

## **Body as Narrative: Narratives of Maternal Disability (Agenesis) and Reproductive/Abortive Rights of Subaltern American Women in Leni Zumas' *Red Clocks***

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### **Abstract**

This research attempts to analyze *Red Clocks* with a perception of taking Body as a narrative because the description of characters in the novel is pre-dominantly physical in nature. The female perspective in the novel maps the intersection of female characters, their personal lives with nature along with politics of United States of America. I have explored gender roles and how gender politics act on the consciousness of the characters. It triggers the initiation of characters into the world of experience where society becomes sensitive over the woman's physical autonomy. The main narratives of the novel encounter White females in general and their issues regarding biological or reproductive rights in particular. Zumas takes *Red Clocks* through the filter of imagination. It highlights her imaginative world towards America's future into the apparent reality of America. This study aims to consider the social significance of womanhood and motherhood to examine the Subalternity of American woman. This article illustrates the gendered power dynamics between the man and the woman and the nature's consequences expressed through familiarity of expressions. I, therefore, investigate the foresightedness of Zumas in the field of politics about woman's reproductive rights in order to explore the dystopian fiction in order to show the political ongoing strife about woman's reproductive rights. The dystopian fiction creates an imaginable world of future possibilities. Likewise, Zumas creates this novel with a perception of reality and imagination. This research challenges the women's position and masculine ideologies regarding woman's body and her bodily rights that need to be corrected in every sphere of life.

**Keywords:** American Woman, Subalternity, Womanhood, Motherhood, Gender politics.

By defining body as a discourse in *Red Clocks* (2018) I examine the power of narration that has the quality to describe different events or clarify different stories through a medium of narration. Our body constitutes our deepest selves which give meaning to our existence. Deb Schachter explores the struggle of human emotions with the body image and builds a three dimensional way of considering body and not as a two dimensional entity. She believes that everyone should have to deconstruct their body to understand the deepest selves. She says, “We need to delve deeper than the experience of the image; we need to turn ourselves inside out to discover what really matters” (Schachter 2018).

In the narrative structure, the ideology behind an individual self is directly or indirectly related with the bodily autonomy of certain character either with his/ her sense of self or their sense towards their own individual power or human agency. The body incarnates our most unambiguous physical reality even as if it eludes our attempts to conceive it or define it according to the theological pattern that is given to us through narratives. It shows that narration itself recollects past experiences or present realities to uncover those unrevealed truths of what our body really wants to conceive around the social milieu. Our body can be injured, broken, and diseased yet it forms our basic understanding of the world through our sense of perceiving. “Everywhere in the world, self-starts with body” (Baumeister 2). Through this statement I can say it is our self which describes the interaction of body with different types of experiences a body encounters.

The feminist activist and author, Carol Hanisch, coined the slogan “The Personal is Political” which became synonymous with the second wave of feminism.

Second-wave feminists saw women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and as reflecting sexist power structures. Zumas presents *Red Clocks* with full of possible realities regarding reproductive rights of American Women in their own American society. She takes *Red Clocks* through the filter of imagination. Her imagination towards America's future becomes a real current state. Hence, by this prediction Zumas turns away the glance of perception and drives our senses to turn towards the unspeakable truths behind her characters' narratives.

Zumas projects the novel with her own autobiographical story that forms the structure that is coherent and revolves around five women namely Roberta, "The Biographer"; Susan Korsmo, "The Wife"; Mattie Matilda, "The Daughter" and Gin Percival, as "The Mender" and, Eivor Minervudottir, a polar explorer of ancient times mentioned in the novel with secrets that connects her story with other women generally. Zumas builds the narrative by focusing on the female body as a question with reference to the bodily issues of American women. The female body framed in *Red Clocks* proves that for an American woman who lives in a small town of America is very difficult to attain freedom of choice. Her imagination towards the futuristic world of America proves the situation of today's American women whose identity draws the line of differentiation and discrimination within an American state. This indifference creates conflict between the state and the individual.

In order to turn a set of stories into a comprehensible discourse requires the act of narration. This act is significant to human experiences as I see a corresponding

duality between body and narration. For a better understanding, it is useful to examine it with a lens of history, which is a certain set of ground and true combination of facts and events placed in historical context. As Hayden White states, “The problem of fashioning human experience into a form as imitable to structure of meaning that are generally human” (White 7). The possibility attached to the act of narration is that it constitutes the convenient truth hidden behind raw details of the plot. The greater task of narrative is to mold the past encounter into a form that makes the piece of literature combined to have a sense in the present reality of the world. *Red Clocks* is a dystopian fiction but even in today’s reality it reflects those encounters of history which Zumas wants to highlight regarding women’s biological rights. By keeping the stories alive, Zumas opens the possibilities by letting her women go and exercise their own decision power towards the bill (Abortion is illegal in all fifty states, the U.S Congress Ratified Personhood Amendment Public Law 116-72, Infertility treatments are federally banned) which is passed against the will of American women (Zumas 39).

By taking the frame of “Sovereign zone” (SZ) which is jotted down as the “Right to refute” it is actually described with some points and relates with the women’s biological rights. It speaks about women’s biological clocks (Fetus). The argument proceeds with the following points:

1. The women’s body is completely her own sovereign territory.
2. It is her right to do whatever she wants with her own body and fetus is a part of a woman’s body and not be taken as an outside authority of another person to rule over it.

Zumas portrays the system of U.S as the extremist's law enforcers who deny women autonomy and subjugate their rights of being women and mothers. The law enforces punishments on whoever goes against the particular law. The punishments include death trial and return to the United States of America for prosecution in case any law violator manages to escape. William Cronon specifically writes about narrative meaning as, "Narrative is the chief literary form that tries to find meaning in an overwhelming crowded and disordered chronological reality" (Cronon 78).

In an interview with Rachel Selvin, Zumas speaks about her story of using In vitro fertilization (IVF): "I have a son — he just turned 5 — and he was conceived by IVF, During the process, I started noticing that there was so much anger from people about the morality of IVF — that it's unnatural, that you shouldn't be allowed to do it, that it's better to choose adoption" (Selvin 2018).

One woman in *Red Clocks* named Roberta (The Biographer) is recognized not by her post as a history teacher or as a biographer but she is known by her failure in the field of bio medicalization and fate of becoming a mother. It clearly defines in the first chapter when she visits the specialist regarding the fertility treatment described as "a room for women whose bodies are broken" (Zumas 1). This is not just a matter of broken or diseased bodies yet it fills the woman's life with some kind of failure where her body is observed as an object to be examined through ultrasounds but this is a place where abortions and termination of undesirable pregnancies also occur.

In *Red Clocks*, Roberta's friend Susan is always puts Roberta on the edge of failure. Susan often remarks in the presence of Roberta that "You don't truly become

an adult until you have kids" (Zumas 182) implying that the failure of the body of not producing or conceiving the child becomes the failure of a woman. Roberta, therefore, deliberately takes her body as a failure. She addresses her own self on this type of needful conversation: "Things I have failed at: finishing book, having baby and keeping my brother alive" (Zumas 180). The question that demands attention is that is this her body or her mind that impatiently wants to be a mother? Or is it some kind of impulsive reaction from the society's insensitive judgments on her infertility which captivates her mind and ultimately her body reacts accordingly.

In *Red Clocks*, Abortion is forbidden by the American law. The federal Government puts its stance seriously by taking action against abortion by amending the Personhood law or Parenthood law with a new legislation, cautioned with the "Every Child Needs Two Act", on 15 January declared as a Public Law 116-72, and taken into action under three months (Zumas 39) that is to make almost impossible for a single or an unmarried person to adopt children. In order to make it fairer or more accurate; the congressman said: "with Abortion illegal, more babies would be available to adopt. It wasn't hurting anyone, to ban IVF, because the people with faulty uteri and busted sperm could simply adopt all those extra babies" (Zumas 161). It means the constitutional amendments very diligently deny the rights of women over their own bodies. By putting a woman's life on the border line of life and death is totally preoccupied with the fierce argument of the denial of women's reproductive rights of giving or not giving birth to the child. It makes the American woman a Subaltern entity in the hands of her own Government.

Dr. S. G. Kabara's opinion regarding the abortional rights of women is that the Abortional right: 'is a fundamental right of two individuals - the mother and the fetus' (Kabarah). By coincidentally constructing a relation of two individuals, the one who is fighting for a natural human right and the other who is not even born yet to complain then what is rightful in making decisions? Is it the mother or the fetus? A woman who knows the consequences behind aborting the child or not or the child who does not even in the conscious state of mind think for its own right, is questionable. Taking a good decision by a woman about reproduction is by no means a freedom of doing harm to the fetus or a womb.

According to Dr. Wen's declaration: "The best way to protect abortion care is to be clear that it is not a political issue but a health care one, and that we can expand support for reproductive rights". She also adds, "I am leaving because the new Board chairs and I have philosophical differences over the direction and future of Planned Parenthood" (Wen). This is the politics of the government to eliminate those people who are with the justice-seekers while protect those who are confirming the government's views as right and are ready to act on their conceptual laws.

Roe v. Wade in 1973 continued their efforts for providing safe and legal abortion to every woman in America. The Supreme Court also ruled that abortion is legal and provided to all the abortion seeker women without any criminal imprisonment from the state. It was considered as a milestone in the history of 1973, declared on 22 January 1973. Their decision guarantees the civilian women of America their natural biological rights and provides them a state where every woman enjoys access to abortion. After

some time, the decision became a politically conservative issue which is still pending to be decided. Majority of Americans are holding up Roe v. Wade and constitutional right of accessing abortion in the beginning of pregnancy. Here, there are three suggestive levels which are basically those three divisions of trimesters which Supreme Court provides to people with some guidelines. According to it, the first trimester requires special preference from a licensed physician for safe abortion and cannot be exercised without preference. During the second trimester, the abortion is a satisfied opinion or an option only in case of woman's health complexities during pregnancy. In the third trimester, the issue becomes more significant because the state pay heed in protecting the potential human life that ultimately outweighs the woman's right to privacy. The question is what those problems which cause such consequences like abortion are. The problems of abortion arise due to unplanned Motherhood and Parenthood, the unusual and unfulfilled sexual desires of couples and lack of financial resources which instigate the pregnant woman for abortion. These problems are not considerate enough to provoke what the actual matter is. For that reason the Roe v. Wade is overturned with many objections and amendments from past decades. According to Donald Trump in 2019, “[Overturning Roe .v. Wade] will happen automatically in my opinion, because I am putting pro-life justices on the court” (Trump).

The above mentioned declaration of Trump specifies that the pro-life team has a support of anti-abortion movement who idealizes life of a little infant as important as the woman's life. So, they believe that it should be the crime, charged with murder on those women who commit abortion after conceiving a baby. The pro-choice gives woman

the freedom of choice so, that she thinks about her personal life without having any state pressure. The pro-choicer believe that a woman should have a legal right over her biological clock (Womb) and does not have any need to consult her personal issue with anyone from any state. Therefore, this is a big difference between pro-life and pro-choice movements. My argument of providing the woman with her biological right is built on an idea that on which movement our novel *Red Clocks* steps into and which is the best way to charge it. My argument is approached with the Pro-choice movement because the women in the novel gain a sense of agency by the power of decision. The decision of aborting the unplanned child by Mattie Matilda also addressed as “The Daughter”, who as a teenage girl falls into a sexual attempt with her boyfriend that results to the inevitable outcome like pregnancy at her teenage. Here, she uses her choice to terminate pregnancy by going to Canada but she is not allowed to do it there because the United States law restricted Canadian borders to return the abortion seekers to United States for prosecution. In the last chapter the choice of Mattie to be a mother also has the powerful influence of her pro-choice movement to proceed.

In *Red Clocks* the government has outlawed abortion on the stage of second-trimester (Zumas 159). Like I see, Mattie an immature teenage American girl feels relaxed to think she would terminate her pregnancy. According to Mattie “It is just an embryo, it can’t make an offer on a house, even though it has the legal right to” (Zumas 177). It shows immaturity of Mattie towards Motherhood. She finds it easy to be pregnant with a child and believes it equally easy to abort the child when things become complicated. The already set culture of America regarding sexual relationships

without wedlock is just a desire to be fulfilled and it makes people less aware of the complexities they face after being pregnant. Roberta, The Biographer, assumes Mattie's abortion decision as: "The daughter (Mattie Matilda) is not a murderer. They're only cells, multiplying. No face yet. No dreams or opinions" (Zumas 176). This prompts that embryo or fetus is nothing but a function of body of creating multiple cells day by day and, therefore, does not have any right, because of the embryo or fetus lacks consciousness in comparison to an adult person.

An English philosopher of the seventeenth century, John Locke, presented his conceptual views on the nature of natural rights. He furnished his thoughts with the quality of reasoning. He calls 'Fetus an extension of women's body' and holds a defensible position in a woman's body. His book titled *Second Treatise of Government* mentions the rights of property which a person has on his/her body. It shows that if a woman is having a body with an extension of (Fetus) must have a biological right of a woman to be possessive about all the decisions she wants to make for her body. In another Essay, *Concerning Human Understanding* Locke categories abortion as an immoral act (Locke 3.19) but does not give any reason. In relation to what he actually means by opposing abortion rights, some other authors defend their views by reviewing Locke's argument with different approach. Locke's political arguments in the extension of his philosophy grant liberty to the individuals for the development of modern conceptions and present philosophy of natural rights which means a lot in American History. His philosophies review the future of today's America in which a person's value become worthless in the hands of the State and the worth of a human being is reduced to the

value of production and consumption in the hands of the manufacturer and the utilizer. Today's America is actually the true correspondence of both Locke's argument and Zumas's dystopian fiction, *Red Clocks*.

Dillon Duke, a student of communications at the University of Houston in Texas, makes his argument a logical one by breaking down the argument of the pro-lifers. By using an objective lens, he discusses the phrase "My Body, My choice" with a new concept by stating "If it's my body, then it's my choice" (Duke). His concept alludes simply with 'If' and 'Then' used in his phrase. Both words are based on one another because the fact says if I'm doing some action and the second person is not going to be affected by my choice then it should not be a problem. Likewise, my argument also suggests that if a mother by her biological problems does not want to prolong her pregnancy then it should be her right to abort the child in a few weeks. As after development it would be considered as an aggravated felony in America and also worldwide.

In the persona, firstly there is "The Mender" named Gin Percival, who is a forest dwelling herbalist, a midwife who provides medical facilities through herbal abortifacients by challenging the medicalization of reproductive care. Another narrator "The Daughter" named as Mattie Mathilda has a boyfriend named "Ephraim". Mattie Matilda finds herself pregnant with Ephraim's child "Half Ephraim, Half her" (Zumas 95) and has no option except abortion, but that is outlawed. Third is the voice of "The Wife" named Susan, who is the mother of two children and is trapped in a frustrated relationship and plans separation from her husband? She thinks that being a mother

she is living a life where everything is a waste. She wants to live by her own choice but the novel endorses that Children need both parents at home. The fourth narrator is mainly described as “The Biographer” though her name is Roberta, who is a high school teacher and is desperate to become a mother either from the natural way or the artificial.

*Red Clocks* contains points of view of five different women whose stories are pertinent and address bigger issues such as Gendered Oppression, Domestic Violence, Fertility treatments, Placement of women in an American society and Laws and Legislation regarding Parenthood Amendment that “Every child needs Two” (Zumas 39). It also conceptualizes bounded and fractured relationships, Bounded with a concept of motherhood and Fractured Relationships of marriage along with Submissive rights of women and Fertility treatments. These types of issues force women of the novel to cope with lawful restrictions against abolition of abortion and automatically push back on women rights and question female subjectivity. This subjective approach explores the personal experience of characters both as mothers or women because it builds the women’s consciousness to a level where a woman understands her own subjective values and her rights.

The female bodies in the novel experience the sufferings of being in the relationships both as a mother and a woman such as in the cases of Susan and Mattie. Susan is unhappy and overburdened with the responsibility of two toddlers and Mattie is being pregnant with her boyfriend Ephraim’s child; ‘Half Ephraim, Half her’ (Zumas 95) in a teenage. The experiences of physical, emotional and mental disturbance engage the readers in the politics of domestic violence. Mrs. Fivey is an example of domestic

violence in *Red Clocks* (Zumas 169). The School Principal also assaults his wife that shows Patriarchal American society. In Roberta's case the Obstetricians show some loyalty to her as a patient but their oblivious behavior towards her fertility treatment somehow reminds her of her infertility as a failure.

Zumas in *Red Clocks* projects that there is a conspiracy going on between the federal systematic law and the white women. The Lawyer in the *Red Clocks* breaks the hard news before 'The Biographer' that "The Prosecutor has appended a charge on women, which is about the conspiracy to commit murder" of the infants. He says, "Because fertilized Eggs are now classified as persons; intentionally destroying an embryo or fetus constitutes second-degree murder. Or, if you're in Oregon, 'murder' rather than aggravated murder" (Zumas 168). These types of assertive sentence by the government puts a question mark on the demonstrators who are struggling to go against the women have will and assert their superiority of having a male privilege of the white society while denying the women their biological rights. They know what they are suggesting by these laws because they have narrow- mentality as they give only few rights to women and decide themselves what the men consider best for the women. By giving them less freedom they want to overpower women. This is the obvious injustice with freedom of women's lives because they are the ones who are kept at the subordinate position and lack any power. This obviously creates differences and discrimination between the genders.

In *Red Clocks* in one way Zumas shows her character's miserable lives because of already passed ordinance and on another way, her characters use their own

will. Zumas, therefore, gives the character's self-image especially of modern women who use her consciousness in a proper way. As Mattie, "The Daughter" thinks "She has a self. Why not use it?" (Zumas 216). This raises a question that to what extent do the characters sticks to their own voice. In the novel, when Mattie is there in the Investigation department at Canadian Border, there is an investigator guy who personally encourages Mattie's self through advice with something notable which is 'I want you to learn from your mistake...Be the cow they have to buy... Don't be the free milk" (Zumas 215). This shows that there is always a need of some strong words to warn someone about the consequences and stir up the character for self-voice. This illustrates in one way or another to every woman that they (the women) must not put their bodies in front of the men even if they desire them the most. It only harms the women themselves and not the men in this Patriarchal American world. Every woman in the novel marvels at her own capacity of bearing with the circumstances, their strength of making decisions, and how they inculcate courage for their own selves. They assert their autonomous selfhood and manifest the ability to take on new roles and responsibilities. Mattie, "The Daughter" after approaching Canadian government decides to take responsibility of her pregnancy. She does not want to skip the Math Academy but she does, she quits the Central Coastal Regional, and Finishes her high school online. She finds a way on her own and takes a new role to be a mother and decides courageously to give the child to a couple who has grey hair and good hearts.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty discusses in the essay "Under the Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Western Discourse" about the relationship between men and

women and states Levis-Strauss's theory of kinship which is structured around the theory of exchange of women within the system. Mohanty puts his stance by saying that 'sex is allowed in some rituals, when a girl reaches at her puberty age, she is allowed to make a relation with the man and the man attain legal right over the woman' (Mohanty 341). My argument functions in a supposed direction regarding this quote which is that is it a legal right of a man to have a relationship with a girl at her puberty age without knowing the consequences? Is he free from every natural or federal law? Most probably, it is the woman who suffers within the whole situation. Does the law sanction the man in all aspects of doing whatever he wants to do with the female body? Mohanty argues as follows:

[B]eing a woman has political consequences in the world we live in; that there can be unjust and unfair effects on women depending on our economic and social marginality or/ privilege. It would acquire recognizing that sexism, racism, misogyny, and heterosexism underlie and fuel social and political institutions of rule and thus often lead to hatred of women and supposedly justified violence against women (Feminism 3).

Ann Oakley, Professor of Sociology, says about gender that the 'Constancy of sex must be admitted, but so also must the variability of gender' (Oakley 166). It suggests a common practice which is done by men in order to subjugate women in every way and rule their power of dominance to attain authority over women. In a patriarchal society where phallocentric system operates a woman is reduced to an object. A

woman's behavior is constructed by men and by the society she lives in. Her behavior towards law builds ideological systems of power who prescribe her subordination, and by women's own participation in those systems. This situation limits or de-limits her status and her freedom. In other words, society keeps a woman blocked from freedom or transcendence. Therefore, liberation of an individual is a social transformation.

It is the female characters of *Red Clocks* and their struggle that shape the consciousness of the women readers in America. Female characters of *Red Clocks* are heaved with a will and a life of their own. The situation shows that they are in deteriorated state but their creative voice urge them to collect courage against those demonstrators and select the alternate way of surviving. They take decisions against the commands of the ruling state. Mattie, "The Daughter" holds strength to cross the Canadian border to terminate her pregnancy because she is too young to be a mother and it also affects her future career. Roberta, "The Biographer" uses tenacity of getting fertility treatment in the gendered system of America. Gin Percival, "The Mender" stands against the law and caters the illegal gynecological services to those who need home abortion. She is thrown into the jail like a traitor for illegal and malpractice of medicine in the forest to the American women. In fact, every woman in *Red Clocks* is being pushed back for resisting the lawful amendments against Personhood or Parenthood. The women's perspective was particularly ignored in history before the women's liberal rights movement but here Zumas does not undermine the subject of women. Zumas stands with the activist department and works for reproductive rights for the women and asserts their importance in the world. Likewise, the cover page of *Red Clocks* also

raises the question that what is a woman for? Thus, it is essential to firstly develop the sense of gender ideology because the gender issue is mostly pushed aside when some sort of political discussion takes place. But here, the gender issue is suggestive because it is the matter of women's biological rights and health issues and is not be undermined without argument in the socially determined society.

Gender has been of much concern to scholars and critical thinkers for the last few decades because of the prevailing uncertainties about their roles as male or female. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* which is also called as Feminist Bible, an epithet, sums up the relation of flesh and spirit with the vision of redemption in these following words:

The same drama of flesh and spirit, and of finitude and transcendence, plays itself out in both sexes; both are eaten away by time, stalked by death, they have the same essential need of the other; and they can take the same glory from their freedom; if they knew how to savor it, they would no longer be tempted to contend for false privileges; and fraternity could then be born between them (Beauvoir).

The excerpt is from *The Second Sex* translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany Chevallier. It shows that all human beings are not born with tags of man or woman but it is society that makes them either male or female and man or woman. Gerda Lerner writes in The Creation of Patriarchy in the following words: 'Gender is the costume, a mask in which men and women dance their unequal dance' (Lerner 238). A Sexologist, John Money, is of the view that gender is a social-cultural matter and Sex

is a biological term. Gender is not determined by sex but modified by race, ethnicity, nation, class and variety of other amplitudes and capacities of social life.

Society creates hierarchies between gender roles and these hierarchical power systems build relations between male and female which lead to gender discrimination that further culminates in marginalization and exploitation of rights of women in society.

According to Reeves and Baden (2000):

Gender relationships among the people are determined, in a culture, by a number of different operating authorities like family relations, legal system etc. These operating authorities are the reasons that are responsible for creating certain rules or regulations to control and manipulate social institutions. Even the history reveals the fact that women were marginalized and were not given equal rights to use their power to bring about change in the social sphere (Reeves and Baden 18).

Gender in Zumas's *Red Clocks* is highlighted as a significant area of concern basically with women who intersect their problems and issues with the socio-political realms. In the volatile atmosphere of American world where intense issue of Abortion is related, the subject of woman automatically grants voice to subaltern American women. The term "Subaltern" means 'inferior position or lower status people in a social, political, or other hierarchy' (Vocabulary). The Indian feminist scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak defines the term "Subaltern" as 'Subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for [the] Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie....' in the context of post-colonial studies. She does not address it specifically for post-colonial studies but also

for the oppressed females who are failed at speaking or hearing their voices outside their patriarchal norms because their voices are neglected and are unheard and unvoiced. So, I examine this novel in the context of American women as a Subaltern entity of United States. Because the women are taken for granted on the basis of their secondary position in society and are rated low in political and social institutions; their womanly matters remain untouched with the large numbers of their reserved rights both in their personal life and in social strata's. American women define themselves as individuals, competent in citizenship; members of communities but the societal framework marginalize their basic human rights. Their bodies are commodified by the political system and not by themselves. The universal principle of human rights thumps up on equal level which demands equal rights for all men and women in the world.

Women all over the world are defined by the roles they play such as the wife, the daughter and the mother. The most important thing is that Zumas portrays her characters with the labels to identify the rights behind their labelled gender roles as she portrays the character of Susan Korsmo with the label of “The Wife”, another character Mattie Mathilda with the label of “The Daughter”, Roberta’s character with the label of her role as “The Biographer”. Because Zumas does not want to create a world of terror and not even aims to compel those who are sitting at the top of the system to surrender rather she wants to build narratives of possibilities for equal rights for both genders, however, Zumas has special concern for women’s biological rights.

American world is projected as a world where internal conflicts are based on differences and discriminates the secondary position holder as their subordinates to rule

over. The secondary position holders are those who are holding the second rank or a subordinate position according to Merriam Webster's Dictionary. By imposing ideas without another person's concern results in crisis within the state. Female subordination in this respect is so deep that even today it seems like an unpreventable rather than a politically charged reality sustained through some ideology and with patriarchal notice. When identities are placed on the verge of differences then the issues of cultural or biological rights become an even more complicated phenomenon. So, it is right to say that not only brown women but white women also become isolated in the society. The question of white woman's existence in an American world places her on the side where brown woman usually stands. Spivak very impressively discussed it in *Can the Subaltern Speak* about the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, "White men are saving brown women from their brown men" (Spivak). This statement actually needs a process of re-conceptualization. It navigates our argument in the way that it is actually the white women and not the brown women who need the attention of the white man because; their own women voices are unheard and neglected by their own government. White man offers no freedom of choice to his white woman.

Before exploring the dynamics of power endowed in male dominated patriarchal societies it would be easier to firstly define the term "Authority". The term "Authority" is perceived as a legitimate power imposed over others for influence according to the prescribed social system. According to Robert A. Dahl, Power is a systematic way which is an important social phenomenon. It can be suggested in terms of a relation of authority between the people (2007). In the context of the selected text the reference of

power is the gendered concept of the power or authority holder. But here the matter is to pin point the system as a whole but question those strategic commands against women's abortion who abide women on crossing to the Canadian border for abortion. It is propounded with detail in *Red Clocks* when Mattie Matilda Quarles "The Daughter" tries to cross the Canadian border to terminate her pregnancy because she is too young to hold pregnancy. She sees that there is a billboard on the highway to Canada that illustrates, "won't stop one, / won't start one. / Canada upholds U.S law!" (Zumas 212). The officer upholds the statement which a Canadian government has signed with the U.S that according to "Section 10.31 of the Canadian Border Services Agency Regulations: 'If an unaccompanied minor registers a positive result on a first response Rapid Result Pregnancy Test, and cannot verify a legitimate personal or professional purpose in a Canadian province, she shall be taken into custody and returned to U.S law enforcement officials'" (Zumas 213). This unfolds the authoritarian law of U.S along with Canada to expose misuse of power. This highlights if the women are doing aggravated felony against the systematic law? What abandons the women to practice their biological rights outside the U.S law? This phenomenon of power is exercised through gendered use and results in the silencing of women's biological rights, oppression and inequality of white women on the land of white men.

In one way or another, power is gained through subordinators and is expected from those who are used as objects. In the gendered system the phenomenon of power and violence are parallel to each other. Women are considered as helpless and vulnerable beings and surrender their selves in front of the family, patriarchal norms, and to the

societal pressure asserted generally by the state. They are idealized as vulnerable only because of their body and female sexuality. Their bodies are objects in the hands of the powerful authorities. In the name of honor, their bodies are abused, sexually harassed, martially raped and on a larger scale, the state also violates their reproductive rights. If I examine it with diversity, then the violence against women cannot be separated from gender perspective. The cases of women experiencing such attitudes of society is exceeding day by day. In order to narrow it down, no reformative action has been taken by any lawful organization. The writer sketches out those narratives to bring a reformatory act to provide shelter to the helpless. Zumas also frames violence on women differently. Males asserts their power, Didier displays his behavior in a hostile way towards Susan. Epharim's misuse of Mattie's innocence and his practice of sexual abuse on her and on the general level, the Obstetricians squeeze Ro's emotional attachment with fertility techniques. Dolores Fivey very smartly removes his name from hospital records, from police reports about his act of violence over his wife but when the Lawyer asks from Gin, The Mender, regarding the issue of terminating Mrs. Fivey's pregnancy, she highlights that Mrs. Fivey was never pregnant, however, Mr. Fivey, "he snapped her wife's finger bone", and "Burned her arm and punched her in the jaw" (Zumas 169). In order to shut her mouth, the Lawyer put the narrative into doubt and charged murderous crime against her. This is the old way of patriarchal system to throw the evidence and exploit women in the name of their female sexuality. The lawyer confirms that: "Anything that can throw this narrative into doubt, we'll use", "Telling about the sex would make it worse. The world's oldest methods of payment" (Zumas 169). Here,

the silent act of violence is used to cover the male's sinful act. The violence is used as an apparatus of finding manly power by exercising violence and assault on a female.

Today's women are working with collective ambition and stay steadfast in their struggle so that their voices are heard, because they are now familiar with the rights they own towards their bodies. In *Red Clocks* the women whom Zumas portrays actually struggle to achieve their own selfhood which somehow hides their esteemed responsibilities like motherhood. They want to gain respect not only through the duties they perform but also for their self-worth and desire to be recognized both by men and the State. Margaret Talbot, a classified essayist and one of the well-known writers of *The New York Times* works on the social and cultural legal issues. She identifies those issues which are creating worse atmosphere for the woman around the country. She highlights that new order of society is less appreciated in the public sphere. In the present state of America, The elected President of America, Mr. Donald Trump has been interviewed by Lesley Stahl, who asks about his overruling *Roe .v. Wade* because that step makes the state itself questionable. He answers: "It'll go back to the states. They'll perhaps have to go; they'll have to go to another state" (Trump). This situation is imagined by Zumas in *Red Clocks* where she makes women travel to another country to seek abortion but that result goes all in vain.

This paper shows that by triggering hard felonies like murder or killing a baby in the womb, the U.S Government and other groups like pro-lifers and anti-abortion groups make a woman to think that they are somehow like a beast. By turning a tide towards women, they actually showing their own ill-mindedness and expose their own

divergent thoughts and interpretations. By looking on the highly debated issues specially of females personal and private spheres, their right over their bodies made their personal issue a political one which would be somehow a very unconventional thing to pass on to the next generation.

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