genders reveal the number of men and women in any text. The lesser the number of genders, the lesser is the importance of that gender. Finally, the last category is the analysis of text in terms of its adjectives. An adjective is something that adds to the meaning of the noun. The types of adjectives that are used for a gender depict their importance. The types of adjectives depict whether gender is portrayed negatively or positively. The choice of adjective depicts clear bias.

3.3 Halliday's Transitivity Model

According to Halliday (1985), there are three main divisions of a clause. These are processes, participants, and circumstances. Processes include the actions that are real or perceived in nature, e.g., write, believe, etc. The humans or objects performing certain actions are called the participants. For example, in the sentence He wrote a poem, He is the participant because he is the one that is involved in doing the action, i.e., wrote. Processes are present in the verb clause; participants are in the noun clause, and the circumstances are in the adverbial or prepositional clause. Participants are one of the following aspects - actor, goal, sensor, phenomenon, attribute, behavior, receiver, and identified. The one object that senses a certain phenomenon is the sensor. For example, in the sentence I feel sad, I is the sensor and sad is the phenomenon.

A verb is an essential component of any clause. Halliday argues that while making the meaning of the language, the semantic choices hold significant importance. Hence, how we use the choice clearly shows its contribution to the construction of gender. Dynamic and stative are the two main kinds of verb that exist in the English language. Dynamic verbs show the involvement of the subject in direct physical action. On the other hand, stative verbs depict the mental beliefs and perceptions of the subject. Halliday (1985) argues that the transitivity of the verb determines the actor in any clause. Stative verb depicts the state of mind of the subject, while dynamic verbs refer to the involvement or control of any physical phenomena by the subject. The more involvement shown by the gender group in processes, the more active or important it is. Certain stative words depict the status of the gender, for example, the use of fear for a certain gender shows its oppressiveness. It shows that the use of different actors, goals, and sensors construct different genders in any society.

3.4 Modified and Combined Model for the Analysis of Present Research Data

According to the need of the study, a model is designed by combining all three of the above models of discourse analysis. The adapted model used to conduct the study includes the

elements, i.e., metaphors, ethos, wording, generic constructions, types of adjectives, verbs, and semantic roles.

Metaphors play an important role in attaching or detaching significance to any gender. Ethos is related to the sort of social identity. Ethos includes the analysis of mainly how participants are projected through their verbal or non-verbal control. Wording is related to the choice of words that have been used in the construction of gendered social identities. The wording and metaphor analyze what is the vocabulary whose usage results in constructing gender identities of both groups. The role played by metaphors is a significant one in the construction of gendered identities. Metaphors, ethos, and wording have been adapted from the Critical Discourse Analysis model of Fairclough.

Generic construction means the use of an expression that is limited to one gender and has played a strong role in creating stereotypes in any society about that gender. For example, the use of the word, 'sportsman in daily life' reveals the hidden ideology behind the word those sports are solely considered the domain of men. Various generic constructions marginalize women. These constructions are used to exclude women from certain phenomena and their usage reflects the gender bias present in the text. This technique has been adapted from Porreca's model of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Types of Adjectives also play an important role in constructing gender identities in any discourse. The type of words that are used for a certain gender is directly related to its overall representation. An imbalance created by the users in the use of the adjectives for certain genders has serious consequences. The technique has also been adapted from the model of Porreca to analyze the quality of verbs used for genders in the poem.

The verbs technique has been taken from the model of Halliday. The analysis of verbs has been done with the help of the transitivity model. It presented what kinds of verbs have been used for a certain gender. Dynamic and stative verbs have been analyzed. They show the involvement and the perception of genders in the discourse.

The model of transitivity has been used again for the analysis of nouns that are used for genders. The various nouns have been used for genders at certain places that depict their involvement in society. The roles that have been constructed for them and assigned to them are called semantic roles. The study analyzed the semantic roles in poetry to unveil the distributive system of places in society.

Although Fahmida Riaz's three literary and gendered poems are famous, i.e., *Four Walls* and *a Black Veil*, *SHO Sahib is Waiting*, and *Aqleema*, only this poem, which is *Four Walls* and *a Black Veil*, was selected for detailed analysis in the present research. The poem was

translated by Patricia L. Sharpe.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The poem, **Four Walls and the Black Veil** was written in response to the extreme conditions which were inflicted upon women during Iranian Revolution in Iran and Zia's regime in Pakistan and is much relevant today. Dressing, behavior, and habits of eating define a specific form of necessary femininity "in terms of certain culturally visible signifiers," all of these are projected onto the female body (Searle-Chatterjee, 1993, p. 130).

4.1 Ethos

The overall image of the women that have been projected using poetry here is of oppressed beings. Men are referred to as the esteemed beings, for example, the use of the word **Sire** for them while women are portrayed as the obedient and the subservient ones living in the confined norms described by the society. For example, as depicted in these lines

*Stamp my forehead with this Dismal seal?
If I am not too impudent, Sire*

There are certain aspects of the society that project the life of the women and they clearly reflect the torment imposed upon women by the socio-cultural and religious traditions as depicted in the following line

Halal for a night, exiled at dawn;

The role of men has been interpreted truly as the oppressor. Towards the end of the poem, Riaz has constructed a new identity of the women like the one emerging out of their suppressed origins. The following verse is the translation of the hope she had in herself,

*I have spread my sails
In the open wind, on the wide seas,*

4.2 Wording

In the poem, the wording shows evident signs of brutality against women whereas the words being used to illustrate the role of men are very respectful. The semantic roles that have been

assigned to women are of **maids, slaves, servants**, etc. are in clear contradiction to those that have been used to refer to men i.e., **sire**. The use of negative adjectives, for example, *Dismal seal, signet, impudent*, to portray women are considerate, while the positive adjectives, for example, *fragrant chamber, perfumed chamber, your blessed seed*, have been used to display the character of men. There is an inherent dichotomy in the representation of both genders that is clearly visible in the structure of the poem.

4.3 Metaphors

Many significant metaphors have been used that have played an important role in constructing the identity of women. The overall effect that has been created using metaphors in this poem is of women as oppressed beings. After the analysis of the poem, *Four Walls and the Black Veil*, the metaphors have been identified, and they include four walls, a black veil, dark folds, perfumed chamber, corpse, naked behind Veil, grey beard, the curtain, cover the corpse, merely as a signet, and spread the sails.

The first metaphor that has been used in this poem is present in the title of the poem, i.e., **Four Walls**. Four walls signify the boundaries that are ascribed to the women in socio-cultural and religious contexts. These four walls define the domain of women inhibitor limit their participation in the public spheres. It is because of these four walls that the experiences and traumas faced by women are absent in the historical context. They never had the chance to leave these four walls and make their contribution by sharing their voice when history was being written down. Four walls represent the limited amount of freedom which is almost equivalent to no freedom that is granted to women. Four walls to some extent can be equated with a glass ceiling that draws a line around the donation of the women in society.

The second metaphor is also present in the topic of the poem, **Black Veil**. The veil is the symbol of female oppression. It signifies the religious and patriarchal adversities inflicted upon the women. Women are expected to follow this veiled culture and not to express themselves or contribute to the public spheres. Veil is in short, the representation of all dimensions of oppression women have to face, i.e., religious, cultural, traditional, and patriarchal. Black veil here is the symbol of women's invisibility, women are supposed to stay in that black veil as non-existent entities according to the culturally defined notions of tradition. So, veil here holds literal, metaphorical, and metonymical significance and has been associated with the concept of women's shame, purity, and honor.

The third metaphor present in the poem is **Dark Folds**. The dark folds are another extension of the veil. These dark folds represent here the length of the torment imposed upon

women. It expresses that the women's veil is multi-layered rather than single-layered. It has several negative consequences on women, not just one. It is a prison, a prison that limits women's physical and mental capacities. Its folds keep women from thinking. The next metaphor used in the poem is **Perfumed Chamber**. It is significant because it expresses how both genders are represented in conversation. Women are represented by symbols like dark folds and four walls, while men are represented by symbols like perfumed chamber. Perfumed chamber represents something lovely and faultless. That kind of symbolism is employed for the oppressors, who are men. The gender power distribution is readily evident, as are the techniques taken to establish one gender's control over the other.

Corpse is used twice in this poem, and it stands for the crimes that have been committed against women at the hands of men. It represents the accumulation of all the disadvantages provided to women. Corpse on some level is the implicit manifestation of the religious and socio-cultural barbarianism inflicted upon women primarily because of gender discrimination. The next metaphor **Naked behind Veil** holds in it the shocking reality of the patriarchal culture. It describes how people who imposed the veil lose sight of their original goal. It symbolises the sexual abuse handmaidens endure. The veil does not protect women of inferior birth. The supposed protection of the veil fails to shield them. They are still abused by men even when they are hidden under the veil. Male violence is not precluded by the veil.

The next metaphor is **Grey beard**. Grey is associated with dullness, grime, and conservatism. It represents the grey power associated with elderly male power. Grey has the negativity and mystery of black, but is not as obvious. The grey beard represents the power and authority handed to males in our culture, as well as their dark personalities, oppression, and brutality towards women. **The curtain in** the poem is also metaphorical. As the hour of remorse has come, the powerful controlling people should hide their terrible acts. Simple words were used to paint a horrific picture. The curtain here marks the end of centuries of abuse against women.

Cover the corpse stands for the arrival of the time when persons of powerful and domineering nature should look behind them and at all the offences caused by their hands, rather than continuing their domination conduct. The term "corpse" refers to their wicked and death-like character, which knows no bounds. **Merely as a signet** is a very strong metaphor, as it encapsulates the entire existence of the women. Riaz has posed a challenge to patriarchy by using this in the lines,

*I am not on this earth merely as a signet
Of your great lust,*

these lines include the prevalent assumption of what is expected of the female, and what is the true notion of appropriateness and morality for the behavior of women. Their entire existence revolves around the fulfillment of the sexual desires of the dominant gender, i.e., men.

Spread the sails holds significant importance, as it represents that instead of adherence to the already defined traditional and socio-cultural roles, women have decided to take a stance against these adversities, and have displayed an act of resistance. This metaphor is the measure of the determination of the female voice here. Women have broken the shackles of exploitation and deprivation. Their voice has spread their sails, and are set in motion. The authoritative role of religion, culture, tradition, and state will be met with resistance now.

4.4 Adjectives

Next, the analysis of the poem is done to identify the adjectives in the poem. The type of adjectives used to describe a gender indicates how important it is in a discourse. Gender is described using adjectives that indicate whether it is viewed negatively or positively. The adjective choice reveals a blatant bias. The adjectives that are used in the poem for the female gender are **Impudent**, **Dismal** seal, **Sick**, **Hostage** women, **Slave** girls, **Hapless**, **Cowering** girl-child, and **Sacrificial** drama. On the other hand, these are the adjectives that have been used for men such as, **Perfumed** chamber, **Blessed** seed, **Grey** beard and **Fragrant** Chamber.

After a thorough analysis of adjectives that have been used for females, it has been concluded that the overall representation of the female gender is negative. The words **dismal**, **sick**, **hostage**, **slave**, **hapless** and **sacrificial** depicts the oppression and the gender-based violence women have to face. All these words are clear manifestation of the impuissance of women. The use of these essentially negative adjectives to construct the feminine gender condemns their subordination. All these words describe how women's bodies are riven with societal and religious inconsistencies. However, on the other hand, the usage of the words like **perfumed**, **blessed**, **grey**, and **fragrant** depicts a male-centered approach. The society's esteem is confined to men, and their representation is clear evidence of this. The patriarchal structure of society is mapped by the potentiality of these adjectives used in the poem. The level of respect shown in this illustration corresponds to the roles that have been assigned to men.

4.5 Verbs

The verbs for females have been identified after analyzing the poem in light of Halliday's Model of Transitivity such as, **Do, Mourning, Show** the world, **Hide** my shame, **Stamp** my forehead, Slave girls who **carried**, Wives who **wait**, Blood will **stain, Spread** my sail and, and **Tell** you most **humbly. Besides**, these are the different verbs that have been used for men for example, **Bestow** on me, **Assure** my life, **Bring** it down and, **Cover**.

When we examine the verbs that have been used to describe women, we can see the clear signs of oppression or compromise. Females have complied to some extent with the parameters that limit them, according to compromise. These subjugated verbs are used to create the female subject like **hide, show, stamp, wait**, etc. The participation of women in society is secondary, and that is visible using a subservient type of verbs for female-like, **wait, hide, carried**, and **mourning**, etc.

In contrary to the above-mentioned phenomenon, strong verbs with powerful and respectable connotations have been used to represent men's participation in societies. The verbs like **bestow** and **assure** that imply the positive involvement have been utilized to construct the male gender. The use of these verbs indicates that men's roles, no matter how oppressive they may be, is considered constructive by the socio-cultural norms and religious traditions.

4.6 Generic Constructions

Two main generic constructions that have been used in this poem are **Black veil** and **Dismal seal**, and they have been confined to the female gender.

Black veil is a sign of female oppression, and it reflects the role religious and patriarchal authorities play in the life of a woman. Women are expected to act in accordance with the established norms and to stay within the boundaries set for them. The poem's entire theme revolves around the concept of veil, which equates to limiting women's potential in society, erecting barriers to their contributions, and ignoring their voices and roles in any society's historical discourse. The construction of this veil is based on socio-cultural norms, implying that there are multiple authorities behind this oppression, aside from religion. The veil is the tool through which women's freedom is sacrificed.

Dismal seal tracks the oppression perpetrated by men. It reflects how women are perceived in society, as well as how they perceive themselves. The type of classification found in the phrase **Dismal seal** is in direct opposition to the respectability accorded to men's classification in society.

4.7 Noun

According to the Model of Transitivity, the nouns that have been used for a gender reflect their involvement in society, and these nouns also describe the role played by any gender in the society. The nouns that have been used to define the semantic role of women in society are **Hostage, Maid, Slave, Signet**.

In contrast to the nouns assigned to women in the poem, only one noun has been used to construct the identity of men and that is, **Sire**.

It is clear from the nouns used for women that the semantic roles assigned to them in the society are subservient in nature. The nature of the role of **hostage, maid, slave, and signet** are submissive. Thus, their role to any society is therefore limited because of their limited involvement. They are unable to put their role forward, and as a result, they are subjected to severe repression in the society at large. Even though their roles are significant, they are hidden behind dominant structures. Because of the nature of the role that has been assigned to them, their voices are not taken into consideration and eventually become lost. In contrast to this, the roles assigned to men are significant. The use of the word **Sire** for men reflects the amount of respect attached to them. In addition to this, it also shows their dominancy in society. The roles assigned to both genders are in direct contradiction to each other. One is dominant, but the other is oppressed; one is respectable, the other is subservient; one listens to the other, but one is even not given a voice, and one is paid attention to, while the other is ignored.

4.8 FCDA Reading of the Poem *Four Walls and a Black Veil*

When the poem is given a reading in the light of objects of feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), it is established that the title of the poem, *Four Walls and a Black Veil* is the representation of how the positioning of women is always confined to the limitations produced by men. The title's metaphorical representation is the simple depiction of society's prescribed roles for women. The way women are treated in society is influenced by religious values that are interpreted in a biased way. The term "veil" is like the term "prison," which refers to a place where someone is held captive. Women desires outside of domesticity are subjugated, and she is held ideologically and physically captive for the rest of her life. Through the poem's verses, the gender hierarchy that has been established in society is criticized.

What shall I do, Sire, with this black veil?

Why do you bestow on me this great favor?

The preceding verses demonstrate how men's hegemony is established in society and maintained over time. The lives of women who are oppressed are labelled by men who are oppressors. They are in charge of their entire life pattern. These lines reflect how men shape women's lives. Men's actions suffocate women for the rest of their lives. Through the poem, the poet criticizes the patriarchal system and discourages the environment, a system that constantly emphasizes that women, as the subjugated gender, are always at fault.

*If you assure my life, may I tell you, Most humbly: There lies, in your perfumed chamber,
A corpse that stinks.*

The above-mentioned lines of the poem highlight the construct of the ideology that maintains that women throughout their lives must seek the approval of the men before taking any step. In the above verse, the woman asks humbly for the assurance of her life from some other being that is dominant over her, and the being is only a male being. In these verses, the mode of interaction between male and female gender is also discussed. The woman sees with her intellect in the next verse and concludes that men are much more sinful in the real world than they consider women in their self-created scenarios.

*Listen to the heart-rending screams
Of those still naked beneath the veil*

In the above-mentioned verses, the poet has brought to the front how biased the whole system is. On the one hand, the veil is worn to ostensibly protect women because they are deemed fragile and incapable of interacting with the outside world. On the other hand, patriarchal men portray the outside world as dangerous to women. On the other hand, the same veil that protects women does not protect those who are exploited by men's hands. So, it is maintained that veil is in the real world a channel that is used to restrict women, and is used to deny them the basic human rights of education, leisure, etc.

*Halal for a night, exiled at dawn;
The slave girls who carried your blessed seed*

The above-written verses are the perfect example of the status of women. Women are objectified in their daily lives in this way. The patriarchal narratives feature a lot of

objectifications of women. To objectify is to discover the iconic quality of an imprecise idea or being, to reproduce a concept in an image, and this is true. Riaz's portrayal of women as objects is implicit. There are certain roles that are assigned to women, and these hegemonic constraints assign demonic roles to men in society. This is a pure depiction of how men chain women for their personal satisfaction and treat them as commodities rather than actual human beings with basic human rights.

*I have spread my sails
In the open wind, on the wide seas,*

The poet paints a completely new story near the end of the poem that woman has begun to use their intellect, which had previously been hidden. The new journey to bring justice, equality, and freedom to women has begun, and their commitment to women's freedom is unfathomable. Their main goal is to eliminate patriarchy, their most tenacious foe, which is at the root of every problem ever created for women. And these women will stick to their goals for the rest of their lives.

FCDA's main goal is to keep a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse to keep gendered social arrangements in place. The application of FCDA objectives to the poem described above has clearly depicted how gender hegemony determines the structure of the discourse produced in patriarchal society. The importance of language in establishing a gender's status in society cannot be overstated. Language, plays a significant role in the formation of the subject. The hegemony of men over women is established throughout the poem by the language.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The study looked at how Riaz's poems changed people's perceptions of what it meant to be a woman. The task examines gender stereotypes in the study. The goal was to show how poetry can be used to depict women's real-life struggles rather than portraying them as models of beauty or romance. It was carried out using an adaptive model of various literary tools such as metaphors, wording that the language is used to establish gender identities. It emphasizes the fact that Riaz created a new sensation in Urdu Modern poetry by portraying the female voice so forcefully. In a true sense, the poems depict the image of power, control, and oppression in a patriarchal society. For the first time, the poet succeeds in presenting an altered feminine experience. Her poetry established the groundwork for feminism in Pakistan. The analysis

focuses on the inequalities and injustices that are pervasive in Pakistani society, and these inequalities and injustices are the driving force behind Pakistani feminist struggles. The present work demonstrates how power abuse and gender dominance are explicitly present in women's literature. Moreover, it delves into how gender is constructed in the selected poem. Fahmida Riaz's representation of women is diametrically opposed to other poets' stereotypical representations of women. It was, and continues to be, the need of the hour. Breaking the shackles of stereotyping, Riaz portrays her woman as strong, intelligent, and active in fighting for her voice. Fahmida Riaz is credited with the shift from a woman adhering to beauty standards to a woman aiming to have her voice heard by millions. Her poetry later became a driving force in Pakistani feminist politics. Slogans from her poetry, such as Chadar and Char Divari (the veil and the four walls of the home), became part of feminist propaganda. Finally, it is to her credit that she has exposed numerous levels of social structures in Pakistani society that lead to women's subjugation.

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APPENDIX

Four walls and the Black Veil

What shall I do, Sire, with this black veil? Why do you bestow on me this great favour?

I am not in mourning that I should wear it

To show the world my grief.

Nor am I sick

That I should hide my shame

In its dark folds.

Stamp my forehead with this Dismal seal?

If I am not too impudent, Sire

If you assure my life, may I tell you, Most humbly:

There lies, in your perfumed chamber, A corpse that stinks.

It begs for pity. Cover that shroudless corpse.

Not me. Its stench is everywhere. It cries for seclusion.

Listen to the heart-rending screams

Of those still naked beneath the veil. You must know them well, these maids:

The hostage women of vanquished peoples, Halal for a night, exiled at dawn;

The slave girls who carried your blessed seed

And brought forth children of half status only, yet Was it not honour enough for them?

The wives who wait their precious turns

To pay homage to the conjugal couch; The hapless, cowering girl-child

Whose blood will stain your gray beard red.

Life has no more tears to shed; it shed them all

In that fragrant chamber where, for ages now, This sacrificial drama has played

And replayed. Please, Sire, bring it down.

The curtain. Now. You need it to cover the corpse.

*I am not on this earth merely as a signet
Of your great lust.
These four walls and this black veil—Let them bless the rotting remains.
I have spread my sails*

*In the open wind, on the wide seas,
And by my side a man stands,
A companion who won my trust*

(*Chadar aur Char Deewari* by Fahmida Riaz, Translated by Patricia L. Sharpe)