

Silencing of Subaltern in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*

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Abstract:

This qualitative research explores the representation of women in Pakistani literature in English. Pakistani women are represented as victims of religious, cultural, social violence in these works. This research finds down the stagnant stereotyping strategies used to represent Pakistani women. This research delimits its focus by selecting Our Lady of Alice Bhatti by Muhammad Hanif for close textual analysis. Feminist Postcolonial theorist Spivak's theory provides the theoretical underpinnings for this research. This research concludes that Subaltern cannot be represented and Pakistani women are depicted as meek, helpless creatures devoid of any individuality. It has further silenced the women of Pakistan.

Key words: stagnant, stereotype, subaltern, Pakistani women.

Introduction

'Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation. The figure of the woman disappears ...there is no place from where a sexed Subaltern can speak' (Spivak, 1988, p.307).

Colonized were the subaltern of colonial era and Postcolonial societies have created their own subaltern. Women being disempowered in every society became the subaltern of Postcolonial societies. Phallogocentric tradition has reduced the chances of women representation in literature. When a group is entitled 'subaltern' it cannot be represented. Spivak has altogether rejected the idea of representation of the subaltern. Spivak has called it the silenced Centre or Margin. Spivak argues that the representation of our 'subjects' are coded or framed in terms of an us/ them dichotomy in which we develop / civilize / empower 'them.' Whenever someone attempts to represent someone else, he is already caught up in 'us' / 'them' dichotomy.

Marginalized, oppressed and disempowered are the focus of Spivak's attention. Giving voice to the disempowered of a society is her aim. Her struggle starts from finding an appropriate word for the oppressed to challenge their representation. Gyatri Spivak argues that there is a 'Crisis in Vocabulary' whenever the disempowered or oppressed groups appear in the discourse. She is of the view that the master words like 'women', 'workers' and 'the colonized' are usually used for the disempowered or oppressed group of the society but she considered them 'deficient' for the justifiable representation of the down trodden and marginalized groups of the society (Spivak, 1995, p. 220). This dissatisfaction led her towards finding new and more appropriate vocabulary for the representation of the marginalized groups. Gyatri Spivak has selected the term 'Sublaltern' for the disempowered groups of the society. Subaltern is a more

fluid and subtle term for encompassing the diverse struggles and lives of the oppressed. Spivak argues that the disempowered became the marginalia both in the history writing and the dominant political discourse. In this research, this fluid term 'Subaltern' is used for the women of Pakistan. Pakistani women cannot be defined by simplification or in abstractions. They are a myriad group of people living in diverse circumstances.

The representation of subaltern is a hideous task and when these are subaltern women, it becomes impossible. As Spivak (1988) remarks not only colonial representations are faulty but some native representations are also problematic. Spivak has borrowed the term "Native Informants" from Demography. She has highlighted the problems and politics of representation. In all claims of giving voice and representing the subaltern (here Pakistani women), the Subject is further rendered voiceless. The native informant is found guilty of a certain kind of epistemic violence which robs them of their individuality thus further silencing them. Spivak has called the Imperial epistemic violence just an 'imperfect allegory' of the extent of violence that is the possibility of an episteme. These Native informants are unable to represent the subaltern women because of various reasons.

Firstly, Spivak claims that 'certain varieties of Indian elite are at best Native informants for the first world intellectuals interested in giving voice to the Other' (p. 308). These writers are unable to give voice to the subaltern because they are native informants and they are speaking for the first world intellectuals. The information about the subaltern Pakistani women is censored for this purpose. The books written by these Native informants will only be accepted after being appropriated, marketed, and accepted as 'counter canonical' (Ahmad, 1992, p. 20). The entire counter-canon is formed in the West so only those versions of the subaltern women are acceptable which come true to the already established dichotomy of White woman/ coloured woman, empowered/ oppressed, educated/ ignorant. This will further strengthen Western women's superiority over Oriental women. Abdul Jaan Muhammad (1985) has named this Western desire not a fixation on specific images or stereotypes of the Other rather on the affective benefits proffered by the Manichean allegory which generates various stereotypes. These Native informants or Cultural Sell-outs are working to naturalize Western women's superiority over Pakistani women.

Secondly, these native writers are unable to represent Pakistani women because of their privileged position. Their comparatively privileged positions prove a hurdle in their way to understand the Pakistani women. These writers require a slippage from their epistemological advantaged positions to capture the variety of experiences prevalent in the lives of epistemologically disadvantaged identities of Pakistani women. These privileges are their loses. In the word of Landry and Maclean (1996)

Our privileges whatever they may be in terms of class, race, nationality, gender and the like may have prevented us from gaining a certain kind of Other knowledge; not simply the information that we have not yet received; but the knowledge we are not equipped to understand by reasons of our social positions (p.20).

1 Our Lady of Alice Bhatti by Muhammad Hanif

1 Alice Bhatti- A Postcolonial Subaltern

Muhammad Hanif has endeavoured to capture the life of a postcolonial subaltern in his novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011). Hanif has himself declared her marginalization. Alice Bhatti is a subaltern of a postcolonial society. She is an Other of Pakistani society. Hanif has employed caste and ethnic difference as a marker to freeze her in the place of inferiority. Nayar (2008) describes the postcolonial subalternization in these words, “if the native was the subaltern in the colonial era, postcolonialism created its own Subaltern, ‘women,’ ‘lower castes’, and classes, ethnic minority rapidly became the Others within the postcolonial nation state.” (p.98). Similarly, Jones (2011) argues that ethnic and racial differences are used to construct difference and freeze groups in the place of inferiority (p.211). Hanif has attempted to capture the life of a Subltern but as Gyatri Spivak argues that Subaltern cannot be represented so somewhere Hanif has further silenced Alice rather than giving voice to this sexed Subaltern. Alice appears on the surface not as a three dimensional character but a stagnant stereotype. Alice is marginalized on the base of her caste, religion and gender. She is a triply marginalized being. Alice is represented as an altogether oppressed figure, humiliated throughout her life. She is over obsessed with her body and humiliation. This practice is repeatedly criticised in postcolonial feminist studies as the discursive construction of the third world women as an oppressed category (Mohanty, 1984, see also, Nayer, 2008).

Hanif has portrayed his characters in dark shades. Alice is “rendered destitute, disenfranchised, and economically powerless” (Nayer, 2008, p.104) by Hanif. There is not even a single crack left open through which a small ray of hope can enter. Although now and then her plight raises sympathy but it is conforming the pre-existing stereotype of a powerless Pakistani woman. Margery Fee (1989) has named such practices as “the oppressive tactics and stereotyping romanticisation” (p.104) where female characters are romanticised and mythologized.

Hanif has used the word “Choori” community for the Christians of Karachi slums, this visual code is used to show the prejudice persistent in the people against the groups of different religions and castes and Hanif has employed this difference as a tool to create a stereotype. Alice Bhatti, the centre of gravity in the novel is a Christian nurse freshly returned from *Borstal Jail for Women and Children*. She is introduced as a distraught woman. She is over obsessed with her femininity and deeply frustrated. She is humiliated, maltreated and exploited again and again. The whole atmosphere is suffocating for her. As Muhammad Hanif writes,

Life has taught Alice Bhatti that every little step forward in life is preceded by a ritual humiliation. Every little happiness asks for a down payment. Too many humiliations and a journey that goes in circles mean that her fate is permanently in the red. She accepts that role (p.55).

Hanif has propagated the stereotype of a typically oppressed woman. She is represented as a tortured being. Life brings nothing but pain and humiliation to her and she has accepted that

role. Alice is depicted as the pariah of Pakistani society. She is an “*untouchable*” of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. She is not depicted as a human being of free will rather a pathological condition left on the misery of fate. She knows very well that she is from the untouchables. This reality has left her alone to accept the role assigned to her. Hanif has drawn her character on the same lines as Farber (1996) writes about the appropriate conditions for being categorized as a pariah, “To be a pariah is to be shunned and isolated, to be treated as if one had a loathsome and contagious disease... Outcasts are not merely inferior; they are not fully human and contact with them is dangerous and degrading” (p.266).

Alice Bhatti is a part of a minority in Pakistan. Hanif has created a fictional world in which there is a binary of Self and Other established. In this Postcolonial world, the oppressed are involved in a struggle of survival between the Haves and Have-Nots. Postcolonial writers are trying to create a balance between the opposites, a middle way for survival by reconciling the opposites. The Others are represented and given voice but in Hanif’s fictive world, he has further exaggerated the Otherness of Alice Bhatti and as a result he has strengthened the pre-existing dichotomy.

2. The Pathological Journey of Female Consciousness

“Woman is defined as an aberration, a pathological condition, associated with ‘complaints’ and ‘weeping’ and pains” (Robins, 2000, p.2).

Our Lady of Alice Bhatti shows a pathological journey of female consciousness. There are only three female characters that are physically present in the novel. All the other females are nameless, faceless. Just a group of females kicked, hacked or shot. There are allusions to weeping, complaining prostitutes. Reluctant to do whatever is demanded. Another nightmarish allusion is to Alice Bhatti’s mother Margret Bhatti. She was raped and murdered by her master. Her death was portrayed as an accident; Hanif has introduced her as the ‘Mother of Alice’ rather having a Christian name. She is depicted as a marginalized Other.

Women are depicted as a nameless category, as an ocean of nameless figures. From the herd of this endangered species (women), only three figures are emerging. One figure is of Alice Bhatti, this is the only neatly sketched character in the whole novel. Second character is a stern female, it is left semi-drawn while the last one is more so a shadow. The last character is almost dead mother of Noor, suffering from three types of cancer. She is introduced as the half dead Zainab, who is completely dependent upon her thirteen years old son Noor.

There is a downward journey of woman’s realization of herself worth as depicted by Muhammad Hanif. These three characters represent the three stages of woman’s consciousness. Alice Bhatti is a beautiful but poor girl. She is humiliated at every step of her life. Every small happiness demands a down payment from her. She is struggling against the religious, cultural and patriarchal tyrannies of the society. She is the kind of woman, who attracts the wrong type of attraction. She is represented as a weak woman. All her life, she has been passing doctrines of passive resistance, bowing down her eyes and avoiding male gaze. Hanif has portrayed her

a weak character. One who is sure about her weakness and her nothingness. Her nothingness is strengthened at every moment.

Hina Alvi is standing at the second stage of this earthward journey of female consciousness. Alvi has adjusted herself into the 'absence'. She has accepted the norms and tyrannies as 'normal'. She has grown herself into the role of a triply marginalized other. Hanif has declared her uselessness into the interview panel that her main contribution to the proceedings was of 'licking the crimson juice occasionally dripping from the corner of her mouth' (p.2). Only as a silent Other, she is acceptable. She is not talking, participating in any activity while all the male members are negotiating with Alice Bhatti. Senior Sister Hina's character symbolizes a passive woman who has to tame her consciousness. This is the only way, a woman is acceptable in Hanif's world of fiction. She has to accept her status as lower to men. She has to accept men as the norm, as the ultimate authority. They can shoot, kick or hack a woman but one has to behave as it is normal. Pakistani women do not question their place in Hanif's fictive world. Teaching the same lesson to Alice Bhatti, Alvi says, "But your duty is to convince them to put it back in their pants. You are not taught to go around hacking them" (p.75).

In Hanif's world of fiction, the common sense of Pakistani woman is moving in the reverse order. It is moving towards extinction, going to be ended soon. The only way to survive is not to light a candle but to adjust their eyes with the darkness. Hina Alvi is a symbol of this adjustment with the darkness. She becomes the Queen of a sick Charya world (p.30).

The last stage of a traumatized female consciousness is symbolized by Zanib, the lead pencil sketch of a female character. She is more so a shadow; a complete absence. Her lips are pursed. Using religion, patriarchy and social oppression as tools, Hanif has completely dehumanized her. She is pampered by her thirteen years old son Noor. She is even unable to shoo the flies off her mouth. Noor sweeps her drippings. He feeds her. She is totally dependent upon him.

Zanib symbolizes the last stage of female consciousness. Female consciousness is dead. The fits of unconsciousness which occasionally made Alice see a stagnant lizard on the wall, have now completely overwhelmed Zainab. She is unconscious, she is not at all aware of her rights. She has lost her fight against tyrannies and couched herself into a position favoured by the male members. She is in a state of complete dependency upon male. She is fed by them, cared by them. Her consciousness is completely dead. She cannot stand up any more. She represents a completely subjugated, silenced woman.

3. Sacred Heart Hospital – A Nightmare

The Sacred Heart Hospital – for all ailments is the setting for this novel, the main action takes place inside it. Hanif has pictured it as a nightmare, a place full of dirt and garbage. The stinking odour of blood and urine is its distinguished feature, a place full of strange creatures with dripping roofs, broken beds and insufficient medicine. Everything happens here should be considered normal. As Hanif writes, "Alice Bhatti has read many stories about women being

hacked and burnt or simply disappeared in the corridors of the Sacred, and now Sister Hina Alvi has told her that she should consider everything in this place normal” (p.35).

In this centre of this entire supernatural, nightmarish normal place is walking, breathing and working a creature Alice Bhatti, who is no less nightmarish than the Sacred itself. A distraught being, thinking of lizards and mops of blood even during her interview. She is depicted as an oppressed person having a sabotaged identity.

Hanif writes about the hospital, “This death hole otherwise known as Sacred Heart Hospital for All Ailments. Rights for admission reserved...” (P.8). Hanif’s description of the Sacred Heart Hospital serves as an extended metaphor for Pakistan. It is the metaphorical description of the country. In Rushdian stance, Hanif has ironically portrayed the picture of a “Death Hole.” Where killing, murdering, burning and disappearing of women is considered normal.

Alice is everywhere and nowhere in the hospital. In Hanif’s fictive world, everyone is obsessed with her presence but no one is ready to give her any place. Arguing about the place allotted to a woman, Arendt (1974) says that to find a place for a woman in any piece of literature, one has to begin by searching in the footnotes, in the marginalia, in the less recognized works of a thinker for those “traces” that are left behind by women’s presence and more often than not by their absence.

4. A Victim of Patriarchy

At the heart of this hospital is situated a sick Charyaward, a nuthouse. It is full of mad men, singing absurd songs, dancing, making nest of human hair, a place which makes one miserable. There is not a single woman in this nuthouse. Alice Bhatti is sent there for their medication. Sick Charya ward symbolizes the elite class of society. The class which is making laws and is involved in corruption. Hanif has attempted to show the madness, lack of logic and cruelty presiding in this class. Woman is a plaything for them. Hanif’s writing is too much focused on male evil and female helplessness, it is further strengthening the dichotomous division. He writes,

As she nears the Charya ward, she realises that the usual smells –disinfectants, spirits, dried blood, stale food –have started to disappear. She can see potted plants, pots chipped and plants dead, and moss growing in the cracks on the walls. An arrow painted on the wall points towards the ward, with the words The Centre for Mental and Psychological Diseases written in English and Urdu (p.32).

In Hanif’s world of fiction, every idea, every action performed by any department in Pakistan reaches through the dark sieve. He has not discussed law, politics, judiciary or any other institute both with its good and bad aspects. Rather every institute is presented as a store house of evils.

The chipped pots show the pomp and show of this class. The apparent sophistication but hollowness of their values as the plants are dead. Their reason and humanity is dead. Hanif has criticised all the departments the law, courts, police, politics, the government,

religion, human rights organization and media. There is no place given to woman in the law. All of these departments are depicted as being run illogically by the mad men. Hina Alvi refers that they might have killed their own sister or daughter but one has to tell them that it's normal. "*Dardaur ,dawaaur ,dardaur,dawaaur,*" Hanif has shown the absurdity and abstract nature of law made by male members. Apparently this song has no significance in the structure of the novel but through its abstract language, it serves to produce the reality effect in the novel, the rules which are made by men and for men. She is a victim left on the mercy of male members. Adrienne Rich (2003) remarks about such writings as these are "so focused on male evil and female victimization that it is, too, allows for no difference among men, places, times ..." (p.35).

5. Alice – The Powerless Figure

Alice is depicted as weak, passive Pakistani women. She is shown as a pawn in the game of male chess. Alice is shown as a woman who is facing the overwhelming lust of a wolfish society. She does not have any power to answer back. She cannot resist. Lusty males are there to eat her up, destroy her body.

Hanif has entrapped Alice into the same old framework of a powerless Pakistani woman. She has managed herself in her powerlessness. As he writes, "She has a whole doctrine perfected over years to deal with all of that" (p.9). She knows that she cannot answer them back or resist their assaults. So she does not want to be noticed because of her powerlessness position. Hanif writes, "when she walks she walks with slightly hurried steps, as if she has an important but innocent appointment to keep. She avoids eye contact, she looks slightly over people's heads as if looking out for somebody ..." (P. 98). Against this powerless picture of an Asian woman, Hazel V. Carby (1982) argues that many Asian girls have strongly protested against being stereotyped as weak, passive, quiet girls who do not dare lift a finger in their own defence (p.67). Similarly, Parmar and Mirza (1981) have also objected against this stereotypical portrayal of women. They consider it a degradation of Asian women to portray them as girls "who do not want to stand out or cause trouble but to tip-toe about hoping nobody will notice them" (Parmar & Mirza, 1981, p.30).

6. Body – A locus of exploitation

If female bodies are the locus of exploitation, they are also the sites of resistance. Hanif has stereotyped Alice Bhatti through the exploitation of body. Throughout her life, she is physically exploited by men. He has followed the century's old tradition of stereotyping women as helpless beings. Alice's body is the locus of exploitation in the novel. Throughout the course of the novel, she is defined by her body. Female body and sexuality is controlled and oppressed by the male members of the society. Alice's body is subjected to scrutiny. All men came in her life as exploiters. Hanif has used the adjective "Competing warriors" for them. She is the miserable creature, who has to be exploited. As Hanif writes, "Her twenty seven-year-old body is a compact war zone where competing warriors have trampled and left their marks" (p.174). Hanif has used war imagery for describing the destruction of Alice's body. All

the men who became a part of her personal life have left scars over her body. Her identity is sabotaged in this process. The communist doctor who was her adolescent lover had left the marks of his love over her left breast. The cigarette ash, he had dropped over her during the short period of sweating intercourse became a reminder for her throughout her life.

Hanif has thrown Alice is thrown into a turmoil with her body. Obsession with body has made her psychologically crippled Woman's sexuality and personality is recognized only through her body. She cannot walk outside in a street without being conscious of her body. Hanif has portrayed that. Alice is portrayed as obsessed with her body. This obsession has hampered her mental growth. Her whole being is defined by a pair of breasts and a vagina. Alice is shown combating all the lust strives throughout her life.

7. Dehumanization

A strange croak comes out of her mouth, a voice that surprises her, the voice of a baby frog complaining about being too small for this world. She notices, for the first time in her life, that the lizard has four feet." (p. 7)

Mohanty (1984) has named it as the "infantilization of women", a stereotyping strategy employed by the writers. Hanif has also stereotyped Alice Bhatti by following the same politics of representation. Alice is not portrayed as a normal human being rather she is shown as a fearful, infantilised figure. Alice's nothingness is signified by her comparison to a baby frog. Like a baby frog, her existence is meaningless in this world. Such a comparison carries the connotation of nothingness, meaninglessness and helplessness. In this vast world, she stands nowhere. Her existence has no importance. By such a comparison, Hanif has dehumanized his protagonist Alice Bhatti. Alice's dehumanization is done on two levels, her comparison to a baby frog deprives her completely of her sense of identity. As a person of free will and choice, who is able to take decisions according to her choice. She herself is surprised at her helplessness. It is Alice's "misplaced anger" in Fanonian terms, which led her to see lizard on the wall. Misplaced anger of a person with compromised identity gives birth to an inferiority complex in the individual. Alice's misplaced anger involves her in day dreaming, the one that cannot express her hatred. The purposeless filthy lizard stagnant on the wall is a result of her inferiority complex. As Hanif writes "She looks at the lizard again. It has moved but it is not going anywhere. It stays fixed on the wall like an emblem that has forgotten its purpose" (p.10).

Lizard symbolises Alice's stagnant, meaningless existence. The filth, the nauseating feeling attached with its sight foreshadows that there will not be any change, any improvement in Alice Bhatti's life. She is born to suffer till her last breath. "It has moved but it is not going anywhere, it stays stuck to the wall ..." (p.10). This line foreshadows the upcoming disasters in Alice's life. Neither her job nor does her wedding to a Muslim brought any solace in her life. Her life is not improved. She cannot attain a respectable status in a society. She remains stuck to her position. The stagnancy Hanif has attached with Alice's existence echoes back the absurdity of Samuel Beckett in "Waiting for Godot" (1991), where all their efforts are fruitless. All their life, they have been living in a ditch and waiting for a miracle save them. Till the last scene, "they do

not move” (p.98). Similarly, Alice has spent her life in a ditch. All her efforts bore no fruit and the pathetic, miserable creature becomes more miserable at the end with “nothing to be done” (p.1). Alice, the centre of gravity has lost her gravitational tug. Her existence is not more than a zero in Hanif’s fictional world.

8. Absence and Presence of Alice Bhatti:

It is not the mere “absences “of the Coloured women which makes them outrageous but the way they make them “visible”, argues Carby (1982) in the start of her nominal article, “*White Woman Listen !*”. Women of colour, the Black women and Third world Eastern women all are depicted in literature according to a set pattern of ideas. They are analysed according to the parallels made between them and the White, educated progressed women of West.

Alice Bhatti is presented as a tortured soul in the novel. Throughout the course of her life, Alice is deprived of a single ray of hope. Religion, family, work place, marriage all these institutes have destroyed her life. Hanif’s lens is more so Oriental in seeing the life and experience of Alice Bhatti. This stereotyping is further carried through the narration of the novel. This is the life history of Alice Bhatti. She is present throughout the novel. The writer’s endeavour is to capture not merely the geographical landscape of her life but the psychological insights are woven in the plot of the story as a sub plot. This is Alice Bhatti, who is present on every page of the novel but unfortunately, there is not even a single instance where Hanif has used “I” for Alice Bhatti. The whole story is narrated in the third person technique. This “linguistic remove” cannot be ignored. This is her “presence” which is questionable rather than her absence in the story. The very title of the novel denotes her absence. In “*Our Lady of Alice Bhatt*”, “Our” shows the possession, the desire to possess. Like a piece of land or a property Alice Bhatti is a property of all male members of this society. As Hanif writes, “A woman was something you could get as loose change in a deal made on a street corner” (p.96). Emphasising this difference of narration which kills the originality and individuality of a woman, Carby (1982) argues that there is a difference between history and *herstory*. While the former refers to the story of oppression written from the Oriental perspective later refers to the story of pain and sorrows written from the view point of an oppressed woman of the Third world.

9. Posters, Play Cards as a Meta –text

Banners, play cards, torn wall posters and wall chalking all are employed as literary devices to stereotype women. Their absurd languages serves as a commentary over the absurd situation of Pakistani women. Like Backett, Hanif has created meaning through absurdity. Hanif says “The electricity pole is splattered with leaflets and stickers. It reads ‘the coalition for the Protection of the Mothers of the faithful’ reads the poster with a chader covering a “faceless woman “(p. 12).

Every word, every image is symbolic. Hanif has employed ‘absurdity ‘as a tool to stereotype Alice Bhatti. Hanif has depicted that the absurdity and myth circulating around women. Religion, politics, culture and society all are moving around women like a snake to

suffocate her. Women are considered as a symbol of honour and respect. She is represented as the repository of honour both in public and private spheres.

Hanif has further conformed Alice Bhatti's 'sotherness' in the novel. People have been fighting, killing each other in the name of "honour of the Mother". Stereotype of mother is perpetuated here. She is considered as a store house of honour. Patriarchy has designed a model to fulfil its demands. The visual code of a "faceless woman" highlights the homogenization of women in Pakistan. "Faceless woman" denotes her marginality and otherness. She is still a classless, raceless, featureless entity. Women are treated as a faceless, classless category. They have no individuality and difference. All are same, undistinguishable junk. The image itself is a denial of "difference."

Under the cover of same "chador," all are collected. It is a complete denial of woman's identity. Women are not identified as individuals of desires, emotions and intellect rather they are just recognized by the roles they play.

10. Politics of Dependency

Pakistani women are portrayed as meek, passive creatures, largely dependent upon their male members for support and protection. They are unable to defend themselves and have to rely upon male counterparts. Alice Bhatti is introduced as a strong woman, who is fighting against the chauvinistic society throughout her life. Bumping a doctor, slashing the penis of a ruffian elite are the most important examples of her courage and extraordinary valour but somewhere, Hanif has again stereotyped her through the politics of dependency. The male dominated society, where every male member is depicted as a killer, exploiter or an oppressor her lingering sense of insecurity brings her to choose one of these killers.

She is still dependent upon a male member for her security and protection. Somewhere, deep down her consciousness this fact is embedded that she is weak, helpless and miserable without a male member. Whenever she walks in the hospital and outside it, she walks with hurried steps because "She does not want anyone to think that she is alone and nobody is coming for her" (p.98). She knows that without a male member on her back she has no value, nobody will respect her. Everyone will consider her easy bait.

Here, Hanif's Amazon Queen becomes a mere passive woman, conforming the pre-existing stereotype of weakness and dependency.

11. Women: An Endangered Species

Either woman is passive or she does not exist (Robins, 2000, p.110). Hanif has used the term 'Endangered Species' for Pakistani women. They are killed, hacked and shot every day in Pakistan. The whole scene is reflected through the eyes of Alice Bhatti. Women are presented as a passive creature born to suffer. They cannot raise a voice for themselves. They are killed in the name of honour, love and sometimes just as a sport. In Hanif's fictive world, male members consider it their birth right to strike every deal centred on women. Centred yet marginalized is the status of women in Hanif's text. At one place, she is a victim of domestic abuse, at another

place; she is suffocated to death by a jilted lover. Farmers, politicians all strike their deals and use women bodies as commodities to be exchanged.

Such a depiction on one hand highlights the marginalized status of women in Pakistan but on the other hand it risks the integrity of womanhood. Women are shown as passive actors, puppets whose strings are tightened by the male members of the society. Women's lives are shadowed forever. They move from one man to another, being kicked, punched and then sometimes bounced back. No one speaks for them, law politics, religion, culture and tradition all are hand in glove with for the deterioration of women

Women are doubly marginalized in the Postcolonial societies, firstly by the colonizers and secondly, by their male members. Hanif's emphasis is upon the marginalized status of women in Pakistan. There is no place for a happy woman in Hanif's fictive world. All women are hopeless, only two are properly named Alice Bhatti and Hina Alvi. Remaining all is described as nameless creatures, facing the overwhelming oppression of the society.

Such a portrayal reinforces the pre-established stereotype of a passive victim. There is no space for a woman to educate herself. Reading this book may lead to depression and disruption. Such a passive, victimized portrait of women threatens the individuality and courage of woman, her realization to speak for herself and love herself as an individual of free will. Throughout the novel, there are instances of the objectification and commodification of women. Spivak has always been vocal against this marginalization of women. This 'guise of sympathy' is threatening their individuality. They should not be depicted as mummies forever silent, forever deaf. Women should be depicted as courageous women, who can raise a voice for themselves. This is the only chink from where a ray of hope can enter.

12. Women as Slaves

Hanif has compared the names of Alice Bhatti and Teddy Butt. Teddy is always addressed by his full name, people give him respect and honour although his financial status is not higher than Alice Bhatti but still he is given respect. While on the other hand, Alice is always addressed as 'sister Alice,' or 'daughter Alice'. She is known by the role she performs for the society not as a human being having a proper name.

Alice and all women are stereotyped as slaves, a prepaid, life time servant. Men are shown as the exploiters, the cruel masters treating their women mercilessly. Men bought women in the deal of marriage, the prepaid multipurpose servants, who cook food for them, give birth to their children and also perform as whores to fulfil their sexual hunger. This image of a breeder, cook and whore are connected with Pakistani women for a long time.

Hanif's depiction has further strengthened the dichotomy of male / female, strong / weak. Women are denied a respectable status in the society. They are treated as slaves; they do not have freedom to spend their lives independently. This also shows the ignorance of women in Pakistan. Alice never has the realization that she is person other than the roles assigned to her. She is mere 'Sister Alice' or 'Daughter Alice'. She is comfortable within the confines of that

constructed role, never challenges it. This 'happy being ignorant' sort of attitude has threatened the humanity of Alice Bhatti.

13. Home, love – The Lingering Sense of Insecurity

Love is a beautiful dream knotted into a lingering sense of insecurity. It is a ray of hope for the traumatized soul Alice Bhatti. Alice is exploited throughout the course of her life. She is considered as the object of male fantasy, a woman who does not have any respect and social position. Every man is determined to sexually exploit her. Hanif describes that she is the type of woman, who attracts the 'wrong type of attraction.' Marriage proves to be the house of exploitation, Alice is introduced as a non –typical woman and she went to the jail for kicking a doctor in the groin. She is the sort of woman, who cannot say 'sorry and yes please'. She is weak from inside. She needs support and protection from a male member, one who can save him from all the other tyrants of his own sex. As Hanif writes, "The whole business of love is a protection racket, like paying your local bhatta to your local hoodlum so that you are not mugged on your own street" (p.82), he is more so a bodyguard who has melodramatically saved her from a bunch of madmen.

The connection of security and peace is attached to the concept of marriage and home. But for Alice, it was a survival strategy, a way to hide from the lusty eyes of male members. Her fear of being lost in the whirlpool of patriarchal lust makes her take this step. It is her desire for a respectable status, her quest for identity which takes her to Teddy Butt but the irony of situation mocked her, a futile effort to touch the centre. But fate laughed at her. The effort of a triply marginalized Subaltern became fruitless. She is further victimized. Her saviour turned into killer. Teddy Butt made her die a death on which Death itself weeps. He burnt her by throwing a bottle of acid upon her. Alice's death does not create any difference. Alice Bhatti does not bring anything new in the already established notion of a woman, a woman who is exploited throughout her life and meets the same miserable death at the end.

14. Alice in Wonderland and Alice Bhatti in Horror land

Alice's adventures through the Wonderland are called as the feminist adventures of self-discovery. Megan S. Lloyd (2010) remarks that Alice is breaking all the stereotypes of a typical Western female. Her journey is the journey of self-discovery.

Like Alice's journey in the Wonderland, Alice Bhatti's journey in this world is full of adventures. It can be interpreted as a mockery of feminist self-discovery which ends into her pitiable death. Every new step brings a new challenge for Alice Bhatti. It is the journey of feminine slavery and objectification. If Alice is a feminist, learning at every moment, Alice Bhatti is a down trodden soul, also learning at every moment. Alice Bhatti learns to leave her pride, her identity at every new step. At the end, Alice Bhatti is stripped off her identity completely by Muhammad Hanif. Alice returns in the real world as a strong female figure breaking all the pre-established stereotypes of a woman but Hanif's Alice Bhatti cannot leave the Horror land as an alive soul, a passive woman who questions the tyrannies of the society but unable to defend herself at the end.

If madness and novelty are the working principals of Wonderland, absurdity and horror are the working principals of the Sacred Heart Hospital –The Horror Land. Alice as a stereotypical passive woman, insecure for support is forced to death. Till the end, she cannot defy the existing stereotype of victimized woman. Absurdity of religion, culture, tradition and racial prejudice kills the ‘little bit’ of Alice Bhatti, she was able to retain till the end. Alice Bhatti is sticking to the ‘cult of true womanhood.’ The stagnant notion of a slave victim of male violence, whose condition does not change throughout her life is the working principle of Alice Bhatti’s life. In Alice Bhatti’s Horror Land, nothing is explainable, everything is considered normal here. Alice Bhatti’s fate in the end of her journey proves her a passive victim.

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