



## REPRESENTATION OF THIRD WORLD WOMEN IN MOHAMMED HANIF'S NOVEL "OUR LADY OF ALICE BHATTI": A POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST STUDY

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### Abstract

*This research investigates the representation of Third World women in Mohammed Hanif's novel "Our Lady of Alice Bhatti" through a postcolonial feminist perspective. The story revolves around Alice Bhatti, a Christian nurse navigating the socio-political terrain of contemporary Pakistan, emphasizing the intersection of gender, class, and religion. The present study reveals Hanif's analysis of patriarchal establishments which shape the experiences of women in postcolonial social setup. By focusing on Alice's resistance against systematic oppression and her search for agency, the research illustrates the intricacies of femininity in a culture distinguished by both tradition and modernization.*

*This research utilizes Chandra Talpade Mohanty's feminist theory *Under Western Eyes* to highlight the power dynamics and illuminate the intricate aspects of resistance in marginalized communities. The findings of this research paper highlight the importance of diverse female perspectives and the need to address their distinct issues within postcolonial discourse.*

**Keywords:** Mohanty, Postcolonial feminism, Resistance, Gender Oppression, Religious Tensions, Societal Marginalization

### Background of the Study

Postcolonial feminist theory proposes a critical framework for comprehending the interdependent nature of gender, race, and colonial history (Mohanty, 2003). This study explores the impact of colonialism on the current experiences of women in nations that were previously colonized (Loomba, 2005). Postcolonial feminism is especially pertinent when examining Pakistani literature, as it encompasses intricate storylines that mirror the intricacies of the life of Pakistani women (Shamsie, 2017). These narratives delve into their challenges and their acts of defiance against different types of subjugation (Khan, 2009). Using a postcolonial feminist perspective, an examination of Pakistani literature allows us to understand how the intersection of gender and colonial legacies shapes the socio-cultural and political environment of Pakistan (Boehmer, 1995).

Pakistani literature plays a crucial role in portraying the intricate reality of women in a culture that is profoundly patriarchal and shaped by its colonial history (Sidhwa, 1988). Authors like Bapsi Sidhwa, Kamila Shamsie, and Uzma Aslam Khan, etc., have created stories that examine the complex realities of Pakistani women, shedding light on topics such as gender bias, struggles with identity, and the consequences of colonialism on their existence (Shamsie, 2017; Khan, 2009).

This study aims at thorough examination of Mohammed Hanif's novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by applying postcolonial feminist theory *Under Western Eyes* by Mohanty (1984). The theory facilitates the exploration of the intricate layers of significance ingrained in these works, leading to a more profound comprehension of the socio-political and cultural forces that influence the experiences of Pakistani women (Loomba, 2005). The research underhand seeks to contribute to the wider discussion on postcolonial feminism and enhance our comprehension of the interconnectedness between gender and colonialism in South Asian literature (Boehmer, 1995).

### Introduction

The novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, enquires the life of Alice Bhatti, a Christian nurse living in Karachi, Pakistan. This captivating and poignant narrative investigates the various encounters and emotions experienced by her. The narrative explores themes of gender, religion, and socio-political

marginalization through Alice's challenges, rendering it a suitable work for a postcolonial feminist examination (Hanif, 2011). Researcher aims to examine Hanif's depiction of the intersecting types of subjugation faced by Alice Bhatti, a character who symbolizes the difficulties confronted by marginalized women within a postcolonial context. Postcolonial feminist theory is essential for understanding the various facets of Alice Bhatti's life. The text enables us to examine and assess the patriarchal and colonial structures that persist in perpetuating gender and religious prejudice (Mohanty, 2003). Alice's story not only explores her challenges but also examines the broader socio-cultural and political factors that shape her worldview (Loomba, 2005). By closely analyzing Hanif's account, we may uncover the complex portrayals of rebellion, resilience, and dominance that characterize Alice's journey. Alice Bhatti's experiences symbolize the complex challenges confronted by Pakistani women, specifically those belonging to religious minority. The novel examines the interrelationships among gender, class, and religious identity, offering a critical perspective on the systemic inequalities that influence the lives of women like Alice (Boehmer, 1995). Through the application of a postcolonial feminist viewpoint, we can see how Hanif critically examines these inequalities and illuminates the tactics that marginalized women use to navigate and resist their oppressive environments (Spivak, 1988).

### Significance of the Study

This work has substantial significance in various crucial domains, encompassing literary studies as well as broader socio-cultural and political contexts. Examining *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* from a postcolonial feminist perspective provides a deep understanding of the complex interactions between gender, religion, and the lasting effects of colonialism in present-day Pakistan. The present research contributes to the expanding field of literary criticism that specifically studies South Asian literature, with a particular emphasis on Pakistani fiction. By analyzing Hanif's work, emphasizes the significance of modern Pakistani stories in the worldwide literary conversation. The analysis offers a detailed interpretation of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* revealing the multiple layers of meaning within the text and illustrating how literature can mirror and scrutinize societal truths (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007; Hanif, 2011; Loomba, 2005). This research enhances postcolonial feminist scholarship by analyzing how colonial histories and patriarchal structures intersect to influence the experiences of marginalized women. It demonstrates how literature can serve as a potent instrument for revealing and questioning these forms of oppression (Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1988). The study expands the range of postcolonial feminist analysis by examining a character belonging to a religious minority. It includes an examination of religious identity in addition to gender and colonialism, as discussed by Suleri (1992) and Tharu & Lalita (1993). The text of the novel promotes the recognition of the tenacity and agency of women, such as Alice Bhatti, who steers and opposes her oppressive contexts. This, in turn, supports a more empathic and informed perspective on oppressed groups (Spivak, 1988; Tharu & Lalita, 1993). The analysis highlights the political aspects of literature, demonstrating how stories can shape public opinions and discussions on gender and minority rights (Loomba, 2005; Said, 1978). The study's interdisciplinary methodology, which incorporates literary analysis alongside feminist and postcolonial theories, showcases the significance of cross-disciplinary research

in producing comprehensive understandings of intricate social matters. It also offers a blueprint for future research at the convergence of literature, gender studies, and postcolonial theory, while inspiring scholars to investigate analogous themes in different contexts and works (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007; Loomba, 2005). To summarize, this work not only deepens our comprehension of Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* but also adds to wider conversations on gender, religion, and colonialism in postcolonial nations. This highlights the influence of literature as a



means of analyzing and changing society, promoting a fairer and more comprehensive world (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978).

### **Research Question**

How does *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* explore women's gender, racial and religious intersectionality in Pakistani context?

### **Research Objective**

To examine women's gender, racial, and religious intersectionality in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*.

### **Literature Review**

The literature on postcolonial feminist theory and its application to South Asian literature, particularly Pakistani fiction, provides a vigorous framework for analyzing *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. This review synthesizes key texts and theoretical approaches that inform this study, highlighting significant contributions to the field and identifying gap that this research aims to address. According to Siraj (2016) Hanif argues that there are three main aspects that lead to the categorization and marginalization of women: religion, class, and gender. Through his novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, he demonstrates that Pakistan is a country where male-controlled traditions still exist. Nazakat (2018) investigates female empowerment, resistance, and survival in our Lady Alice Bhatti. She is shown battling for her life throughout the tale. The research study examines the otherness of a female heroine in a novel and her battle against gender discrimination in society.

Alice and Alvi are the courageous enough to work alongside their male counterparts. However, their personal lives are far from affluence. They had to deal with the trauma of failed marriages, which limited their social life. Women suffer the most when their marriages fail or they become widows (Asgar,2020)

### **Postcolonial Feminist Theory**

Postcolonial feminist theory critically examines the intersection of colonialism, gender, and race, providing a lens to explore how historical and ongoing colonial dynamics shape the experiences of women in postcolonial societies. Foundational texts such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (1988) *Can the Subaltern Speak?* argue that traditional postcolonial theory often neglects the gendered dimensions of colonial oppression, emphasizing the need to include women's voices in these narratives. Spivak's work highlights how women are doubly marginalized, both by colonial power structures and patriarchal norms.

Homi K. Bhabha's (1994) *The Location of Culture* extends this discourse by exploring the cultural hybridity that arises in postcolonial contexts, suggesting that marginalized groups create new identities through resistance and negotiation. Bhabha's concept of the "third space" is particularly useful in analyzing characters like Alice Bhatti, who traverse multiple intersecting identities. Ania Loomba's (2005) *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* provides a comprehensive overview of postcolonial theory, emphasizing the importance of understanding colonial histories to fully grasp contemporary social and cultural dynamics. Loomba's work is crucial in contextualizing the specific historical and cultural backdrop against which Hanif's narrative unfolds.

### **South Asian Feminist Literature**

The body of work on South Asian feminist literature underscores the importance of regional specificity in feminist analysis. Urvashi Butalia's (1998) *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the*



*Partition of India* documents the gendered experiences of women during the Partition, providing historical context that is essential for understanding the legacies of colonialism in Pakistan. This historical perspective is vital for appreciating the socio-political environment depicted in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Sara Suleri's (1992) *The Rhetoric of English India* explores the narrative strategies employed by South Asian writers to critique colonial discourse, offering insights into how authors like Hanif use storytelling to challenge dominant narratives. Suleri's work helps in understanding the literary techniques Hanif employs to highlight the complexities of Alice Bhatti's life. The anthology *Women Writing in India* edited by Susie Tharu and K. Lalita (1993), provides a rich collection of writings by Indian women, offering diverse perspectives on gender, identity, and resistance. Although focused on India, this collection is relevant for understanding the broader South Asian context in which Pakistani literature is situated.

### **Pakistani Fiction and Gender**

Pakistani fiction has increasingly become a site for exploring issues of gender, religion, and social justice. Kamila Shamsie's (2009) *Burnt Shadows* and Uzma Aslam Khan's (2003) *Trespassing* are notable examples that delve into the lives of Pakistani women, examining how their identities and experiences are shaped by socio-political factors. These works provide a comparative backdrop for analyzing Hanif's portrayal of Alice Bhatti. Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) specifically addresses the intersection of gender and religious minority status in Pakistan. The novel's protagonist, Alice Bhatti, embodies the struggles of marginalized women, making it a rich text for postcolonial feminist analysis. Hanif's narrative strategy of using dark humor and satire to critique societal norms adds a unique dimension to the exploration of these themes.

### **Gap and Future Directions**

While substantial work has been done on postcolonial feminist theory and South Asian feminist literature, there is a relative paucity of focused studies on contemporary Pakistani fiction through this lens. This study aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, contributing to the broader discourse on gender, religion, and postcolonialism in South Asian literature.

### **Research Methodology**

The Present study has used Alan McKee's model of textual analysis as a method to analyze the selected novels. According to Alan McKee (2003) textual analysis is a procedure or approach for gathering and examining data in hypothetical research. When we analyze a text we make an educated guess what some of the most possible interpretations of that text would be. According to Rockwell (2003), textual analysis is a type of close reading that investigates the relationship between how we represent texts, how we see them, and our theory of textuality. The method of textual analysis involves close reading techniques. Textual analysis is a qualitative research method used to analyze texts in-depth by examining themes, meanings, patterns, and language use within the text itself (Krippendorff, 2018).

Mohanty (1984) in her theoretical framework "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses", addresses a number of themes such as: colonialism and feminism, intersectionality, representation, marginalization, agency and resistance. In this study gender intersectionality, marginalization, resistance, agency and representation have been thoroughly discussed. The research aims to examine the complex relationships between gender, religion, and



colonial influences as portrayed in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. The subsequent sections delineate the precise methodologies and strategies employed in this research.

### Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial feminist theory is an analytical framework that integrates aspects of postcolonialism and feminism to investigate the impact of colonial histories and legacies on gender relations and identities. The theory of intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, examines how different types of social hierarchy overlap to produce distinct patterns of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). It specifically focuses on how historical colonial legacies exacerbate gender inequities through racial and cultural oppression. Subaltern studies, influenced by researchers such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, examines the viewpoints of marginalized groups affected by colonial systems (Spivak, 1988). These studies specifically emphasize the experiences of women who face dual marginalization due to both patriarchy and the lasting effects of colonialism. Homi K. Bhabha's idea of hybridity explores the emergence of novel cultural expressions resulting from the fusion of colonizer and colonized cultures (Bhabha, 1994). It scrutinizes how women negotiate their hybrid identities in postcolonial countries. Colonial discourse analysis, based on Edward Said's notion of Orientalism, examines how colonial powers create knowledge about colonized populations (Said, 1978). This process influences the portrayal of gender and sexuality, reinforcing stereotypes and inequities. Transnational feminism offers a critical analysis of Western feminism's inclination to generalize women's experiences (Mohanty, 2003). It highlights the significance of local circumstances and promotes feminist approaches that are customized to the challenges faced by women in postcolonial environments. Postcolonial feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, criticize Western feminist studies for their ethnocentric biases. They argue for the acknowledgment and acceptance of indigenous forms of knowledge and resistance to create a truly inclusive feminism (Mohanty, 1984). Postcolonial feminism emphasizes the concepts of agency and resistance. It explores how women in postcolonial settings assert their power and oppose oppressive systems. This field of study documents many ways in which women resist and represent their ability to endure and be innovative in the face of various forms of oppression.

Mohanty's theory, *"Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,"* offers a critical analysis of Western feminist scholarship. Mohanty argues that this scholarship often generalizes women's experiences and presents non-Western women as universally oppressed, devoid of agency, and requiring rescue (Mohanty, 1984).

Mohanty further argues that Western feminism tends to see all women as the same, ignoring their different cultural, social, and historical backgrounds. This view often makes women in the Global South look like passive victims who need saving by Western women. She points out that this attitude is similar to colonialism, where Western women are seen as freer and more enlightened. She emphasizes the importance of intersectionality, which means considering how race, class, gender, sexuality, and other factors combine to shape people's experiences. Mohanty believes that ignoring these intersections leads to incomplete and unfair analyses and solutions. She advocates for postcolonial feminism, which recognizes the strength and resistance of women in the Global South and calls for feminist thought that values diverse voices and experiences. In her notable works, *"Under Western Eyes and Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity,"* she critiques the oversimplified views of Western feminism and explores ways to build feminist solidarity that respects differences. Mohanty's contributions have greatly influenced feminist theory, especially in postcolonial and transnational feminism, promoting a more inclusive approach that acknowledges the varied experiences of women around the world.

Mohanty's postcolonial feminist theory explores the representation of women as subordinates in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. The focus is on the protagonist's experience of intersecting forms of oppression

within the unique socio-political and cultural environment of Pakistan. It explores how Alice's identity as a Christian woman connects with gender, religion, and class-based forms of oppression. Alice's encounters with religious discrimination, such as being perceived as an outsider in a culture that is largely Muslim, and her exclusion from the healthcare system because of her lower socio-economic level, exemplify these intersecting forms of oppression (Hanif, 2011). In *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, there are three main themes such as: gender and intersectionality, resistance and agency, and representation and marginalization. Alice Bhatti, the main character, faces many difficulties because she is a Christian woman in a mostly Muslim, male-dominated society. She experiences discrimination due to her gender, religion, and job as a nurse. Despite these challenges, Alice shows great strength and independence, standing up against the unfair treatment she faces. This theme of resistance highlights how marginalized people can challenge oppressive systems. Additionally, the novel looks at how marginalized communities, like Christians in Pakistan, are represented and treated. Through Alice's story, Hanif shows the stereotypes and discrimination these communities endure, emphasizing the need to give them a voice and challenge unfair narratives. These themes come together to create a powerful story that critiques societal structures and highlights ongoing oppression.

### **Data Analysis**

Pakistan despite being a secular state with many castes and religions, suffers from sectarianism and marginalization. The protagonist, Alice Bhatti faces discrimination based on her gender, religion, and socio-economic conditions (Iqbal et al., 2022). The data analysis of the present study focuses on how the text portrays the intersecting oppressions faced by the protagonist, Alice. Specifically it highlights the representation of gender, religion and socio-economic issues in the selected novel. The depiction of colonial and postcolonial power dynamics and narrative techniques used by Hanif to critique societal norms and issues of social justice in the light of Mohanty's literary theory *Under Western Eyes* has also been focused (1984).

### **Gender, Religious and Socio-Economic Intersectionality in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti***

The novel *Our lady of Alice Bhatti* portrays Alice Bhatti's experience of intersecting discrimination based on her religious and gender identity in Pakistani society. Hanif's novel highlights how being a Christian woman subjects Alice to ridicule and harassment, both in her workplace and public spaces, reflecting broader societal biases. Alice Bhatti is a genuine example of one who lacks agency and representation. The following text portray her suffering: There was not a single day — not a single day — when she didn't see a woman shot or hacked, strangled or suffocated, poisoned or burnt, hanged or buried alive. Suspicious husband, brother protecting his honor, father protecting his honor, son protecting his honor, jilted lover avenging his honor, feuding farmers settling their water disputes, moneylenders collecting their interest: most of life's arguments, it seemed, got settled by doing various things to a woman's body" (Hanif, 2011, p.96).

The above textual lines emphasize on a fact about violence in a patriarchal culture. This supports the claim made by Mohanty (1984) that Alice frequently survives in a system that turns her pain into something extremely horrible which always target to abuse her. Women's bodies are objectified and politicized. This is similar to how Mohanty (1984) criticizes the way that external narratives control subaltern identities, as women's experiences are filtered through the prism of masculine action and dignity. In addition, men's positions as husbands, brothers, fathers, sons, and moneylenders serve as examples of the social systems that support violence against women.

The analysis emphasizes Alice's resilience in navigating these challenges while critiquing the systemic inequalities that shape her experiences, encouraging readers to consider the complex interplay of identity and discrimination. In the following lines it is discussed as Alice Bhatti knew that being a Christian and a woman made her an easy target. Every day, she encountered the double burden of religious and gender discrimination, whether it was in her workplace, where she was often the subject of ridicule, or in public spaces, where she faced harassment. Asgar, Ahmed and Fatima



(2020) agree with the current study and explain that portrayal of women's marginalization, and otherness in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* reveals the predicament of Pakistani women and highlights the cruelty and lack of sincerity towards the weaker members of the society.

In *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* Muhammad Hanif adeptly portrays Alice Bhatti's profound awareness of the intersecting discrimination she faces as a Christian woman in Pakistani society. The statement that "being a Christian and a woman made her an easy target" encapsulates the dual burden of religious and gender-based prejudice Alice endures daily. This intersectional identity exposes her to ridicule in her workplace, where her role as a nurse challenges traditional gender norms and subjects her to harassment in public spaces, reflecting broader societal biases against religious minorities and women. Hanif's portrayal not only highlights Alice's resilience in navigating these challenges but also critiques the systemic inequalities that shape her experiences, inviting readers to consider the complex interplay of identity and discrimination in contemporary Pakistan.

The main concept of the text is the dehumanizing experience of Alice Bhatti, a Christian woman in Karachi, who faces marginalization and invisibility due to societal prejudices against religious minorities. Despite her achievements and struggles, Alice is often overlooked and reduced to a symbol of discrimination. Muhammad Hanif's portrayal critiques pervasive stereotypes and biases, highlighting the profound impact of systemic discrimination and inviting readers to recognize the full humanity and complexity of marginalized individuals like Alice. In the eyes of many, "Alice was invisible, just another member of the city's downtrodden Christian minority. Her achievements and struggles were often overlooked, her humanity denied by those who saw her only as a symbol of their prejudices"

The above passage from *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* illuminates the dehumanizing experience of Alice Bhatti, a Christian woman living in Karachi. The statement "In the eyes of many, Alice was invisible" underscores the marginalization and invisibility that Alice faces within her community and society at large. Despite her personal achievements and enduring struggles, Alice finds herself overlooked and dismissed, reduced to a mere representation of societal prejudices against the Christian minority. Hanif's portrayal critiques the pervasive stereotypes and biases that shape perceptions of religious minorities in Pakistan, highlighting the profound impact of systemic discrimination on individuals like Alice. This depiction invites readers to confront the dehumanizing effects of prejudice and challenges them to recognize the full humanity and complexity of marginalized individuals in their midst. The character of Alice Bhatti is a profound exploration of "othering", particularly in the context of gender, religion, and socio-economic status. "She was just an "other" woman who had to endure the whims and fancies of the men around her" (Hanif, 2011, p, 72).

The given narration clearly demonstrate that women are frequently deprived of their agency and identity and reduced to nothing more than objects of male desire and control. She is not considered a human or a woman but an 'Other' in a male dominated society.

According to Mohanty (1984), those who are on the margins of social, political, and economic systems find it difficult to express their experiences in the context of prevailing circumstances. The text implies two levels of marginalization: she is defined by the males who have authority over her, in addition to being labeled as "other." This is a reflection of a systematic silence in which her identity is created by men rather than by her own lived experiences.

The main concept of the text is the marginalized existence and vibrant internal culture of the Christian community in Karachi, as depicted in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Despite being overlooked and living "in the shadows" of mainstream society, this community exhibits resilience and solidarity. Alice Bhatti's story exemplifies the untold tales of hope and perseverance within this marginalized group, challenging readers to empathize with and recognize the complexities and strengths of such communities.

"The Christian community in Karachi lived in the shadows, their contributions and existence often ignored by the mainstream. Yet, within these marginalized neighborhoods, there was a vibrant culture and a deep sense of solidarity. Alice's story is just one among many untold tales of resilience and hope." (Hanif, 2011). The given passage from *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* sheds light on the marginalized existence of the Christian community in Karachi, Pakistan. It depicts how this community often resides on the periphery of mainstream society, their contributions and daily lives overlooked and underappreciated. The phrase "lived in the shadows" evokes a sense of invisibility and marginalization, where their presence is acknowledged only through stereotypes or prejudice rather than recognition of their individuality and worth. Despite these challenges, Hanif portrays a vibrant internal culture within these neighborhoods, characterized by resilience and solidarity. This community's ability to maintain a "deep sense of solidarity" speaks to their strength in adversity, finding strength and support within their community despite external neglect.

Alice Bhatti's story is positioned within this broader context of marginalized narratives. Her experiences and struggles are emblematic of the untold tales within the Christian community, representing resilience and hope amidst systemic challenges. Christians live in Pakistan on behalf of Muslims. Muslims believe they are superior and want to lead minorities. They play an important role in society by recognizing that minorities are unable to accomplish the holy responsibilities that are ascribed to them. Joseph Bhatti protests against the conduct of Muslims. He claims that we are not less than Muslims in any way. He claims that we are seniors who lived in this region before them. Hanif (2011) often exposes the actions of Muslims against Christians in Pakistan. According to Hanif, Muslims originated from the Arabian Sea shores. However, once they invade the territory, they become the rulers. They think themselves superior than minorities in all aspects. While society offers opportunities to the majority, minority groups remain marginalized and underprivileged. They are not provided adequate facilities in society. Joseph Bhatti, who works on the city streets. He is a devout Christian and the city's cleaner. When discussing their social position with Alice, he tells her that Muslims see Christians as shit-cleaners as shown in the lines "These Muslims will make you clean their shit and then complain that you stink." (Hanif, 2011). The portrayal of poor conduct among wealthy Muslims highlights the marginalization of minorities in Muslim societies.

By highlighting Alice's journey, Hanif amplifies the voices and experiences of those often overlooked, offering a glimpse into the complexities of identity, belonging, and survival in a society marked by inequality and prejudice. This portrayal invites readers to reconsider their perceptions of marginalized communities, urging empathy and understanding for their resilience in the face of adversity.

The main concept of the textual analysis is that Alice Bhatti's journey symbolizes the collective struggle and resilience of marginalized communities. Muhammad Hanif uses Alice's story to amplify the voices of those living on society's fringes, highlighting their enduring spirit and strength in the face of oppression. Through Alice, Hanif invites readers to recognize and empathize with the struggles of marginalized individuals, celebrating their courage and resilience. "Alice's journey was not just her own; it reflected the countless others who fought similar battles in silence. Through her, Hanif gives a voice to the voiceless, highlighting the enduring spirit of those who live on the fringes of society." (p, 99). This excerpt from *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* underscores the significance of Alice's journey as a representation of collective struggle and resilience within marginalized communities. Hanif portrays Alice's challenges and triumphs not merely as individual experiences, but as reflections of the broader, often silenced narratives of those who face similar adversities. By giving voice to Alice, Hanif amplifies the voices of countless others who live on the margins of society, marginalized by factors such as gender, religion, and socio-economic status. Alice's journey symbolizes courageous defiance against the oppressive norms and systemic injustices that seek to diminish her, and others like her. Through her character, Hanif illuminates the enduring spirit and strength found within marginalized communities, showcasing their capacity to



navigate and resist societal constraints with dignity and resolve. By acknowledging Alice's story as a vessel for the voiceless, Hanif invites readers to recognize and empathize with the struggles faced by marginalized individuals, while also celebrating their resilience and resilience in the face of adversity.

### **Findings**

Through an analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, it becomes evident that the novel serves as a poignant portrayal of entrenched gender disparities and systematic oppression within Pakistani society. Alice's journey exposes the challenges imposed by societal expectations, particularly evident in her role as a nurse where she confronts patriarchal standards that confine women to domestic roles while subjecting them to mistreatment and exploitation. Despite these obstacles, Alice's resilience and refusal to conform highlight themes of personal empowerment and opposition to gender inequity.

The novel critically examines the complexities of gender relations in postcolonial Pakistan through three central themes: Gender Intersectionality, Resistance, Agency, Representation and Marginalization. Hanif uses Alice Bhatti's character to illustrate the intersecting discrimination faced by Christian women, shedding light on identity-based biases and societal norms that marginalize them. Alice's defiance against injustice underline's themes of Resistance and Agency as she navigates workplace challenges and societal scrutiny with unwavering determination. Additionally, Hanif portrays the marginalized existence of Karachi's Christian community, emphasizing their solidarity and resilience amidst neglect, thereby addressing subjects of Representation and Marginalization.

### **Conclusion**

Through the characters of "Alice Bhatti," we see a strong critique of how women are treated unfairly and oppressed in Pakistani society. The novel shows characters like Alice Bhatti facing discrimination and violence because of their gender, religion and socio-economic conditions. Alice's story shows how women like her struggle against these unfair norms. The book also explores how being Christian, a poor and a woman adds even more challenges in Pakistan, showing how these identities affect their lives. Alice fights back against these problems, showing themes of standing up for oneself and pushing against society's expectations. The novel also talks about Karachi's Christian community, showing how they support each other despite being ignored by society. Overall, "Alice Bhatti" tells a powerful story of bravery and standing up against unfair treatment. It encourages us to fight against inequality and injustice, and to give more respect and opportunities to those who are often overlooked in Pakistani society.

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