

Received : 05 July 2024, Accepted: 20 July 2024

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9i4.124>

**The Feminine Objectification: A Discussion with Special Reference to Muhammad Hanif's**

*Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*

By

**Dr. Najia Almas<sup>1</sup>**

**Assistant Professor in the Department of English (SBKWU)**

**PhD in English Literature**

**najia.almas@gmail.com**

**Abstract:**

*It is noticed that women in some parts of the world are treated as objects/commodities which is extremely a lower level in regards of the humanity. Women when are treated in this become the objectified by the objectifier and the whole process is known as objectification. Cahill (2012) explains that objectification generally refers to the social behavior that treat women as objects, rather than treating them as human-beings to insult/hurt women and is not considered an ethical issue or problem. However, objectification being a heinous practice is a common culture among the societies, yet least addressed one, especially in regards to Pakistan's patriarchal setup. So, I choose to explore the objectification of women in Pakistan through Martha Nussbaum's Theory of Objectification, in order to address the injustice towards Pakistani women, in reference to the novel Our Lady of Alice Bhatti by Mohammad Hanif.*

**Key Words:** Objectification, objectifiers, objectified, submissive, master, lord, patriarchy

**Introduction:**

Woman is born a feminine, becomes female, after experiencing several external processes and major role in this process is played by a patriarchal society (Bacchilega, 1993). Patriarchal system treats women as objects and commodities which are passive and dependent (Simone de Beauvoir, 1949). Treating people as objects is the objectification of the objectified by the objectifier. According to Cahill (2012), "Objectification is one deft move, reduces women to things and therefore non-persons, and here by robbing them of the respect that person demands". Very skillfully women are skillfully

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor in the department of English (SBKWU)  
PhD in English Literature  
najia.almas@gmail.com  
3504

shifted to the level of an object or the commodity reduce them as person/human-being to fit to the criteria where they can serve well the gender.

**Literature Review:**

As discussed that women are treated as objects and objects, despite women, are not only dependent, but also lifeless and unfortunately, just like objects women are given ranks and standard, as good or bad women. Commodities and objects are ranked after passing through several criteria of judgment and so are women. Similarly, definition and qualities of a good woman are also provided by men and thus women are ranked. In most of the cases, this definition of a good woman is closer to Coventry Patmore's *Angle in the House* (1854) or like Rousseau's Sophie to become a suitable wife for Emile (1762/1963) in his *Émile, De l'éducation/Emile, or On Education*. Rousseau exhibits Emile as a typical representative of majority of common males' sexism exists in the society, who believe women are inferior to men and could only be given chance to learn to beautify themselves, learn simple household chores and attract men with their skills in playing music. Men desire to change their women's individuality to fit their criteria, which involves negation of the subjectivity as well as autonomy of the women. While doing so they neglect that women also are human beings and thus their individuality must not be defied. It appears women are treated as objects on an extremely lower level, below humanity.

Furthermore, according to the famous English writers Charles Dickens, perhaps inspired by Patmore, explains that the lady of a house should be a person of extreme devotion towards her house and husband, as he describes it in his unfinished novel *the Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), "ministering angel to domestic bliss" (P. 265). Contrarily, the research by Heflick, N. A., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2009), opine, ". . . focusing on a woman's appearance will promote reduced perceptions of competence, and, by virtue of construing the women as an "object", perceptions of the woman as less human."

Women like objects/commodities are not given rights to speak for their happiness nor did they ever advise to appreciate their individuality for being who/what they are. Sometimes society imposes restrictions on women and also sometimes gives utmost freedom to women to exercise their free will but unfortunately, in both the cases women are unsatisfied beings. In both the settings, women somehow are not at their right place which she deserves. The reason may be is that women are not treated as they should be treated. These are two extremes that harm women's individuality and in both the situations, patriarchy plays its role of suppressing women's feminine being and her individuality.

Somehow in Eastern societies it appears that women's objectification is far deeper than the objectification that occur in West.

## **Power, Dominance, and Patriarchy**

When patriarchy is established, the occurrence of objectification is inevitable. Patriarchy utilizes all the seven elements, namely, Denial of Autonomy, Ownership, Denial of Subjectivity, Fungibility, Instrumentality, Inertness, and Violability of Nussbaum's theory.

Male members of a Patriarchal society are usually the dominant ones who empower the female members that result in vile subjugation passiveness in them towards the males thus turning them into objectified. Men and women are enforced to fit into the stereotype gender roles which are hard to dispel. This gender role makes the families' setup, and these families result into such societies that are the flag bearer of specific patriarchal culture of rigid school of thoughts or of the religion. These Gender roles originate gender ideologies that create different norms for men and women to spend life according to the societal set up.

According to (Eckert and McConnell, 2003) opined in '*Language and Gender*' that 'we are surrounded by gender and it is thoroughly embedded in our institutions, actions, desires and beliefs as seems to be completely natural. In the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bahtti* by Mohammad Hanif, power of male gender over female gender is vividly depicted as men empower women completely. According to Weber (1844) power is an opportunity that exists in the social relations, which allows one man to carry out his will against all sorts of disagreement, Moreover, power relationships diverge from one another not only in measure but also in types. (Jean Jacques Rousseau, 1762) in *The Social Contract* divides the power relation into three categories. The first is related to social surroundings where power and threat are used by one to dominate the other. The second is psychological where power is used by objectifier to influences and persuades the objectified to change their interests according to the will of the master. The third role deals with authority's power used as right and forces obedience as duty. All the three types of power seem to be found in under the research novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*.

Furthermore, from Ursula Le Guin (1970) opines, (as cited in Linda, N. & Lewis, J. J. (2019), that Civilized Man has the ideology that he is the self, and Master, and all the rest is other, and outside the realm of his being, comes underneath and is subservient. Furthermore, he believes in having full ownership, full control, total exploration, and exploitation of what he controls. For him rest is wilderness and women with the purpose to be used by him as he likes.

In addition to this, Adrienne Rich (1976), opines (as cited in Linda, N. & Lewis, J. J. 2019),

“There is nothing revolutionary whatsoever about the control of women's bodies by men. The woman's body is the terrain on which patriarchy is erected.” This reveals the oppressed nature of women in patriarchal society. The scholar, further explains the status of female members of society, marked as the child bearer and thus also labeled as “childless or Barron” but there is no terminology such as “nonfather” to socially categorized a man.

This research deals with different aspects as defined by Martha Nussbaum in her Theory of Objectification which plays the integral part in identifying women an object/commodity, and the whole structure of this research centers around it building the argument up.

*Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Mohammed Hanif discusses how Christians in general and a female Christian in particular, are treated in Pakistan (a declared Muslim state). This novel depicts the condition of Christian women but also of women from other religion as well that give readers a clear picture of women being subjugated in Pakistani society. literature is the mirror of the age and this novel is an extraordinary example to mirror the known as well as hidden realities of the current Pakistani society. Bitter truths are revealed by Mohammad Hanif. There are plenty of women who suffer by the hand of patriarchy and this hand could surprisingly be of men and women both. Pakistani women face gender suppression and counter hegemony, suppression through capitalists and do not even know what these terms are or why they suffer in an imbalance in society.

Basically, this novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* written by the Mohammad Hanif narrates the story of a Christian nurse Alice Bhatti who is multiple times marginalized leading to her objectification and still struggles to make her mark in the patriarchal society.

### **Theoretical Frame Work:**

Martha Nussbaum explains the objectification and its components in detail, discussed as follows.

Objectification is the central notion of the feminist theory. Flick (2013) explains that theory is the conceptual model, an understating through which we understand a phenomenon, one that describes as well as explains that phenomena. So, according to this definition, the theory of Objectification explains that the objectification involves treating a person generally and more specifically women as objects. Whenever in a relationship there is one powerful person and another with lesser or no power, objectification occurs as the powerful becomes the objectifier and thus objectifies the weak turning the weak an object. Dowrkin (2000) believes that when a person is bought or sold, through some social ways is treated as lesser than a human-being, turned into commodity, depersonalized without having any social individuality or integrity or possess extremely restricted privacy. People who are used in

some ways are treated as lesser than human and thus they remain not fully human in social manner because their humanity has been diminished. There are several ways a human's objectivity is questioned as there are several elements that take part in the objectification of a human being.

The philosopher Nussbaum (1995) identified seven features that are involved in the idea of treating a person as an object:

1. instrumentality: the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier's [*sic*] purposes.
2. denial of autonomy: the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.
3. inertness: the treatment of a person as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity.
4. fungibility: the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects.
5. violability: the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity.
6. ownership: the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold).
7. Denial of subjectivity: the treatment of a person as something whose experiences and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account [*sic*]. she continues to say that it is the treatment of a something as a thing which is not a thing."

Evangelia Papadaki (2015) also opine that Kant sets the definition of Objectification in association with the low treatment of an object, an individual experience. If a person is treated lower than a human then this individual's Humanity is diminished which is the rational nature and capability for the rational choice. A human-being has ability to decide what is valuable, and how this value can be promoted. This is only humanity which makes the difference between human-beings and animal or objects. Martha Nussbaum's theory of objectification is very closer to Kantian model which is the prototype. The elements of Nussbaum's theory will be traced in the events, incidents, situations major characters of the novel experiences to locate the process of objectification.

### ***Our Lady of Alice Bhatti***

The novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* written by Muhammad Hanif is a modern classic. Joseph Bhatti, a *choorha*<sup>2</sup> (a janitorial worker) spent his whole life working for the municipal corporation. He had a

---

<sup>2</sup> Sweeper/genitor  
3508

beautiful daughter Alice, or it would rather better to say that he had a daughter with beautiful figure. This father and daughter were Christians, a minority in Pakistan. Alice J. Bhatti thought the daughter of *choorha* but a fair girl of golden heart. Alice was a true warrior of God throughout her life, till her last breath that she took far from her workplace as her father's said that the martyrs die afar from their people. This study explores Alice's struggle (the protagonist of the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*) to uplift herself from lower socio-economic strata during her short span of life. Furthermore, this research explores that during this journey she faces several elements of the Martha Nussbaum's theory of objectification

Following is the detailed discussion on extractions from the novel as several themes developed after careful analysis. These themes are composition of two or more elements from Martha Nussbaum's Theory of Objectification.

### **Discussion:**

I here discuss the incidents in Alice Bhatti's short life that accelerated the process of her objectification. These incidents have even more elements that Martha Nussbaum's theory encompasses and thus every time it is a different theme that emerges from the combination of these elements. Following are the themes that explain Alice's objectification.

### **The Events:**

These themes are formed by the combination of the elements from Martha's Theory of Objectification.

#### **A. Denial of Subjectivity, Denial of Autonomy, Violability, Instrumentality, Ownership**

##### **1. Denial of Subjectivity, Denial of Autonomy, Violability, Instrumentality, Ownership**

Alice committed a few mistakes alongside huge blunders as she did not have anyone to seek guidance from after her first mistake. Alice's mother was murdered when she was in pre-teen and her father was never close to her. Alice's first mistake was falling in love with her teacher in the nursing school. Second mistake was to trust this man and to sleep with him. Lastly, she allowed him to abort their child. This is very unfortunate the both the time when Alice was impregnated, her children died inside her.

Her blunder was her over confidence. Alice not only always invites troubles, but she also jumps into the dangerous situations. First, assuming herself a heroine, Alice fought Christian girls in her nursing hostel though this was valiant but also dangerous that made Alice more confident which led

her later to bang the surgeon's head with a flowerpot for wrongly blaming her for a death in the operation theatre. Gradually with these experiences her confidence strengthened and Alice assumed she could do anything and flee from the consequences. Alice emerged as her own guard against everything so, she went to the most dangerous *Charya* Ward and later to VIP ward where she encountered a rapist and during the assault she cut his penis which pushed her in the most dreading situations.

To avoid the consequences Alice married the police tout Teddy Butt, who was no better than a low-level hooligan, who claimed to love her but it was all a lie. After some time of their marriage, pregnant Alice left Teddy, realizing he was not capable of being a good father and a responsible husband. She took her belongings and so Teddy assumed that Alice is gone forever; Since Alice did not go to her father's place, assured Teddy in his heart that Alice ran off with another man. He found her at her work place and killed her.

### 1.1 Alice's Objectification by The Hand of Her Lover

Being Christian Alice committed a blunder by falling in love with a Muslim *Shea* doctor who was Alice's Teacher, at her nursing school who ruined her life and her faith in love. He also blemished the sacred profession by crossing the line that distinguishes the rank of a teacher from student and took Alice to his bed, slept with her several times, impregnated her and then left her to suffer after knowing about her pregnancy. After several days he informed Alice that his mother did not agree to allowed him to marry outside a shea family. Last nail in the coffin of Alice's love was most piercing as he himself aborted Alice's child. Shea Muslims normally do not marry Sunni Muslims and vice versa. So, marrying a Christian was almost an impossible thing. People belonging to any of these sects know this fact. So, this betrayal was only to extracted physical pleasure from Alice, using her as an object. Alice suffered from trapped psychological issues, which is seen in the child saving episode in Sacred's maternity home, where she prayed to Jesus to bring "*Chotoo*" back to life and also months after when she herself conceived, once again.

Coming back to the incident when that doctor being coward refused to marry the woman he used as toy, to have pastime enjoyment and satisfy his beastly desires revealed his nature to treat a woman as an object. To highlight the intensity, I would shed light to his lame excuse that his being heart patient his mother will not bear the seriousness of the situation. The coward hid his vile self behind his ill mother and religion and emotionally blackmailed the soft-hearted Alice who found herself convinced and thus gave upon her love and her unborn baby. Doctor knew in their last three

generation, none married outside shea sect. He only wanted an adventurous love-voyage that for Alice was full of tempests. Metaphorically, he finally deserted Alice on a remote island and fled away. Being histrionics, he played helplessness so well that Alice forgot her pain to console the betrayer. Poor Alice couldn't even completely judge this episode that drained her. Muhammad Hanif said about her body once as the "battle ground" (p.256), where several battles were fought and I believe this was the creepiest.

### **1.1 Woman is a Commodity**

"a woman was something you could get as loose change in a deal made on a street corner." (p. 142)

Women are treated like commodities/objects in Pakistan as described by Muhammad Hanif in his novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. He reports alarming facts such as, "... settle a game of cards they had gone for too long in the night by trading in a woman." (p.143)

Alice's mother was also treated like a toy by her capitalist employer who after satisfying his lust killed her. What a pity, that the capitalists didn't consider his maid, the *other* gender human-beings. Human-beings breaths and deserves a better life than becoming a capitalist's playful object.

## **2. Instrumentality, Denial of Subjectivity, Denial of Autonomy, Inertness, Violability:**

### **2.1 The Most Malicious Misogynist**

The most hideous crime among all in this novel is this objectifier (Malangi) who instrumentalized his beloved. Later he advises to Teddy to treat his wife inhumanly, reveals the true nature of the general patriarchal mentality of Pakistan.

The vilest patriarch in the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, is the revengeful misogynist, inspector Malangi killed a woman for not accepting his love. He took advantage of his position in the secret forces to take that woman into custody. This is an evil misuse of an authoritative position to imprison his beloved to fulfill his selfish desires. Later, being the slave of his patriarchal and misogynist nature murdered the woman he loved in the lockup by shooting her in the head. The psychopath later regrets that he freed her easily, and he no longer can torment her any further. In his perception the deceased was all at peace while he was in pain. In Malangi's opinion, he should have given her a bitter punishment by burning her face with acid, "try this . . . as love hurts." (p.310).

Inspector Malangi asked Teddy to pour acid on the face of Alice Bhatti who became Alice Butt<sup>3</sup> even after her marriage. He could advise Teddy to discuss the issues with his wife who was compelled abandon Teddy's apartment in his long absence.

Malangi arranged *The men's night* celebration, for Teddy Butt “. . . being the bride groom” (p.149), where bizarre sexual activities, centering round a young prostitute, who was booked for the whole night. They Vulgar squad wanted to hire a “Christian virgin” (p.149) in reference to Alice. Being the groom Teddy was the first among them to satisfy his lust.

Inspector Malangi did not treat his own female family members well. He was womanizer, misogynist and an adulterous who could go any far in his ill treatment of women. It is said that,

“he has the greatest knowledge about women which comes with his lifetime experience of dealing with all kinds of women and he believes that no man can make a woman happy and faithful. . .” (p.145)

Inspector Malangi was a government official to serve the civilians and yet he gave Teddy the ugliest advice to commit the most ferocious crime against his wife Alice Bhatti who was pregnant with Teddy's child. Teddy's behavior as husband was questionable and this distanced Alice from him.

## 2.2 Alice is Teddy's Property

Teddy, left no stone unturned to prove that Alice was literally his personal property. He later demonstrated that he also owned Alice's body as well as her life, when he attacked her with the acid and killed her.

When Alice left Teddy, he went out looking for Alice and came to Noor. Teddy threatened and beat Noor to lower his pants down so Teddy could perform sodomy, using Noor as an object. Noor was terrified as his near death, bed ridden mother Zainab whose days were counted was laying in the same room. Noor petrified thought was,

“. . . Noor knows that he loves her, whatever it means. It is often said that love turns some people into martyrs and others into poets and philosophers. Obviously, it turns many into downright liars and criminals.” (pg. 290)

Teddy's love for Alice was not the reason he did crimes for he was already a criminal, who took part in numerous killings and murders. He was a liar who betrayed his wife too. It was Noor's innocence which made him think that Teddy Butt would convert into a criminal out of his love for

---

<sup>3</sup> Alice Bhatti's Muslim name after her marriage  
3512

Alice. Poor Alice mistook Teddy's macho-man attitude as her savior who could shield her against the Senior's people but unfortunately, Alice misjudged Teddy. Teddy was curious to know if Noor loved Alice but Noor replied wisely to his queries as,

“what you should be asking is, does she love me?” (Pg. 290)

After saying this Noor advised Teddy to have more communications with Alice. Seventeen years old, Noor, a colleague of Alice and his jail companion, found an urge to advise Teddy on his married life, unaware of a husband's duties for he dealt all his life with prostitutes only.

### **2.3 Alice's Mother was Taken by Him**

This episode revealed valueless feminine life in Pakistan. Alice mother was used as a toy and then murdered, who worked as a maid in several homes to support her family. One day her lifeless body was sent to her home with an explanation that she slipped from the marble staircase and lost her life. The visible marked on her body told another story of her assault, rape, and murder. Being attractive and beautiful was Alice's mother's drawback that resulted in her rape and murder. The author of the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* Muhammad Hanif repeatedly wrote the line ironically, “he took her” instead of saying “He took her”. All the Christian community at Alice's mother's funeral were sad about her untimely death, including her husband Joseph Bhatti. Women witness the nail scratches on Alice's mother's breast and also the semen flowing downwards, on her legs. A Muslim servant from the house she worked as a maid, came to her funeral and was heard uttering “murder, murder” that was assumed as, “martyr, martyr”. A poor woman lost her life as she goes out to earn money to support her child and family. It's a sin to comment on her death with following words that, “He took her” and referring Him to be God/Allah. Not only Joseph Bhatti but all the people who intentionally overlooked the evidence that proved this as a murder and thus they are also guilty of being part of the crime. They are called *Choorhas* who belong to the lowest socio-economics class but they are human beings who have their dignity, self-respect and share equal national rights.

### **2.4 Pre-Birth Female Genocide**

This is one of the ugliest truths of Pakistani society those female fetuses are killed/aborted before their birth. These unborn children are killed in the wombs of their mothers and then they are nor even given a proper burial but are drained. It reveals “no value” of feminine life for they are killed before they are born.

“I found a baby in the main drain at the Ideal Housing Society.” (p.72)

Joseph Bhatti was an introvert, who kept his work issues apart from family. He could not remain silent

finding a fetus in a shopper down the sewerage drain to be carried away with human filth. The savages are completely devoid of humanity as they first abort baby girls and disrespected their dead bodies as not giving a proper funeral but thrown in the shopping-bags. This state of the female fetuses is below the status of animals and of objects.

Alice asked his father, “boy or girl?” (p.73), and Joseph Bhatti replied that it was a girl not bigger than the size of his palm whose body was dumped in a plastic shopping bag. This was Clearly the case of an abortion. Alice then thought that this was a sign,

“ . . . that human life can be flushed down to the toilet.” (p.73)

This type of femicide is very much common in Indo-Pak subcontinent. Ultrasound has made this hideous crime easier to abort the undesired baby (a female in most of the cases) abortion though it is illegal in both the countries. This is modern and more abominable disposing of female child is a custom that was unknown even in pre-Islamic Arab. Alice Bhatti was saddened when Joseph Bhatti spoke of the size of the fetus that was smaller than his palm. Killing a baby inside the mother’s womb and then send her down the drain is the uglier than objectification as people do not flush their commodities.

## **2.5 Women Harassing Women, Due to Fear of Men**

Patriarchal pressure on women is extremely intense in everyday life in Pakistan. It is expected that men, especially rich and powerful capitalists can go any far in treating women lower than objects. Their behavior grows extremely intense in order to gain sexual advantage especially when they are dealing with a helpless poor woman. Following is the example which reveals that this situation also prevails in Pakistan too.

“Senior nurse Hina Alvi doesn’t . . . ordered by her.” (p.108)

Alice was called in the office of senior nurse Hina Alvi, to face her awful conduct. This was only the beginning of the harassment Alice Bhatti suffered, in her workplace, for the crime of standing and defending herself against rape and assault. Hina Alvi blamed Alice for the incident happened in VIP room, where rich and politically powerful Begum Qazal Bakash (Begum Qaz) son tried to rape her. Hina Alvi was siding with the VIP even in a private meeting with Alice Bhatti. The irony of the whole episode is that the victim Alice Bhatti was accused for the crime who in fact defended herself against an armed assault.

Hina Alvi nervously spoke with Alice in the following words,

“just because there is no police case. . . it means they want to deal with you on their own.”

(p.108)

Hina Alvi basically was afraid of Qaz's sons and her fear forced Hina to blame Alice for the adverse situation, even though Hina knew Alice was the victim. In a threatening tone Hina warned Alice that Qaz's sons did not registered a complaint against Alice for they would take revenge themselves from Alice. Furthermore, she added that this could be tremendously ugly and dreadful and so Alice must fear even more.

"I have learnt my trade at the bedside . . . that thing that you slashed was a real cock." (p.111)."

Alice Bhatti's asked Hina Alvi for an advice to deal with such a situation, in response to Hina Alvi's brutal speech in which Hina Alvi's opinionate that Alice let the situation went out of control, so this would have been avoided.

This advice is impractical as to keep a situation in control; when an armed man wanted to fulfill his lust with a nurse on gun point in a hospital's VIP room. Hina Alvi's effort to blame Alice was due to a fact that did not want to be misquoted later, during in any discussion on this topic with authorities who would support the powerful. Hina Alvi understood the whole situation well but did not admit in front of Alice. Furthermore, Hina Alvi elaborated her scolding speech with information that Alice was neither the first nor would she be last to encounter rape. Therefore, it was Alice's duty to ask the rapist to put it (his organ) inside his pants and zip it. She continued to blame that it was Alice's failure that she unable do so. Hina Alvi overruled Alice objection when she protested that it was not a possibility due to the gun in the hand of the rapist. Pointed towards her.

Hina Alvi shifted all blame of extremely terrible situation on Alice. Alice further asked Hina Alvi to take slight responsibility by pretending that she was with Alice in this matter. On this Hina Alvi provided Alice with a small pistol (gun) to help herself by her own.

In a professional set up, in Pakistani, Hina Alvi, demonstrates a typical example of women who do not side with women. Not everyone likes to stand for a person facing a bad situation, only because they do not want to get involved.

### **3. Denial of Autonomy, Denial of Subjectivity, Violability**

#### **3.1 Sacred as the Harassing Place for Women**

Similarly, as discussed above women in Sacred are venerable too. Anything may happen to these women at any time.

"Alice Bhatti read...in this place normal." (p.52)

It is very shocking that formal victims in the hospital may be kidnapped, assaulted, and burnt to death to keep the secrecy of the crimes committed against these women to protect these sinister sinners. These women who were kidnapped and put to the death in the most horrible way possible in a hospital named Sacred and unfortunately these incidents are never reported.

### **3.2 The Infant's Father**

Whoever *Chootoo*'s father was, he instrumentalized, violated and objectified *Chootoo*'s mother. There is no description or even the slightest detail about the father of the infant (*Chootoo*) born helplessly in a public sector hospital. There was no one with the poor mother from her family or from the family of the man who fathered her son.

The infant's father and the doctor who fathered Alice' first child and Alice's husband who fathered her second child are the examples of the coward and weak men. The example of the VIP men who were after a woman Alice from low socio-economic strata of life belonging to a minor religious community to take their revenge of the deed these men were guilty of. This also reveal the weak, coward and evil patriarchy of Pakistani society.

## **4. Violability, denial of Subjectivity, Denial of Autonomy, Instrumentality**

### **4.1 Women are Trained to Think Inferior**

Pakistani women are also trained to think inferior to males, who consider women as their inferior.

Teddy is the lord of the house. “. . . if there is going to be a lord around here, it has to be him (p.108).”

Teddy Butt plays the paterfamilias, which is a common patriarchal pattern of Pakistani society, where man has precedence over women. Additionally, Teddy does not provide for his wife, which of-course is a man's duty. Similarly, Inspector Malangi also behaves as the paterfamilias in his home. Such conduct is the result of the mental training which these men attain from their home environment and thus turns into patriarchs like the characters of Teddy and Malangi. They start dealing with people with this patriarchal mentality that set up their minds in their early boyhood. They dominate women in their homes and so they consider women inferior to them in their workplaces as well. This sets up their mentality to consider all women as their inferior which leads to the disastrous incidents such as Alice's death, her mother's death, and the death of Malangi's beloved.

Teddy's father was also a similar example of men who consider themselves omniscient at their home. They treat their family members as their subjects and in some cases as their slaves. The women

are the handmaidens of the male family members and are expected to obey all their commands. Women cannot have any objection to any of the decisions the men (in their family) make, even if they want to disagree. In men's opinion women have no right to do so. This caused Teddy to consider himself as the lord of the family, so he did not care to inform Alice about any of his matters. Yet he expected Alice to follow his setup of the household and provide him money when he came home after an uninformed absence of a few days.

## **5. Violability, Denial of Subjectivity, Denial of Autonomy, Instrumentality**

### **5.1 Coward Teddy**

Cowards are brutes, and this is explained well in the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Teddy's biggest crime was that he burnt his wife with acid. Teddy being a coward could not stand the reality of his own life. Teddy is an egoistic goof who could not see his mistakes in his marriage. Furthermore, he discussed the matter with a psychopath and followed his advice blindly. Alice's mistake cannot be punished in such a horrible way. Teddy did not even show any concern when his boss told him that VIP people must settle some score with Alice. Alice was his wife and Teddy was responsible for her wellbeing not to take her life against his anger and for the happiness of a few savages. This is the culmination of the objectification of women in Pakistan.

## **6. Denial of Subjectivity, Denial of Autonomy, Instrumentality, Ownership, Fungibility**

### **6.1 Wife is Not Prostitute**

Teddy Butt wanted to make a quick move to consummate their marriage and suddenly he realized that Alice was staying for the whole night and so there was no hurry. Being a womanizer, this behavior became part of his reflexes as he believed, if a man does not think of a woman for few minutes, is not a man. Pity that Alice married with a nasty womanizer who stooped exceptionally low when she left him for his irresponsible conduct. Alice experience of men was exceptionally less in comparison to Teddy Butt's experience with women. Alice Bhatti was ignorant of Teddy beguiling nature. Once he shared his knowledge about women in extensive detail and curious Alice asked,

“you told me you never knew a woman before you met me, so how do you know these women and their special routines?” (p.210)

To this inquiry Teddy lied in the following words,

“I know people who knew people who knew women.” (p.210)

Alice is a victim of a bad marital bond as well.

## **6.2 State of Women in The Sacred Hospital**

Women in Sacred could be as privileged as the Qaz, as well as some of them can also get medical facilities like Noor’s mother Zainab. *Other* women can be found on a trolley like chairs, begging for the sleeping pills in order to pass their nights easily. Women would die during labor due to negligence. An inexperienced Staff nurse would be sent to *Charya* Ward and no enquiry will be held. Alice in VIP Ward will face an assault, and fear VIP’s revenge for the rest of her life. Alice will be blamed for being the victim. No law prevails to rectify this unjust in the Sacred, nor outside the Sacred. This episode reveals that “fittest survive” in Pakistan. Fittest in Pakistan is the capitalist. Women are not the ones who can be counted as fittest and so they can only survive if they are with a powerful person that can be their father, brother, husband, or son. Alice thought that Teddy would save her who thought himself the lord of the house. He was an objectifier and Alice mistook him for her savior. And after her marriage Alice experimented Self Objectification which resulted in her ruin.

These conditions of this hospital push working women to make wrong decisions that may ruin their lives and there is no protection to the women who are not associated with the powerful person.

## **6.3 Standing Against Crime; Not acceptable**

Alice Bhatti was a brave warrior who could stand against every ill, not only for herself but for others too. Protecting Christian roommates from the Muslim attackers, to saving a child “*Chotoo*” and adopting him. Alice stood against the evil son of VIP Qaz. She married Teddy Butt, who was later indirectly worked for the same evil descendants of Qaz against Alice. He did so because of his self-created assumption developed into string of suspicions which were strengthened by misogynist inspector Malangi, who killed his own beloved. All these people are rather psychopaths or sociopaths. In Pakistan women who respond boldly to tyranny, face fatal consequences such as Alice Bhatti. Woman who can live with wearing another face and veil their secrets are in a better position like Hina Alvi, though she cannot be addressed as an example of a good woman in good social status. Hina Alvi herself is triple marginalized due to her class, gender, and religion besides she had to hide her religion to live in peace.

Apart from all this Alice depicts the height of courage and moral character who stood against

3518 remittancesreview.com

an elite member of society, against the Muslim and for *Chootoo*. Alice Bhatti shows a remarkable strength of character and such people are extremely rare.

#### 6.4 Orthopedic Doctor ki Tharak

Alice was openly harassed by a senior doctor who interviewed her for the post of junior staff, “lewd gestures, .....castrating someone.” (p.14)

Alice Bhatti started her career as a junior nurse and soon gained a good reputation due to her hard work. Alice was a beautiful woman. The tailor who measured her for her wedding dress, told Alice that posh Christian women of their community would kill for the figure like Alice. However, Alice instructed him to make the dress flat below the neck area, where her true assets rest. Alice was extremely careful to avoid every gesture which may attract men towards her. Still Alice had to face people’s evil gaze, their vile gestures and above all their effort to touch her body. Alice could sense the lust in Ortho Sir’s conduct during her interview. Alice knew that when he licks his gums with his parched tongue, he was desiring to lick her nipples.

Postnatal nipples...his teeth? (p.14)

Ortho sir fixed his eyes to Alice’s breast and questioned her about postnatal nipples, proving his cheap lustful, harassing mentality. Unfortunately, Not only professional women but non-professional women also suffer harassment.

Alice took precautions every day dealing with people at her workplace.

“Alice Bhatti is not taking any chances. She . . . send the wrong signal.” (p.145”).

Alice also carefully camouflaged her feminine assets as well as took every single precaution with people in all spheres of her life. She carefully observes her speech to avoid code switching/code mixing during a conversation at her workplace. She would not choose *Punjabi* as mode of communication over English, to avoid intimacy, and depict her more modern person instead. She made direct eye contact. She would sidestep with a slight hurry, if a person half of her age appeared in-front of her on the path. She also walks a bit fast, so no one would seek her attention. She would walk by the side of little puddles, for if she jumps over them by stretching her legs a little, she may give a wrong message to the people around. She knew that people would take advantage by looking at her and so, she always tried to hide her feminine assets to avoid the approached with the intention of using her as a joyful object. Majority of the women in Pakistan observe these rules irrespective of being professional or not.

Alice careful attitude is vivid in the following lines, as she asks a favor from Mr. Dalhousie (the tailor) in the following requesting manner,

“When you stitch the shirt, can you please make my privileges look a bit flat.” (p.146)

Still, the following description summarizes the characteristics of the people at Alice’s workplace Sacred.

“Mostly people call her daughter, or sister and then do exactly what they would do with their own sisters and daughters: they treat her like a slave they bought at a Clearance sale.” (p.122)

Alice’s character also exemplifies the victims of societal criticism. She was blamed for her armed assault and no one sided with her. She marries and everyone raises a finger to her character. Her co-workers stated rubbish that Alice was living in an open relationship with Teddy without *nikah* and thus marriage became a political issue and everyone including the surgeons and doctors made filthy statements to Alice’s character and accusing her to turning the hospital into a slutsville.

Later he said. “. . . an army of heart broken suiters would take offence.” (p.217)

He was concerned about Alice’s conversion and later this conversation became too grave when people started discussing the future of their yet to be born children’s religion. Moreover, Alice and Teddy were blamed for having their marriage ceremony on an Indian boat. Teddy was called ironically Mr. Junior Faisal Abad.

“are you sure. . . it would be quite simple.” (p.218)

Jealous Hina Alvi exposed herself as she lectured Alice on the side effects of marriage. Such jealousy is often converted into envy and thus women ruin a woman's happiness. Alice Bhatti also becomes a victim of the jealousy of a colleague who shares with her the same gender, same job, and same religion. This makes Alice Bhatti marginalized even more than three times.

### **6.5 Hina Alvi’s Cruelty in Maternity Room**

An Eighteen years old pregnant woman suffered labor pain for several hours and on the delivery bed, the senior nurse Hina Alvi yelled mercilessly at her by saying, “somebody must have given you birth, or did you fall from sky? (p.240)”. Alice Bhatti prepared for scalpel and a pair of scissors, to which

Hina Alvi responded cruelly that the patient should learn to bear pain. Unfortunately, the mother died on the operating table.

## **7. Violability, Denial of Subjectivity, Denial of Autonomy, Instrumentality**

### **Alice**

In the case of Alice Bhatti, she was a victim of her faith, of her love and her easy trust. Above all the victim of bad marriage to a possessive maniac womanizer, punter, a police tout, and a broker of the information whose biggest weakness was money.

“Teddy Butt is accustomed .... I am not running away with your money”. (p.155).

Teddy feared his scandalous reputation regarding physical affairs with women to come to Alice’s notice.

“... but surrounded by the ... reaching her.” (p.155)

Furthermore, due to his very own bad characteristics Teddy started assuming suspicious things about Alice. The author of the novel revealed that Teddy on one occasion had a pastime with a 14 years old prostitute who claimed to be 21. Alice trusted Teddy for his proclamation of love for Alice and expected him to be her protector.

### **7.1 Hospital is a Butcher’s Shop**

This hospital where Alice worked was more like a butcher shop specially for female patients. This situation grew more intense where Mohammad Hanif speaks of a girl in labor who was treated inhumanely by Hina Alvi. Alice did all she could to save the girl’s baby but Hina Alvi continuously accused the dead girl for falling in love and bearing her lover’s child.

“Sister Hina Alvi turns the baby...says Hina Alvi” (p.242)

Later, Hina Alvi slapped the infant, hanging him in the air like a kitten and declaring the baby dead. This cruel conduct and her sharp words had piercing effect which is unacceptable from a paramedic.

## **8. Inertness, Violability, Denial of Autonomy**

### **8.1 Rapist Damaged Alice’s Faith**

Alice’s mother’s murder damaged her faith and she stopped believing in God as the protector. With her innocent conduct she tried to show God her unhappiness. she would wear dirty clothes on Sunday church visits and think of dirty jokes during the prayer to ignore the sermon and think of

abusive words during the hymn such as,

“*poo, piss, musla, protestant, Gaon;*” (p. 251)

Later, a time came when she realized her mistake and confessed before father Philip who guided her to rectify her trivial blasphemies which she committed in her innocence. Alice then decided to fulfil a mission of brightening up His name.

### **8.2 Teddy’s Love for Alice**

Teddy’s love for Alice soon after marriage. He was outrageous to notice that Alice rearranged his weight disks. The thought of his vengeance against was deadly,

“He wants to take that twenty-kilogram bumper plate and crush her head with it.” (p.231)

Teddy’s thought process expresses that his love was only a fragment of affection that he and Alice both mistook for love.

### **Conclusion:**

when there an imbalance in power occurs, it results in making one gender more powerful over the other than the true essence of a relationship is lost. The harmony, care and love are engulfed by submission, dominance, manipulation, and collusion and so the bond that could have been more powerful, passionate and much loving would cease to exist. The imbalance and the patriarchy sometimes weaken the connection between the couple and the bond doesn’t properly forms. A man loses his natural self after becoming a patriarch and when it intensifies man becomes objectifier and women objectified. Eve/Hawwa was created so that Adam/Aadam could cherish her companionship as his other half not as his *submissive* or objectified which has become a common culture in Pakistani society. The drawback of this practice suppresses men’s true self, desires, and increases negligence of the sole purpose of having Eve’s daughters in their lives. On the other hand, this practice turns women into playful commodities and objects which is evident in the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Furthermore, the novel depicts another very intense kind of patriarchy that treats women even lesser than objects or commodities. To address this there should be another kind of research because they have exceeded and gone a step further from objectifying women. Moreover, another terminology other than the objectified must be coined for such victims because this is a level below objectification.

## References:

- Ali, Rabia (2001), "The Dark Side of Honour", Shirkat Gah, URL: [http: http://www.pk.boell.org/downloads/the\\_dark\\_side\\_of\\_honour.pdf](http://www.pk.boell.org/downloads/the_dark_side_of_honour.pdf)
- Ali, T. S., & Khan, N. (2007). Strategies and recommendations for prevention and control of domestic violence against women in Pakistan. *Journal of Pakistan Medical Association*, 57(1), 27.
- Angierski, K. N. (2014). *Reclaiming the motherland:(Eco) feminism in Sahar Khalifeh's The Inheritance and The End of Spring*. State University of New York at Buffalo.
- Bartky, S. L. (2015). *Femininity and domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression*. Routledge.
- Bhattacharya, Sanchita (2013), "Pakistan: Woman: Unseen, Unheard, Targeted", [Online: web] Accessed 27 Aug. 2020, URL: [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/sair12/12\\_2.htm#assessment2](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/sair12/12_2.htm#assessment2).
- Bhattacharya, S. (2014). Status of women in Pakistan. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 51(1).
- Bolmefalk, J. (2012). The Failure of Promoting a Sense of Sisterhood in the Face of Patriarchy: A Feminist Reading of Jane Smiley's A Thousand Acres.
- Butler, J. (1998). Sex and gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex. *Simone de Beauvoir: A critical reader*, 72, 29.
- Cahill, A. J. (2012). *Overcoming objectification: A carnal ethics*. Routledge.
- Calogero, R. M. (2013). Objects don't object: Evidence that self-objectification disrupts women's social activism. *Psychological science*, 24(3), 312-318.
- De Beauvoir, S. (1972). The second sex, trans. HM Parshley. *London: Cape*.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). Sex differences in social behavior: A social role interpretation. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Engels, F. (2010). *The origin of the family, private property and the state*. Penguin UK.
- Heflick, N. A., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2009). Objectifying Sarah Palin: Evidence that objectification causes women to be perceived as less competent and less fully human. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45(3), 598-601.
- Higgins, T. E. (2006). Book Review: Are Women Human? and Other International Dialogues by Catharine A. MacKinnon. *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism*, 18(2), 6.
- Jabeen, S., Riaz, M., & Omer, S. (2020). Applying socioecological framework to acid attack violence: an exploration of inhabitant factors. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 0886260519898442.
- Jasam, S. (2001). Honour, shame & resistance. Lahore, Pakistan: ASR Publications.
- Kahalon, R., Shnabel, N., & Becker, J. C. (2018). Experimental studies on state self-objectification: A review and an integrative process model. *Frontiers in psychology*, 9, 1268.

- Lim, L. (1983). Capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy: the dilemma of third-world women workers in multinational factories. *Women, men and the international division of labor*, 70-91.
- Linda, N. & Lewis, J. J. (2017). Feminist Theory of Patriarchy. *Man VS. Women and Children on Balanced Scale*. WUNRN. Retrieved from, <https://wunrn.com/2018/03/feminist-theories-of-patriarchy/>
- MacKinnon, C. A. (1987). *Feminism unmodified: Discourses on life and law*. Harvard university press.
- McKee, A. (2001). A beginner's guide to textual analysis. *Metro Magazine*, (127), 138-149.
- Mies, M. (1998). *Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale: Women in the international division of labour*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moghadam, V. M. (2004). Patriarchy in transition: Women and the changing family in the Middle East. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 35(2), 137-162.
- Munoz, G. M. (1993). Patriarchy and Islam. *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*.
- Mumtaz, K., & Shaheed, F. (1987). Women of Pakistan two steps forward, one step Back?.
- Nasir, N. u. A., Hussain, T., & Waheed, S. (2021). The Objectification of Women in Pakistani Television Advertisements and its Impact on the Body Image of Women. *Global Sociological Review*, VI(I), 119-132. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2021\(VI-I\).16](https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2021(VI-I).16)
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1995). Objectification. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 24(4), 249-291.
- Nussbaum, M. C., & Estlund, D. M. (Eds.). (1997). *Sex, preference, and family: essays on law and nature*. Oxford University Press.
- Oakley, A. (1972). *Sex, Gender and Society* (London, Maurice Temple Smith).
- Noor, M. J. (2004). *Daughters of Eve: Violence against women in Pakistan* (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology).
- Ullah, H. (2014). The Objectification of Women in Television Advertisements in Pakistan. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(2).
- Welsh, J. (2009). It was like burning in hell: a comparative exploration of acid attack violence.
- Wilson, K. J. (2006). *When violence begins at home: A comprehensive guide to understanding and ending domestic abuse* (2nd ed.). Canada: Hunter House.
- Zia, T. (2013). *Acid violence in Pakistan*.