

# Behind the Veil/ Lifting the Veil – Politics of Spatial Boundaries in Rashid Jahan’s *Behind the Veil* and Ismat Chughtai’s *The Quilt*

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## Abstract

The *zenana*, in an orthodox Muslim household, often acts as a spatial divide between the public and the domestic, and in Foucauldian terms, as a barrier between knowledge and repression. Veiling is integral to the politicization of Muslim women's bodies. Rashid Jahan, a gynaecologist and one of the pioneering women writers of the Progressive Writers Movement, dedicated herself to the task of interrogating the position of Muslim women during the pre-independence era; especially the disadvantages they had to suffer due to their secluded and cloistered life, the perils of early marriage, apathy towards their reproductive health, and the agony of frequent pregnancies. Her short story in the form of a one-act play, *Parde ke Piche (Behind the Veil)* works towards unveiling the hypocrisy and invisible oppression that Muslim middle class women were subjected to.

Ismat Chughtai carried forward the legacy of Jahan in her bold, progressive voice as she critiqued the double bind of religion and gender politics through the representation of her female protagonists. Her infamous short story, *Lihaaf (The Quilt)* is an attempt to make visible to 'unveil' the highly politicized, space of the *zenana* or the inner chambers of the Muslim household. The plot of the story positions the *zenana* as a paradox traditionally constructed to maintain sexual purity of women in a marital home, is here re-defined and re-structured to provide a queer space for an intimate relationship between Begum Jan and her maid.

Thus, I seek to interrogate and analyze the *zenana* as a liminal space of ambiguity in my paper. It can act both as a constraint and an agent to subvert the patriarchal ideological basis and destabilize it.

*Key words: politics of spatial boundary, Rashid Jahan, Ismat Chughtai,*

*zenana, liminal space, subversion, patriarchy.*

Fatima Mernissi<sup>1</sup> in her seminal essay *The Meaning of Spatial Boundaries* discusses how Muslim sexuality is essentially territorial. Its regulatory mechanisms consist primarily in a strict allocation of space to each sex and an elaborate ritual for resolving the contradictions arising from the inevitable intersections of spaces. She further comments on how the institutionalized boundaries dividing different parts of the society express the recognition of power in one part at the expense of the other. Any transgression of the boundaries is a danger to the social order because it is an attack on the acknowledged allocation of power. This link between boundaries and power is keenly perceptible in a society's sexual patterns.<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* also traces the way power operates throughout the social matrix and how it is used to forge a 'docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.'<sup>3</sup> In his other path breaking study, *The History of Sexuality, vol. I*, Foucault outlines the central place of sexuality in the controlling discourses of modern society. Foucault identifies the body as one of the sites of struggle and discursive conflict wherein these discourses work to shape, constrict and distort human impulses and the sense of selfhood.

The symbolism of sexual patterns certainly seems to reflect society's hierarchy and power allocation in the Muslim order. Strict space boundaries divide Muslim society into two sub-universes: the universe of men: the *umma*, the world of religion and power and the universe of women, the *zenana*, the domestic world of sexuality and family. The spatial division according to the difference of sex reflects the division between those who hold power and authority and those who do not. This distinction between the *umma* and the *zenana* is not simply a spatial separation between the two worlds but these two universes of social interaction are regulated by 'antithetical concepts of human relations, one based on community and the other on conflict.'<sup>4</sup>

The universe of the *umma* is communal where its members unite in a democratic collectivity based on a sophisticated concept of belief in a set of ideas which promote equality, reciprocity and a general sense of brotherhood and trust. However, the inhabitants of the domestic universe are primarily sexual beings, defined by their reproductive organs and not

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by their faith. Women, who are the citizens of this domestic sphere and whose existence outside this space is considered a transgression – forever remain a subordinate, inferior class plagued by inequality, segregation and distrust. The men, however, possess entry into both the worlds – they control the domestic sphere with their set rules and regulations which are obeyed by the womenfolk and they also dominate the public domain of religion, power and politics. Having been identified as primarily citizens of the domestic universe, women are then deprived of power even within the world in which they are confined, since it is the man who wields authority within the family. The separation of the two groups, the hierarchy that subordinates the one to the other, is expressed in institutions that discourage, and even prohibit, any communication between the sexes. Men and women are supposed to collaborate in only one of the tasks required for the survival of the society, i.e. procreation. To prevent interaction between the two worlds, sexual or otherwise, ‘veiling’ (a symbolic form of seclusion) was developed.

Rasheed Jahan’s short story in the form of a one-act play *Behind the Veil*<sup>5</sup> is a bitter rant by a woman living her life in seclusion. In this story Jahan not only investigates what happens ‘behind the veil,’ but probes into the spatial configurations that determine ‘private’ and ‘public.’ *Behind the Veil* is a conversation between two women, Aftab Begum and Mohammadi Begum, where the latter expresses her wish to consume poison and end her miserable life. At Aftab Begum’s remonstrance, Mohammadi Begum launches into a catalogue of her unending woes: a child every year since she was married at seventeen, a weak constitution, a husband who insists on sexual intercourse even when she is sick, a sickly brood of children who were never able to drink their mother’s milk, marital infidelity to divorce threats. Through this exchange of the stories of trials and tribulations between two female relatives, Rasheed Jahan ‘unveils’ the domestic, feminine atmosphere of the *zenana* or the women’s quarter. The ‘veil’ of the title acts both literally and figuratively – the stage curtains behind which this domestic tableau is set and also the discursive and material barriers that attempt to separate private from the public.

The text is, at one level, an attempt to make visible, to ‘unveil’ the workings of a sphere which remains hidden from the public sphere. Acts of naming are therefore central to it as it catalogues the conventionally taboo

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topics: pregnancy, wombs, breast-feeding, sexual abuse, male promiscuity among other unnamable topics. This insistence on naming the body was an integral feature of Rasheed Jahan's works; her pioneering attempts in this regard were to pave the way for even more explicit engagements with body and sexuality that Ismat Chughtai was to undertake later. If to name the body is to make it visible, then the 'veil' refers to the mystique and silence that surround the female body. The most dramatically engaging moment in the story is reached when Mohammadi Begum recollects her interaction with her female doctor. Mohammadi is conventionally treated by a male doctor who sits on the other side of a screen (another literal and figurative veil) and diagnoses her without actually seeing her. It is when it finally becomes necessary for Mohammadi to be examined from 'within,' that a woman doctor is summoned. The story is as much about this new 'unveiled' doctor-patient relationship between two women as it is about gender relations in the domestic sphere. The woman doctor has access to the woman 'behind' the curtain as well as access to her 'inside.' But the opportunity is also enabling for the patient, Mohammadi, inasmuch as it allows her to articulate a reflexive sense of her own physical, mental and emotional condition. The body, from a state of sexual erasure, now becomes integral to the woman's subjectivity. The interaction between both the women proves to be a mutually instructive experience. If the doctor has a vantage-point as she looks 'inside' the patient and detects yet another two-month old foetus, she is limited in her perceptions about the symptoms. The lady doctor does not apprehend why she became pregnant when she had been sick, and yet again, Mohammadi must explain to her that sickness and health have no meaning for her husband:

I said, ehay, Miss Sahiba, it is you who are simple.  
You earn, you eat, you sleep, the sleep of  
enjoyment. Here the corpse could be in heaven and hell, but his  
concern is with his plate of  
sweetmeats.... She heard me and fell silent.<sup>6</sup>

The story, perhaps deliberately, never distinguishes clearly between the different uses of the word '*andar*' or 'inside'. Spatially, the term could refer to the inner (female) quarters of the home or the inner recesses of the female body and mind. The *veil*, both as a spatial divide between public and domestic and as a cognitive barrier between knowledge and repression,

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was integral to the politicization of women's bodies.

Adrienne Rich in a famous essay explores two central and interwoven topics; compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. Her definition of 'lesbian existence'<sup>7</sup> covers a broad spectrum of female experience. It is described as a woman's choice of women as passionate comrades, life partners, co-workers, lovers, and a bond of sisterhood with the aim to resist common repression. This 'lesbian bond' is a source of knowledge, energy and power available to women. It is woman-identified experience, the forms of primary intensity between and among women, and it is opposed to normative heterosexuality because it is a bond against male tyranny. Rich argues that lesbian bond re-creates a mother-daughter bond. From a feminist-psychological perspective, the search for love and tenderness in both sexes seems originally to lead toward women, from this mother-daughter relationship.

Rich's essay relates to the subject of patriarchy, sexual harassment, traditional views on marriage, and categories of 'unmarkedness' and 'markedness.' Rich resists patriarchy, male tyranny by stating examples which include the denial of women's own sexuality, the control and exploitation of women labour to control their produce, the physical and mental confinement of their movement, leaving women in a state of arrested development, and to use them as objects in male transactions. Similarly, in the short story, *Behind the Veil* Mohammadi Begum and the lady doctor share a bond of sisterhood which enables Mohammadi to articulate a reflexive sense of her own physical, mental and emotional state, integral to the expression of a woman's subjectivity. In choosing to have the patient, rather than her physician, narrate the encounter, Rasheed Jahan offers an account of a mutually instructive experience for both the women.

An iconoclastic figure, Ismat Chughtai was one of the first writers to shift focus towards upper-middle class women and the complexities involved in domestic hierarchy. For Chughtai, the female space of the upper-middle class Muslim home, the *zenana* was the originating space for the ideal wife and she strived to illuminate the limited, static lives of these women under *pardah*. These women were not only confined within their homes, but also outside it where they were forced to wear veils and had limited mobility.

Ismat Chughtai's narratives portray the home as a site of myriad forms of oppression for women, and of violation of contemporary Muslim ideals

of the family as the means of preserving Muslim culture and virtue. In order to maintain an identity among Hindu and colonial interests, women's *adab* or their ability to maintain honour and dignity in the face of corrupting influences became a means for the preservation of Islamic society. The well-behaved house-wife was promulgated in didactic literature and handbooks intended for the instruction of women so they might better fulfill their familial duties and uphold their communal role as cultural preserver and boundary markers. Chughtai's fiction revises this very convention of *adab* literature<sup>8</sup> as she directly questions the Muslim rationalizations for containing women within patriarchal norms.

Since time immemorial, positioning the women inside the quarters of the home has been upheld to promote the idea of the chaste, virtuous woman – a silent figure, invisible to the public sphere. Marriage, as depicted in the narratives of Chughtai, is indeed not an association of equal individuals. A dismal picture of wives as oppressed victims of social and religious practices is what generally emerges from the pages of her texts because of the married women's subordinate status and lack of agency. The husbands, on the other hand, are often involved in extra-marital affairs, polygamy, or even homo-sexual or incestuous activities that tend to negate the very essence of marriage. In Chughtai's short stories and novels we explore the extent to which women accept or resist the constraints placed upon them by social, familial forces and how they try to re-define their sense of self within the physical boundary of the *zenana* and the figurative boundary of marriage.

Chughtai's short story, *Lihaaf* (*The Quilt*) is set within the confines of the household of a wealthy Nawab and his wife, Begum Jan and is narrated by a woman who tells the story through the eyes of her childhood self. As a young girl, she has been 'deposited' in the Begum's home by her mother in the hope that this sojourn will initiate her into proper feminine behaviour, given that she has a penchant for fighting with the boys rather than 'collecting admirers'<sup>9</sup> as her older sisters did. The irony of the story lies in the fact that Begum Jan's household is the anti-thesis of proper domesticity as it brings together a husband enamoured of male students and a wife who seeks emotional and sexual solace in the companionship of a maidservant. The story depicts the curious relationship between a neglected wife and her maidservant, Raboo, as observed by the adolescent young girl who narrates the tale. Every night, the girl is alternately fascinated and alarmed

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by the energetic contortions of the two women under the quilt, a place from where curious sounds and smells emanate. The quilt thus becomes, the organizing metaphor of the story, and its shifting surfaces suggest the mobile relations of erotic pleasures that Chughtai weaves throughout the text. The adult woman narrator frames the story as a remembered childhood instance of both fear and fascination. The Begum's quilt remains 'imprinted on (her) memory like a blacksmith's brand'<sup>10</sup> and embodies the beginning of her own ambivalent sexual awakening.

Chughtai carefully sketches the character of the Nawab. He has none of the common vices typical of men:

Nawab Sahib was noblesse oblige. No one had ever seen a dancing girl or a prostitute in his home. He had the distinction of not only performing the Haj himself, but being the patron of several poor people who had undertaken the pilgrimage through his good offices.<sup>11</sup>

However, Nawab Saheb has a 'strange hobby,' '...all he liked to do was keep an open house for students; young, fair and slim-waisted boys, whose expenses were borne entirely by him.'<sup>12</sup>

Chughtai's main focus here is to expose the gaps between public perceptions and private behaviours. The household acts as an important signifier. The culturally accepted homo-social space of the *zenana* shelters the desires of both the husband and the wife without forcing either to outwardly challenge the normative expectations of society. But Chughtai presents an alternative reading of the household space in *The Quilt*. The Nawab marries, but sequesters his wife in her own quarters and creates his own separate, interior life with his young students by virtue of his superior position in the domestic hierarchy. The interior space of the home reveals the husband's desire for young boys while his public impression remains exemplary:

After marrying Begum Jan, he deposited her in the house with all his other possessions and promptly forgot about her!

The young, delicate Begum began to wilt with loneliness.<sup>13</sup>

The Nawab's refusal to behave as a proper husband reverts the order of the house. The wife's relatives and the girl's mother do not look past the exterior of this home that is headed by a religiously observant wealthy man. They misread this household as a secure, sanitized space where all

members, including the wife behave appropriately.

Chughtai's narrators are members of the household they observe. They are often young female family members who report unusual experiences of the adults around them. In a way these narratives can be called 'anti-nostalgic' narratives. Her stories are told as extended flashbacks, where the narrators re-enter scenes from childhood. These recollections reveal a household where women are mistreated by other residents; they show the home as a fractured and contested space that is unwelcoming to its married female members. This literary strategy produces a distance between the adult narrator and her childhood abuse. This distance opens another issue: it demonstrates the lifelong results of abuse by exposing the adult narrator's attempts to absolve herself of guilt. Additionally, the choice of an adult narrator opening and closing the narrative exposes the narrator's position within a corrupt system. Chughtai uses memory to unwrap the home as a site of wholeness by showing the uneven behaviours of all household members, male as well as female.

The question of space, territoriality, as well as the articulation of the desiring subject, whether male or female, is critical to the narrative framing of *The Quilt*. The Nawab, we are told, has a curious hobby of keeping an open house for young, male students whose 'slim waists, fair ankles, and gossamer shirt'<sup>14</sup> torture the Begum as she glimpses them through 'the chinks in the drawing- room doors.'<sup>15</sup> The Begum witnesses this scene of pleasure and desire in the *mardana* ( the male quarters) but is absolutely shut out of its circuits of exchange – subtly defined by Chughtai through the metaphor of food and appetite: '[...] she realised that the household revolved around the boy-students, and that all the delicacies produced in the kitchen were meant solely for their palates.'<sup>16</sup> The Nawab and his Begum never share any details of their personal lives with each other. The Nawab indulges himself with his students while his wife finds herself ensconced within his home as the chief protector and sufferer of her husband's secret. Because of irreconcilable differences with her husband and the need to maintain the privacy of her home, Begum Jan is isolated and ignored: 'The young, delicate Begum began to wilt with loneliness.'<sup>17</sup>

The introduction of the female servant Raboo into the narrative, however, shifts the spatial focus of the story away from the Nawab's drawing room and this partially glimpsed scene of an eroticized male territory, to one that centres upon the *zenana* and in particular, the space



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beneath the Begum's quilt. It is Raboo's entrance into her life that allows the Begum to finally start living. This marks the Begum's entry into an alternative homoerotic economy of desire that functions parallel to the dominant economy of the household within which the Nawab and the boys operate. Denied access to her legitimate position in the household, the Begum and Raboo generate their own eroticized female space, drawing nourishment and sustenance from each other.

Indeed, their erotic pleasure is insistently figured in the text in terms of food and the satiation of hunger:

Raboo came to her rescue just as she was starting to go under. Suddenly her emaciated body began to fill out. Her cheeks became rosy; beauty, as it was, glowed through every pore! It was a special oil massage that brought about the change in Begum Jan.<sup>18</sup>

The Begum's persistent skin rash, which is an outward manifestation of her sexual and emotional dissatisfaction, starts healing with the massages rendered by Raboo. Here and elsewhere, the text reveals an intense preoccupation with touch, smell, and the enumeration of various body parts (lips, eyes, skin, waist, thighs, hands, ankles) as each becomes libidinally invested through Raboo's relentless massaging of the Begum's body. Female desire is generated and conveyed through literal and metaphorical consumption of food.

The child narrator, for instance, describes the activity under the quilt in the terms available to her as 'sounds of a cat slobbering in the saucer'<sup>19</sup> and later comments:

Smack, gush, slobber – someone was enjoying a feast. Suddenly I understood what was going on! Begum Jan had not eaten a thing all day and Raboo, the witch, was a known glutton. They were polishing off some goodies under the quilt, for sure.<sup>20</sup>

Chughtai uses figurative language, especially, the image of an elephant, as a metaphor for the physical relationship that the narrator observes between the two women:

In the depth of winter whenever I snuggle into my quilt, its shadow on the wall seems to sway like an elephant. My mind begins a mad race into the dark crevasses of the past; memories come flooding in.<sup>21</sup>

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The symbol of the elephant is a deliberate choice on Chughtai's part to underscore the unnamed relationship that exists between the Begum and Raboo. The image of an 'elephant in-doors' and underneath a quilt becomes a metaphor for the nature of the fantastical relationship between the two women. That an upper-middle class Muslim wife would be physically or even socially intimate with a maidservant was outside the purview of polite society.

The elephant imagery used to describe the sexual act of these two women allows for an ambiguous space, and this realm actually frees their desires to operate outside standardised sexuality, all the while remaining within the registers of domesticity. This double identity of the Begum is deliberately shown by Chughtai as she pushes into the margins of daily choices, to reveal the alternative identity women construct for themselves. Begum Jan's relationship with Raboo remains unnamed by the narrator except through the use of figurative language: 'Later that night, Begum Jan's quilt was, once again, swinging like an elephant.'<sup>22</sup>

The narrator's ambivalence about the secret activities beneath the quilt is a marker for her own growing awareness in what causes the quilt to contort:

The quilt meanwhile had entered my brain and started growing ...The elephant somersaulted beneath the quilt and dug in. During the somersault, its corner was lifted one foot above the bed.<sup>23</sup>

At this crucial moment, the young girl is finally made aware of the cause of the elephantine contortions under the quilt: 'What I saw when the quilt was lifted, I will never tell anyone, not even if they give me a lakh of rupees.'<sup>24</sup>

Gayatri Gopinath explains that the narrator's ability to see but not name, empowers the relationship between the Begum and her maid. Their homoerotic desire is shielded from categorizing or labelling. The non-naming of the space beneath the quilt also served a practical purpose when Chughtai was charged for writing obscene literature. In her biography, *A Life in Words: Memoirs*, Chughtai explains:

The witnesses who had turned up to prove *Lihaaf* obscene were thrown into confusion by my lawyer. They were not able to put their finger on any word in the story that would prove their point.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that the relationship between the women was not defined was

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critical to clearing all charges against Chughtai.

Begum Jan and Raboo occupy an in-between space that creates a new space, which negates previous categories. She exists within the domain of the household but yet carves out a way to give expression to her needs. These two women engage their sexuality outside of either category of male formulated uses of female sexuality. Their failure to conform to sanitized versions of womanhood consolidates personal control of their desires.

Feminist critic Gail Minault<sup>26</sup> makes an interesting observation that the Urdu word *ismat* means ‘modesty, chastity, or honour.’ Chughtai’s narratives wrestle with these very definitions of female Muslim identity. Chughtai’s stories explore female sexuality within the *zenana*, as she challenges the prescribed behaviour for women by placing the middle-class home as a site where women negotiate sexual identity.

Through visceral descriptions of daily life in a hierarchal household, Ismat Chughtai explores the symbolic and physical disempowerment of women who exist in a patriarchal set-up. At the centre of Ismat Chughtai’s narratives are female characters like the Begum, struggling to establish selfhood and gain a measure of autonomy within ideologies that privilege masculine dominance. Chughtai’s goal is to overturn the notion of patriarchal hold by configuring dissent that originates from within the home. By claiming her sexuality, and by being dissatisfied with the status-quo, Chughtai’s women characters like Begum Jan cleave their households from the traditional, domestic frame.

Chughtai’s re-reading of the *zenana* shows middle class women as independent agents wrestling with personal desire while making choices contrary to the rules for acceptable women’s behaviour, especially in an orthodox Muslim family. As internal critics of domesticity, women destabilize the middle class home by expressing their sexuality outside the bounds of patriarchal marriage. Chughtai establishes a double screen through which she explores the intricate relationships in the home while leaving surface domesticity undisturbed.

While observing various other social and cultural dimensions, Chughtai explores the idea of the ‘New Woman’ in the face of gender and sexual conflicts where patriarchy nurtures gender concept legitimizing hierarchy of the male and repressive sexuality of the female. Chughtai admits, ‘*Purdah* had already been imposed on me, but my tongue was a naked sword. No one could restrain it.’<sup>27</sup>

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Chughtai does not let Begum Jan become a victim of sexual disillusionment but allows her 'agency' to make a bold choice of homosexual relationship with the maid, Raboo. As Adrienne Rich observes:

Constant and true love for women and her contempt for male dominated culture which caused failure of communication 'between men and women on both personal and cultural level' compel her to conceive of a visionary community of women as an alternative to the contemporary social order ruled by men. Rich calls it 'the lesbian bond' or the lesbian continuum.<sup>28</sup>

She believed that this self reliance would empower women and usher in a social order and a new civilization. In this manner, *Lihaaf* (*The Quilt*) proves to be Chughtai's landmark work, heralding the emergence of her distinctive analytical aesthetic where the body forms a paradigmatic site for the engagement of subject and structure. As the contest for meaning unfolds, the quilt functions as the material embodiment of the circumstances and desires of the cocooned wife who finds physical and emotional fulfillment in the transgressive bed she shares with her maid. The quilt, under which she spends her luxurious but lonely days, signifies both the life of the wife in deprivation as well as the site and instrument of a reworking of this oppressive condition into first survival and then fulfillment, as her 'emaciated body began to fill out'<sup>29</sup> and she began to bloom once again. Like the quilt, the female body in this story is both substance and interpretation; it is acted upon by historical and social structures, but it also engages in re-shaping those very structures. Like Rasheed Jahan, Chughtai is deeply interested in the female body as subject of emancipatory knowledge and agent of change. Chughtai portrays Begum Jan as a strong subversive power which can resist and contest the hegemonic hierarchies within marriage.

Michel Foucault closely observed the relation between social structures and the individual and focused on the analysis of the effects of various institutions on groups of people and the role those people play in affirming or resisting those effects. Central to this concern with structures is his analysis of power. Rather than simply viewing power as a repressive force, Foucault argues in *The History of Sexuality, vol. I*, that even at their most constraining, oppressive powers are in fact productive in giving rise

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to new forms of behaviour and in foregrounding resistance to power. Repudiating the belief of a one-way traffic of power from top downwards, Foucault's bottom-up model of power shows how power relations permeate all relations in society and are continually enacted and contested so that individuals act as active agents rather than as passive dupes. Thus, Foucault upholds that 'where there is power there is resistance.'<sup>30</sup>

Begum Jan, similarly, challenges and reframes patriarchal values and practices through the agency of performing differently. She not only challenges the sites of contestation, she redeems her marginality to gain autonomy and empowerment in the process. She proves that despite being subject to discipline and docility, Muslim wives can muster enough subjectivity to recuperate from marital dissatisfaction and have the ability to retaliate against marginalization.

### Endnotes :

- <sup>1</sup> As an Islamic feminist, Fatima Mernissi is largely concerned with Islam and women's roles in it, analyzing the historical development of Islamic thought and its modern manifestation. Through a detailed investigation of the nature of the succession to Muhammad, she casts doubt on the validity of some of the *hadith* (sayings and traditions attributed to him), and therefore the subordination of women that she sees in Islam, but not necessarily in the *Quran*.
- <sup>2</sup> Domestic hierarchy is a social construct legitimized in a patriarchal society. Patriarchy can be defined as a system of power relations based on gender differences, which are hierarchical and unequal, and which allows men to have control over women's production, reproduction and sexuality.
- <sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part Three. *Docile Bodies*. Trans. A.Sheridan, 1977. New York: Vintage Books. p.136.
- <sup>4</sup> Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil- Male Female Dynamics in Muslim Society*. "The Meaning of Spatial Boundaries". London: Al Saqi Books, 1975.
- <sup>5</sup> *Behind the Veil* is written as a one-act play but reads more like a short story.
- <sup>6</sup> Rashid Jahan, *Behind the Veil. A Rebel and Her Cause* by Rakhshanda Jalil (New Delhi: Women Unlimited. 2014), pp.198-212; p. 203.
- <sup>7</sup> Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" in *Signs*, 5.4, *Women: Sex and Sexuality (1980)*: 631-660.
- <sup>8</sup> *Adab* encompasses various literal and metaphorical meanings. It has been defined to include the best of what had been said in the form of verse, prose,

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and anecdotes.

<sup>9</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p.9.

<sup>10</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 7.

<sup>11</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 8.

<sup>12</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 8.

<sup>13</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 8.

<sup>14</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 9.

<sup>15</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 9.

<sup>16</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 9.

<sup>17</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 9.

<sup>18</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 10.

<sup>19</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 13.

<sup>20</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 13.

<sup>21</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 18.

<sup>22</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 18.

<sup>23</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 18.

<sup>24</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 19.

<sup>25</sup> “In the Name of Those Married Women...” in Ismat Chughtai, *A Life in Words: Memoirs* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 37.

<sup>26</sup> Gail Minault, *Ismat Chughtai: Stories by An Uncivil Woman*. Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in. Accessed on 2 August 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Ismat Chughtai, *A Life in Words: Memoirs*. Trans.M.Assaduddin (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 34.

<sup>28</sup> Paraphrased by Rajeshwar Mittapalli and V. Rajasekhar. “Burning together in the Snow: Orchestration of Lesbian Ideology in Adrienne Rich’s Poetry,” *The Atlantic Review*, 8.1(2007). Quoted by Shagufta Naaz Farooqui in “Sexuality: A Path to Self-Actualization in Ismat Chughtai’s ‘The Quilt,’” in *The Criterion: An International Journal in English* 3.1 (2012):1-10; p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Chughtai, *The Quilt*, p 9.

<sup>30</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. (London: Penguin Books, 2015).