

WOMEN, WORDS, AND WOUNDS: FRAGMENTATION AS FEMINIST RESISTANCE IN OUR LADY OF ALICE BHATTI

Hina Bibi

Lecturer, Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Qurtuba University DIKhan
bibihina396@gmail.com

Sana Saddiqi

Mphill Scholar at COMSATS University Islamabad
sanaakhan5698@gmail.com

Shahbaz Ali Khan

Shahbazali.qusit.92@gmail.com

Chahat Shah Zeb

Ph.D Scholar, Lecturer UST- Bannu.
Chahatshahzaib@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper, going to examine Our Lady of Alice Bhatti (2011) by Muhammad Hanif by using Feminist Stylistics, more specifically, the Feminist tool fragmentation conceived by Sara Mills (1995). Discursive fragmentation, in such a context, means reducing women to parts of the body and sexualizing them- to pretty eyes, big breasts, juicy lips, and hot figure as opposed to an embodiment of a person. The study takes the same approach and applies mixed methods of research because it should explore both textual and quantitative explanations. The chosen passages of the novel are discussed in relation to the identification of how Hanif addresses the language of objectification of women, at least in the Pakistani society where walls of the male dominated institution and religion act as the most effective guardians of such objectification. A side table of frequencies also measures the frequency of the use of objectifying language in the text. As per the results of this work, this analysis shows that stylistic fragmentation in Our Lady of Alice Bhatti (2011) is more of a representational strategy and a space of struggle. Although the language indicates dehumanizing male gaze, the novel also criticizes the same gaze by exposing the ridiculous and the violence in it. These two capacities reinforce the feminist reading of the text and also make intuitive the statement by Mills that style choices have the potential to represent as well as challenge prevailing gender ideologies.

Keywords: Muhammad Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011), Feminist Stylistics, Fragmentation, Sara Mills, Gendered Language, Objectification, Mixed-Methods, Pakistani Fiction, Textual Analysis

1. Introduction

Among the modern Pakistani fiction authors, the research on gender relations has picked up the pace, especially in the area of language and representational strategies. *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) by Muhammad Hanif is one such literary piece that draws our attention since it is critically reviews gendered realities. Reputed to be a bright satirist and thought-provoking social critic, Hanif builds a graphic set of narrations which raises the voice of women who become oppressed in the frameworks of institutions and society. In this paper, the use of linguistic strategies in the novel especially the instrument of fragmentation as theorized by Sara Mills (1995) is discussed to see how language is used to objectify female identity as also as a means of resisting female identity. By so doing, the paper explores the connection between stylistic features to the extent that not only do they shape ideologies in a given society, they also attack and disrupt the ideologies.

Fragmentation, which is a term that is used by Feminist Stylistics, is the discursive act through which a woman is reduced to sexually charged isolated body parts, and through what is set up as the breaking down of the female body into a fragmented collection of parts featuring such

elements as pretty eyes, sexy legs, or a curvy figure and so on), and the elimination of her subjectivity or her agency. This figure of speech supports the male objectification of women constructing them as visual objects of consumption and sexual appeal. Hanif deliberately uses such linguistic practice as a form of portraying the loci of misogyny patriarchal institutions uphold. In the *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011), he uses such a linguistic practice as one means of tackling misogyny practiced in societies. The style with which the female characters have been portrayed in the novel, especially Alice Bhatti has often been made to sound by male consciousness, where the main focus seems to be given to a physical appearance of a woman rather than people as a whole. Nevertheless, these examples are not introduced without criticism but instead, by irony, humor, and exaggerated diction, Hanif reveals the irony and the violence behind such depictions.

This work fits into the grand tradition of Feminist Stylistics, that is, a field in critical linguistics which examines how language actively helps in building and maintaining gender ideologies. Feminist Stylistics, represented by Sara Mills, attempts to combine both aspects of not merely what people say, but how they say it, which involves linguistic patterns, vocabulary selection and textual design which are attempts to code gendered meanings. When this framework is applied to the novel by Hanif it is possible to get a subtle idea about the way the stylistic device works ideologically. The analysis reveals the extent to which Hanif uses fragmentation as a strategy of narrative and a location of ideological contestation and in the process creates opportunity of feminine resistance in a hyper-patriarchal context.

This study aims at explaining that *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) fails to reproduce sexist lingo as a narrative tool; instead, she uses it to lambaste the very systems by which women are discursively dehumanised. Hanif by exposing the stylistic fragmentation of female identity indicts the concept of misogynistic embeddedness of societal and institutionalized discourse, especially that originating and integrating in the spheres of religion, medicine and law enforcement. Concurrently, the novel opposes such simplifications by allowing its heroine not just to speak but to be heard, considering that although she is being sexualized, she chooses to exercise her autonomy through minor but effective gestures. The fact that language plays a dual role both as an instrument of oppression and as a subverting tool reiterates the main point of this paper and resonates well with the fact that Mills told us that stylistic choices can never be neutral, and instead they are deeply ideological.

1.1 Research Questions

1. In what way does Muhammad Hanif use the stylistic device of fragmentation in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) to illustrate the objectification of women?
2. How does the novel apply fragmentation as a tool of criticism and opposition of the ideologies of patriarchy in Pakistani society?

1.2 Research Objectives

1. In order to examine the language of the construction of women in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) through the feminist stylistic feature of fragmentation as put forward by Sara Mills (1995).
2. To investigate how stylistic fragmentation is not only an attempt to retract the male gaze, but also a resource of feminist resistance in the novel.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The research presented will be significant as it will connect the domains of feminist criticism and stylistics bringing them to a lingual context to represent contemporary Pakistani fiction through the idea of gendering. Using the latter approach of Feminist Stylistics suggested by Sara Mills and one of her tools, namely the concept of fragmentation, the study illuminates the role of language in objectifying and marginalizing women in works of literature. Another strength of the study is a demonstration of the possibility of stylistic strategies acting as means

of resistance against oppressive patriarchal modes of thought. In addition, this study also adds its voice to the emerging feminist literature on South Asian literature as it alerts to the less apparent, but strong methods by which language codifies social structures of power. It will also be of particular interest to gender studies scholars, stylistics scholars and postcolonial scholars of literature and readers and anyone interested in the triangular relationship between language and power and identity.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

The present study is narrowed down to the textual analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) (2011) by Muhammad Hanif with only paying attention to the linguistic strategy of fragmentation according to the definition by Sara Mills in her work on feministic stylistics (1995). Other tools of the Mills framework are not examined like transitivity, modality, and naming and no comparative study with other texts was done in the research. Also, it is limited to the analysis of some extracts in the novel applying the fragmentation in the best ways. The interpretation of the work is an interpretive study, and the study does not draw upon the readers or the external social surroundings to provide empirical evidence and is therefore only confined to happenings within the text itself.

2 Literature Review

The theoretical base of the literary interpretation provided by Sara Mills serves as a basis to understand the premises on which the examination of literary works through the prism of feminist approach is constructed, and much attention is paid to the choice of language as the predetermining factor of shaping the gender ideologies. Mills applies in it a tool of fragmentation, or objectification of the woman on one hand by referring to the parts of a woman instead of to her fully as the subject as the ways to shore up the male gaze as well as do away with female subjectivity. According to her, lexical selection, sentence structure and naming patterns cannot be neutral; they are ideologically charged. In this research, the idea of fragmentation presented by Mills will be employed as the critical framework to analyze how the novel of Hanif codes the gender relations of power and oversimplifies them through the conceptualization of the story pattern as a form of critique of the construction of such power relations with respect to gender issues.

Bano and Anwar use feminist stylistic instruments to examine the way women are depicted in the modern Pakistani novels. Their labor shows how such linguistic patterns in fictional texts reflect the norms in the society, as well as resist them. They claim that fragmentations, naming, lexical forms usually reveal the patriarchy inherent in language. They follow an analysis of Kartography and How It Happened, which overlaps the purpose of the current paper and offers a comparative approach, which proves helpful in arguing that such Pakistani fiction tends to agonize over the self-same gendered ideologies that it portrays. Their strategy legitimates the significance of Feminist Stylistics as a procedure of critique to texts of South Asian literature. Khattak and Saeed utilize the aspect of feminist linguistic approach through examining objectification of women in Pakistani English novel. Their results indicate that female characters are regularly presented in pieces, concentrated on body parts rather than intellect or influence, thus affirming the idea that they are made as passive objects of male longings. This literature underlines the main statement of the present research: the role of language as a determinant of sustaining or questioning the patriarchal systems. The article notes the importance of a critical reading of such objectification and indicates how the feminist reading can find subversive meanings in seemingly misogynistic texts.

This novel by Muhammad Hanif is a satirically gloomy depiction of a Christian nurse, Alice Bhatti, who is passing through institutional, religious as well as social oppression in Karachi. It is filled with stylistic innovations, humor, irony, and critiques an objective approach to more objectification of women as a reality in the system. The physical descriptions of female

characters especially Alice are commonly presented in a fragmented form especially by the male gaze. The gaze, however, is often undermined by Hanif who exposes the absurdity and violence of this gaze by using narrative irony. This twofold patriarchal role of the language and its opposite tendency is the thing that this paper is focused on and is also consistent with the theoretical approach of Mills regarding ideological role of stylistic choice.

3. Methodology

This paper uses mixed-methods research design; that is, qualitative text analysis and quantitative data analysis to review the stylistics of representation of women in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) by Muhammad Hanif. The qualitative part is devoted to the interpretive reasoning of the passages of choice of the language that demonstrates the stylistic gadget of fragmentation as formulated by Sara Mills (1995). The passages are examined according to its syntax, word usage and male gaze in these passages. Alongside it, there is the quantitative part, which entails drawing up a table with a list of repetitions of lexical material indicating the body parts belonging to women, broken, sexualized or objectified. The two-pronged method makes the results more solid and grounded by offering both interpretive data and visible patterns in language.

3.1 Tools for Data Collection

There are two major tools involved in data collection: Textual Extraction: Key passages are manually identified and extracted out of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) to carry out qualitative analysis. The excerpts were chosen using the existence of gendered language and references to the female body, which are in fragments. Frequency Table (Quantitative Tool): It is a data table that is used to count and measure the frequency of certain lexical items that are: the use of the word hot figure, sexy lips, big breasts and pretty eyes that indicate the disintegration of female characters. Such table assists in defining trends and repetitive themes in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) that support the stylistic device under question.

3.2 Sample

The data that makes the sample in the present study includes the excerpts of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) where the particular instances of stylistic fragmentation and the objectification of the female protagonist, or other female characters) occur. This selection is purposive and only those sections of the novel were chosen on which there is plenty of the linguistic markers of fragmentation. Moreover, a smaller but selective lexical list is created based on the complete text in order to measure the frequency of certain words and phrases that help in dehumanizing female identity. The unit of the analysis incorporates phrases, individual sentences, descriptive writings of not only the narrative voice but also the dialogues of the characters.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This paper can be based on Feminist Stylistics by Sara Mills (1995), and more specifically, in the notion of fragmentation. Feminist Stylistics is the study which considers the context of the interface between language and gender through the argument that specific linguistic characteristics (names, sentence structure, choice of lexicon, narrative viewpoint) contribute to arraying gendered representations. Fragmentation, in this system, is a discursive practice that is based on portraying women as parts of body at the expense of presenting them as complete individuals with an agency of their own. Mills claims that beauties are not merely reflective of the patriarchal ideology but also help carry out the patriarchal ideology. It is this theoretical lens that makes it possible to subject *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) to critical reading through which the stylistics can be identified as a point of oppression and resistance at the same time.

4. Fragmentation

As a term of literary criticism, fragmentation is the tendency to describe characters, especially women, in terms of independent body parts or similar attributes, as opposed to whole, self-autonomous people. This type of literature is usually used to objectify women and turn them

into a collection of fragmented objects, most of them consumed quietly through a male lens. Mills (2005:166) puts it well when she says that such representation of women as objectified parts of a body corresponds to male gaze, that is, women are objectified and are perceived as objects of desire, not as complete subjects. Another reason why this technique diminishes women as passive objects in the patriarchal sphere is that this method makes them an entire composition of all things (Mills, 2005:133).

The fragmentation of women is commonplace in literature as compared to men who are represented as whole individuals. Such renditions do not only occur in texts that speak explicitly about sexuality, but are in fact present in a broad genre of literary texts. Such fragmentation also underpins social standards that exist in the societal context and contribute to the maintenance of gender inequality, a topic of the major concern when it comes to feminist stylistic analysis. Through these incomplete images we now see how the patriarchal principles influence the image of a female in literature and also lead to the consolidation of gendered balance of power.

Our Lady of Alice Bhatti (2011) (2011), the sexist and stereotyping language here are so rampant that there are too many cases of linguistic fragmentation of women in the book. This fragmentation has been typical of anti-feminist literature and such abundance could be found in the novel. Women characters are usually named after their physical aspects based on their anatomy instead of being who they are. Though fragmentation in the male gender is also possible, it is experienced more often with great intensity affecting women disproportionately. The following passage can be regarded an example of such fragmentation in the novel: "The room is a shrine to pharmaceuticals marketing the orange wall clock of GlaxoSmithKline and the calendar with blonde models at different stages of migraine of Pfizer Pain Management System."

This excerpt reveals the tendency of placing the bodies of women under the role of secondary items and the need to continue a trend of subjection and discontinuity. When Hanif (2011) talks about these skills, she argues that the academic pathways must be made up of people who are able to scale the height of their educational training project because people will get to it. In other words, in the case of Hanif (2011) we are dealing with a situation where our academic pathways need to be comprised of individuals who can reach the heights of their educational training project since people will reach it.

There is no direct yoking of the female body in the above mention but indirectly she has made use of terms such as blonde that the writer has alluded to the body parts of women something which arouses sexual feelings in the mind of the reader. Since we know that the word blonde is used to show something negative meaning that models can have fair hair, skin, and light eyes that create a negative impression on women in the society you will find that there is a lot of fragmentation that derails depending on the physical appearance of women when it is not necessary to highlight fair hair or light eyes.

This indirect yet very incessant kind of fragmentation subjects women to their apparent anatomical features as compared to generalizing them as total beings.

The passage mentioned above is the example of this split as women are depicted not as whole but fragmented organisms. Such dislocation continues all through the novel where we find there are several moments of female body disassembly as the story progresses.

At first Alice Bhatti sits on the edge of the chair but then can feel that she is dizzy; she is afraid that the chair may slide and she will find herself lying in the wind with legs in the air. She scoots back in her chair, the chair squeaks, and she put the file on her lap, and pulls it on to her chest. Then as she realizes that she is causing a commotion of herself, she reissues it into her lap and pushes her hands under her thighs, in a bid to prevent any trembling." (Hanif, 2011, p.05)

In the quote cited earlier in the first chapter of the novel, the heroin of the novel Alice Bhatti speaks of fear of being looked upon by the male member of society. There are several fragmentizations of the Heroin of the novel. As she sits on the sitting chair we find that the male group of the panel of doctors is literally gazing at her body parts rather than following the interview process which is so common in the current day society and this scenario illustrates how the women are being treated by the male member of our society. She is uneasy and places the file on her lap to her chest but all of a sudden she looks down and realizes that they have begun staring at the lower body parts of her and she makes a show of her self, she places it in her lap and places her hands there also not letting them viewing her body. The phrases such as chest and legs in the air belong to the category of fragmentation that proves to be exceedingly abusive to the women. Doctor staring symbolizes the male representatives of the society the which indicates that the woman is not safe in the modern society of today, the using of the above mentioned terms is most rude and serves a negative stereotype about women in the community. This also happens one more time when she is in the interview room on yet another occasion.

It is her Dupatta that flares in a rush of wind and the faces of the three individuals occupying the seat before her blur into a mob, a mob that is on a mission to a pre decided lynching elsewhere but during this time it decides to warm up on the stray dog. (Hanif, 2011, p.07)

The text mentioned above makes an indirect reference to the body of the female protagonist making an inference to her breasts that generates a particular emotion among the readers. It is yet another example of indirect dishonoring of the female body, turning the character into its physical characteristic, instead of viewing her as a complete personality. The woman in the novel named Alice Bhatti displays the motives of the doctors and how they wanted to stare at her body parts. We even see how male panel of doctors are staring on her nipples particularly Ortho sir when they are interviewing her. The language that they employ in the communication with the heroin would be quite derogatory and abusive. The negative attitude of the men against women in our stereotypical society is reflected in the negative action by Ortho sir when he asks her that you had better tell us how you take care of these (nipples). The phrase inverted nipples give connotation towards the abusive words against women in the novel which underlines the position of women and which type of Language are used by the male population of our society towards women. The main character is treated with very abusive words, which signify the kind of mistreatments and objectification of women in society. The use of such language highlights the culture of shame and derogation of women by tradition and society who place them at the lowest ranks and further highlight gender disparity.

Fragmenting of female body is also an other example which is there at the same page: “Skeevy fawnings, dirty looks and unwanted contacts are just part and parcel of the daily ordeal of Alice Bhatti.” (Hanif, 2011, p.09)

In the said line of the novel, we have again the indirect allusion to the body parts of a female which directly signifies these hands that unexpectedly hits the bottom of the female protagonist and the readers know that the writer is referring to the hips of the female protagonist. The heroin implies that the sexual indecency of men to women tends to be disgusting and intolerable in the community.

The main character, Alice Bhatti describes the story that when men offer lewd displays and whispered suggestions at women, in most cases, that is normal as far as sexual desires are concerned. Bottom means the female part of the body and this is a form of pure fragmentation. Alice Bhatti was accustomed to male hands who came without invitation to the male strata of the society, and this was her everyday life that depicts how the women undergo all the evils of male and represent the negative actions of the male towards the women. As we go in the novel, the author informs us concerning the other women in the novel:

He Dampens an old bandage in a bowl of spirit and cleans around Zainab lips, chin and wrinkled neck. She has a chilly forehead and her grey eyelashes which are always moving when she sleeps are totally still.” (Hanif, 2011, p.37)

In the cited passage, the author dismembered the old woman, Zainab, mother of Noor and presented her in terms of forms of her body, but not overall looks. In this the writer is not pointing to the whole being of Zainab he is pointing to her physical parts like lips, chin and her wrinkled neck also her eyelashes which is a clear case of female fragmentation but even the old lady who is in a stage 4 cancer is stereotyped and fragmentized. There are various types of sexist words that have been utilized to fragmentize the body of Zainab by talking about her s lips, her chin, her wrinkled neck, and her grey eyelashes among others. Even the old woman is disintegrated which is sign of moral loss of the eastern society. As the story continues, Alice informs us about the junior clerk of Dr. Preira Noor, who is bound to write whatever Preira Sahab utter: Noor listens and watches the arm of Alice Bhatti, the arm is white and fleshy above the elbow and dark and scrawny below that. To him, he wants to touch the two parts to establish whether they feel different.” (Hanif, 2011, p39)

In this instance the author has reported the sexual appetite of a man that everyone desires to feel the body parts of a woman body. The author has dismembered the female lead Alice Bhatti since he has not referred to her as a full body part but a white and fleshy arm. The author uses the body parts of the female heroin such as her white and fleshy arm which is sexually attractive to the man and they desire to get seduced through the gape of flesh and skin color of these women in our society. Noor wants to touch them in order to identify the difference between his flesh and the flesh the Alice Bhatti as is seen in the passage. In the following paragraph Alice discloses how seductive Noor is: His question is real, he has been cogitating over it these few days, but he is disturbed by the fact that Alice has removed her bra together with her uniform. (Hanif, 2011, p.38)

In this line, the writer does not actually allude to the female body parts but to the undergarments of the female to which the readers can indirectly imply to her chest and her body. Here we get to see that Noor is discussing the patients who have heart problems and explains to Alice Bhatti the significance of the patients life, the medicines they are taking and their diets. In this scene as he is talking to Alice, he is distracted as Alice Bhatti removes her Bra together with her uniform that is an undergarment. The author has disintegrated the main character when we get to know the undergarment of the character that she wears, Bra that is offensive and stereotyped to women in our society. The tale progresses further and other character of the novel gets opportunity to come before the audience and that is of Teddy Butt who is the lover of Alice Bhatti:

Now he has realized that it is the part of the growing-up process. At some point Teddy told him that when a man has not thought about women in nine seconds, then that person is probably not a man, something Teddy had heard on the television. Say, even when you are peeing or eating? Noor had said, in bewilderment. I believe that what they imply is that you can imagine the parts of a woman and not the entire woman. Her mouth or her hair maybe, said Teddy. (Hanif, 2011, p.39)

In the above quote, there is once more the indirect allusion of the writer to the body parts of women through the terms as women body parts, her mouth, her hair and the readers receive specifically the sense that the writer is referring to the female body parts and these create sexual urges in minds. Our society and the manner in which men behave towards the opposite sex (women) or rather, women in the digital media are depicting a bad portrayal as far as our society is concerned.

The male members of our society believe that unless one does not consider the body parts of a woman like her mouth and hair or any other part, then he is not a man because manliness lies

in thinking about the mating parts of the girl body. In this case we can have a clear fragmentation of female where the body parts of females arouse men. Sexist imagery of the woman is displayed in the development of the plot:

Alice turns to him, and leans on her elbow. Child, So she says. Her right breast swings over her left breast. In spite of all the times that Noor has been contemplating about them, he could not even in the wildest imaginations of his thoughts think of her breasts cozied up together, in two poor forlorn puppies thinking that the other one was the mother.” (Hanif, 2011, p.39)

In the excerpt above, we are able to note that two characters are conversing with each other. The first one is male character and this is presented as Noor only and no additional details regarding his body or any other are mentioned.

The second one is a woman who is a lead character of the novel Alice Bhatti that is introduced as object of entertainment by the male gaze and dissected into separate body parts. The names such as elbow, breast, cuddling of breast are cliched names and they are shameful in our culture. The author describes her here by her various body parts and this is in the context of being seductive by male gaze. Her right breast invited and went down on her left breast and this enkindled sexual desire in the man and this is a thing that makes them have sexual gratification. Such a presentation of the body parts of a female main character seems that this person is not a human being and merely a source of sexual enjoyment. Words such as breast, and elbow point to the fact that women are divided into small parts of the stereotyped society.

Her armpit is smeared with sweat on the layer of Tibet talcum powder. This ends the habit of twirling a lock of hair between her forefinger and thumb and then sticking the finger onto the chest of Noor. then she traces a circle round, Heart. Patients of cardiac diseases are fortunate. It simply stops and then attempts to start up again and then they die. She backslides on the stretcher, there is the movement of neck and breasts, which came to their normal position.

The vocabulary adopted by the author in the above verse presents a clear separation of women as composite parts. Even the armpit of a female body is mentioned here which is a very foul depiction in our stereotypical society. The writer has told about Alice Bhatti not as a complete personality, but her various parts of the body such as, lock of hair, forefinger/ finger, neck and even breasts. In this case, the author has separated her body in various parts such as upper part of her body is discussed as uses lock of hair, lower part of her body is explained by using the word neck and the part of her body that is attributed to sexual pleasure is in evoking use of boldness as the writer herself says, her breast shift into their original state which leads to sexual thoughts in the mind of readers and falls in the category of fragmentation because the writer uses women as a source of sexual pleasure. In this instance, the author has focused on the boobs of the heroine. The over indulgence of sexist language which is used against a woman character depicts the seeming attitude towards women by the author. The unnecessary attention on the description of female bodies proves that the author contributes to the disjoining of women turning him to the separate physical features and not to the portrait of healthy multidimensional people. The words such as lock of hair, forefinger and breasts brings out the disintegration of the body of Alice Bhatti. The novel is considerably laden with the presentation of bodies of Alice to be a delight to male sexual organs just as it is stated in the following paragraph: Alice then turns on the other side of her. Now Noor face to face with her and he can sense that she is trembling. The first role is to screen the view of everyday life as a total picture (Hanif, 2011, p.40).

In this line the writer has indirectly referred to female organs yet again by using the words such as back-to-back, quivering spine that directly implies the back of the female lead and the reader gets to know that he is actually writing about the back side of the female body and arouses them sexually. The author gives details of the sexy backside of the female lead character Alice Bhatti and even brings out sexual urges in the readers. He calls her back that now Noor is back-

to-back with Alice and he can even feel his gorgeous back which is a fragmentation of female body. It is normal in our society that when a man is only given the opportunity to touch the back of a woman, he is capable of seducing her and having sexual pleasure by imagining parts of the body.

This implies that man is a slave to its sexual desires. In the following paragraph we find multiple fragmentation of the female character Alice as: Alice Bhatti places both hands on the stretcher and stoop. Noor is also able to observe some layer of talcum powder between her breasts. He is not contemplating about women or their body parts. (Hanif, 2011, p.41)

The quote portrays in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) (2011) the figure of the female protagonist Alice Bhatti and the fact that she is not displayed as a whole person, but her fragmented words of perception of her body representation. When the author wrote that the fact that Noor can see a layer of talcum powder between her breasts means that women are perceived as an object of sexual gratification within our society and also by the men who want to have them seduced by gazing on their genitalia. In this case we can observe that the body part of Alice such as the hands, breast and many more are explained. The use of the words such as hands or breasts may fall under the stereotypical aspect of the category of fragmentation as it is practiced in our society. The story continues and an old lady enters in the wild arms of fragmentation: She sees the patient, elderly person, overweight woman with rosy cheeks and silvery-grey curly hair the kind they call the old grand lady, she can barely figure out that this woman who is also the grand lady seems to resist the illness despite her upper body wrapped together in a two-toned shatoosh shawl. (Hanif, 2011, p.57)

In the mentioned above fragment, the author directly alludes to the woman body parts again as pink cheeks and silvery grey hair but it is comprehended by the audience and it evokes sexist emotions. The writer uses very depreciating terms to describe the old woman due to the degrading and rejecting mentality meted towards women in our society. This depiction highlights inherent gender prejudices and absence of respect to women, irrespective of their age and status. The old women are a patient but she is presented in terms of her various body parts without being a complete being in the forms of fat, pink cheeks and salmon lips.

All these words point out to the negative representation of women in male society.

This implies that even an old lady is stereotyped and broken down. The narration proceeds and describes some of the African models: "Some representatives of Africa fashion industry so strut down a catwalk in bralets made of cocoanut shells and elephant bones." (Hanif, 2011, p.57)

In the above passage in the novel, the author has once more indirect allusion to the body part of a woman because he refers to bra yet in the minds of readers he has referred to the chest of the female character which evokes sexual desires. Its a widespread belief that the fashion models are there to satisfy a male desire being the centres of entertainment at least according to the writer whereby he has used abusive term female as fashion models.

The second one is that the author has written the word bra, which is under garment a woman wears and it is rather an abusive language that degrades the women in our society.

The names such as fashion models and bras are indicators of the dissection of women in the society dominated by men and this is not acceptable in eastern stereotypical society. The action skips and Alice tells another incident of sexual harassment as she is the center of male gaze: Alice thinks: He is imagining me naked. She is always surprised that all the men, including death watchmen, think alike. His eye on the expiring mother and another on the tits of the paramedic. (Hanif, 2011, p.58)

In the above section, the actual fleshiness of the female body has been broken through the use of words such as naked and the tits of the paramedic which the writer has mentioned the parts of the female body that stimulate sexual thoughts in the mind of the reader and the audience can understand that the writer is talking about the tits of the female character. The protagonist

in the novel Alice has spoken her mind about male gazing, which is one of the favored tradition of men. The male division of our society is obsessed with viewing the personal parts of a females body. And always fantasized about them being naked in their heads and had seduced them to perform sexual favors even when they happened to be at a funeral, men are likely to be gazing at the tits of a women and would fantasize a nurse being naked. She opines that men are the victims to their sexual desires and once they begin to fantasize a woman naked in their minds unconscious and forget about what they are doing in their environment. The words such as naked and tits are very offensive and stereotypical in our society. Derogatory language is highly used on women in this novel and it is not suitable. It is on these sexist words that women are viewed in a very negative light as the novel unfolds during the course of the plot.

As the narration continues, the female protagonist indicates her fear of male aggressive and abusive attitude towards women in the society:

His shala is half down his legs now and a wet limp part of his body is touching her cheek. She feels a wave of nausea in her stomach and strangles her throat trying not to be sick in front of a patient. But then when the barrel of the pistol hits her face, some bit of vomit emerges out of her mouth.”(Hanif, 2011, p.59-60)

The protagonist herein is a woman named Alice Bhatti who discloses an incidence that happens to her at the hospital ward and reflects our eyes to the dark side of our society where women are subjected to what seems to be a sex machine to feed the desires of the male gender. The old lady Qazalbash has a bodyguard called Jr. who sexually desires Alice to be in a slave position (p.60).

According to the male dominant level of our society women are viewed as an instrument of entertainment and their property. Junior is attempting to sexually harass Alice by seizing out his ding-dong, which he flaunted before the female protagonist and slaps on her chicks with it, and all that he is doing is on the gun point which is a shame that is completely against the laws and morals of our society. The words such as cheek, throat, or mouth, underline the breaching of the woman body that is unfitting to the female in the eastern society. As the novel unfolds, Alice tells the same story in a different paragraph and talks about what happened next to the junior:

Her eyes are closed, and with left hand Alice takes it: she pumps her fist a couple of times. When it gets rigid, Junior loses his grip on her shoulder and his grip on his penis as the blood goes to his eyes and he feels feebly light-headed with only one hand resting on her shoulder.” As Hanif (2011) notes, the context comes to an end when things begin to go wrong (Ch 60).

In the above quote of chapter 07, direct fragmentation of the female body is referred to by the words of slapped and suck and eyes and pumps her fist and shoulder and hand on his penis has been used by the writer to refer to the body parts of women which trigger sexual feelings in the mind of the reader and the audience realize that the writer is talking about the body of the female character. The leading lady Alice reminisces about her memories to Sacred Heart hospital of All Ailments and relates it as once the body guard of the old lady rich with a name Begum Qazalbash Junior harasses her on gun point to quench thirst of his lust and sexual desire. Since it is a regular feature in our male chauvinistic society that when men turn into a beast and a blind follower of his lustful instincts, he then makes the female serve his sexual needs in whatever cost.

Alice is victimized and victimized because she is made to be nothing more than a piece of flesh, one desirable only because of its brainless attributes of body and sexual exploitation and her feelings and personal significance are totally irrelevance. In this treatment we see how women are dehumanized and objectified in patriarchal society and Alice feels not being seen and feeling diminished and we realize that no value or status is given to the women in our society but they are regarded as sex objects and slaves of the men. The status of the female in the

eastern society is quite apparent as extremely derogatory and sexist terms are used to describe the female protagonist of the play Alice.

These terms such as slapped, suck, shoulder and penis are very abusive and unethical to women and are considered unacceptable in our society.

In the following paragraph, Teddy fantasizes their love to Alice in astonishing speech: when I recall you, do I recall these milk jugs? He makes a gesture with a Mauser across her breasts” (Hanif, 2011, p.68). Teddy Butt who is narrating the story of how he loves Alice explains that I love thee but not thy flesh and I know that this world will not believe in our true love hence I know how they would call it. Our society has males who regard women as sex slave rather than human being to be loved and taken care. They are called the bodies of flesh and mere sources of sexual satisfaction. And here the writer has fragmentized the body of female not only directly but also directly mentioning her boobs as milk jugs which the readers are able to relate it to the writer is indirectly mentioning the boobs of a female or she is breaking down the female body directly as she is using the word chest which directly connects the mind of the readers to the chest of the female protagonist and it is a form of abusive and offensive language towards women. The label milk jugs is used in reference to Alice chest (boobs) and it is a wrong and abusive term that should be used on a girl in the eastern society and falls under the label of fragmentation.

In showing how Teddy proposed to Alice, the writer uses the story to explain that this is what Teddy Butt has been like and against this, there are men back at the east who believe that woman are mere objects of flesh and meat and they belong to them as their property.

The negative portrayal of women in the eastern societies also comes out with the attitude of the men towards the workers in the hospitals who were nurses and according to the men involved they thought that they were the prostitutes and that whenever they would bring them to bed they would happily oblige and join them in the further events, which is shown in a negative picture of the women who were living in the eastern societies. The word Chest belongs to the type of fragmentation because it evokes sexual emotions in the mind of the reader. The plot of the novel flows and the author gives an account of the body of the leading female character: Alice and her body is one of those wonders of malnourishment, which has led to a thin and brittle bone structure with over grown breasts. The second is the senior management or management which is possessed by the organization if it is implemented by the senior management or management. Incidentally, there is another property that I have found very useful at a time of stress. This is another property; this property is mindfulness. (Hanif, 2011, p.93)

Here we can make out that the author has made a direct as well as an indirect reference to the figure of the female main character and he refers to the desirable body of Alice the product of malnutrition or poor nutrition. According to him, it is only through miracle one can be able to maintain such a figure. The body of Alice has been fragmentized using different kind of sexist terms like, thin, brittle bone and over grown breast which evokes sexual pleasures and desires to one mind and the audience can understandably know that the writer is referring to her over grown boobs.

These are all unflattering, abusive and inapplicable in an Eastern society of a female and belong to the segment of fragmentation. As the plot progresses, the writer has also described the body Alice in some details:

When she was fourteen, she acted in an Easter play and later at school, she was made to stand in front of a cross in order to have a shot of her picture. A veteran num, as he put it, worked out that she was a cross with tits”. (Hanif, 2011, p.93)

The author has employed the explicit references to female body directly by means such as using the word ribs,

The writer has mentioned body parts of women that arouse sexual feelings in the mind of the reader and they are the collarbones as well as the ankles. The author has talked about the tempting body of the titular character Alice Bhatti and states that Alice has gotten a body that many girls of her age would die to preserve and would kill themselves just to have such a figure.

The author has shown others her body in sections, in her ribs, ankles, collarbones and breasts not as a whole and he cuts her body into pieces directly when she puts it off in the form of breasts and tits which is much offensive and abusive to the female in our society. Another thing that is common in our society is that the authors are fragmentizing the female body into various body parts in their writings whereas the men are written in the literature works whole. Alice Bhatti remembers that, when she is acting in an Easter play at her school and pose in front of cross to be photographed, an old nun makes a witty observation that she looks like cross with tits (p.93). The breakdown of the eastern society in terms of morals is clearly exhibited by the fact that even the clergy class nun disintegrates other females. Alice exposes the kind of people who are out of French Colony and says: the same set of people who are not able to take a drink of water using the same tap she has been touching is not hesitant to swing their elbows on her breasts or twist themselves such that they are touching her heathen buttocks. It is stated that (Hanif, 2011, p.94-95)

All humans have an aspiration to achieve not only mental independence but physical one as well yet in our society most male dominated the male counterparts view women as their slaves and their subordinates. The author also has direct references to body of females like heathen bottom that indicates the part of her body that is covered with clothes (hips and thighs) and arouses sexual emotions in the minds of readers. The female hero Alice Bhatti is telling us her story beyond the gates of French Colony and confesses being frightened of male gaze and direct touches of her body by the male layer of society. In our society men have a right to stare the body and even parts of the female body in the name of satisfying their sexual urge. They are not just confined to this but in most cases, they seek to touch the private organs of the female body to derive sexual satisfaction, they would like to feel them so as to make a conclusion whether what they saw is true or false.

Writer is very abusive and derogatory in the language that he uses here to describe the female protagonist and this language is unacceptable in the Eastern society. Such labels as Rubbernecks, Women Anatomy, Touch, Breast, Rub and Heathen Bottom bring the notion of fragmentation of a female body to the fore. The same thing in our male dominating society is that it is the responsibility of the females that they must follow their husband and must do whatever they make them ask, and the same thing is narrated in the next passage: I will take my Shalwar off but you must promise me you will not touch my bra. (Hanif, 2011, p.105) The writer again allusively refers to that part of body of the female and uses a term bra that the listeners would associate as referring to the internal part of a female body (boobs) that arouses a sexual desire in his or her mind. To put it in other words we can say that the male looks at female as an animal without a brain where is easy to do with them but never touch their bras. In this, the author has treated female with a derogatory and abusive language. The word shalwar, bra and hair is emphasizing the piecemeal of female body and is demeaning female gender in our male oriented society. The woman is murdered in our society in the name of religion, honor and sometimes even unreasonably but there is nobody to questions about them, As the story progresses Alice narrates a case of her mother which brought her closer to God: it would in fact be much less likely that in falling on that staircase, you would even accidentally scratch your left breast so severely as to have four parallel scratches by human nails so as to be seen by those who have washed our carcass. It is also not possible that during the same fall you would spill someone sperm on your thighs. (Hanif, 2011, p.119)

Table 1: Lexical Fragmentation of the Female Body in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011)

S. No.	Lexical Items (Body Parts & Descriptors)	Page No.
1	Blonde	01
2	Legs, Lap, Chest, Thighs	05
3	Faces	07
4	Nipples, Bottom	09
5	Lips, Chin, Neck, Forehead, Eyelashes	37
6	Breast, Bra	38
7	White & Fleishy Arm, Dark & Scrawny Elbow, Mouth, Hair, Elbow, Right Breast, Hanging Breasts, Sweet Telcom Armpit, Hair, Forefinger, Chest, Neck	39
8	Quivering Spine	40
9	Hands, Telcom Powdered Breasts	41
10	Rosy Cheeks, Silver-Grey Hair, Coconut Shell Bras	57
11	Paramedic's Tits	58
12	Cheek, Stomach, Face, Throat, Mouth, Eyes, Left Hand, Fists	59–60
13	Her Milk Jugs, Her Chest	68
14	Chest	69
15	Thin Brittle Bone, Overgrown Breasts, Tits	93
16	Breast, Bottom	95
17	Left Breast, Nails, Thighs	119
18	Her Legs, Wiry Hair, White Panties	160
19	Breast, Chest, Forefingers, Ears, Chest	218

5 Findings and Conclusion

It is shown in the results of this study that the *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) by Muhammad Hanif uses stylistic fragmentation on a large scale to present the phenomenon of objectification of women, as well as the male gaze in this situation. According to the qualitative study of the chosen passages, there is the frequent trend to refer to the female characters, in particular, the main protagonist, Alice Bhatti, juxtaposing the fragments of sexual descriptions of her body parts. The male characters use words and phrases such as hot figure, big breasts, juicy lips, and pretty eyes to comment on all objects of desire, which are deeply entrenched into the everyday language, as words like these may be heard out of the mouths of the narrator as well. These stylistic devices are consistent with the idea of the fragmentation by Sara Mills whose proponents convey this fragmentation on women who are diminished in their fullness on the linguistic level depriving them of their subjectivity and identity.

But these results also show that such fragmentation does not blindly reproduce narrative realism but is strategically used to challenge the patriarchal systems, within which such language is built. The violence and the absurdity of this discourse, dominated by men, is brought out by Hanif through irony, satire, and exaggeration. To exemplify, those characters who are most antagonistic to the splitting up of women, are usually depicted as otherwise extremely misguided or even instructive, which makes them trade respect in exchange of absurdity and devastatingness. Despite the frequent objectification, Alice Bhatti is not only allowed some moments of resistance, agency, and complexity that elude the slot of the

definition, which is forced upon Alice. These two roles, representation and resistance testify to the complexity of the role played by stylistic fragmentation in the novel.

Drawing a conclusion, it is possible to say that *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) serves as the mirror and as the opposition to the patriarchal society of Pakistan. Hanif employs the stylistic device of fragmentation to show how the use of language can be degrading and eroticizing of women, and how women can be silenced, but then how language and linguistic formations could be reemployed in defiance of hegemonic values. The investigation confirms that thesis mentioned by Sara Mills, that the choice of style is never neutral, it is politically and ideologically important. This research helps in understanding the politics of the language and by creating awareness, this study helps to bring about a deeper understanding on how literature may align itself to create a system with gendered oppression and at the same time be subversive of the same system of gendered oppression.

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