

MAGICAL REALISM AS A TOOL FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN OUR LADY OF ALICE BHATTI BY MOHAMMED HANIF

AAMER SHAHEEN¹, SADIA QAMAR² & MUHAMMAD HAFEEZ-UR-REHMAN³

^{1,2}Lecturer in English, Department of English, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan

³BS(Hons) English Literature, Department of English, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Mohammed Hanif, a comic genius, represents feminist agenda in his novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by empowering his protagonist Alice Bhatti with the tool of magical realism. With a very strong interest in sprawling metropolis Karachi, he delineates the dilemma of hypocritically conservative Pakistani society where women are sexually harassed, shot or hacked, strangled or suffocated, poisoned or burnt and hanged or buried alive. But Mohammed Hanif's headstrong protagonist, Alice Joseph Bhatti, is fighting against Pakistan's misogynous patriarchy and religious majority. Hanif stands fast in advocating the role of Pakistani women who are conversant in patriarchal discourse. *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* foils the patriarchal hegemony by incorporating magical agency in Alice Bhatti to restore her feminine prestige and primacy in the real mundane phallogocentric world. The exploitation of the Christian Choorahs (Sweepers) in the novel is also the indication of Muslim intolerant attitude towards minorities of Pakistan. The objective of the research is to highlight the depth of Pakistani Literature in the broader realm of South Asian Literature which has recently gained more momentum with the start of a number of Literary Awards for this region. The research draws its Theoretical Framework from the general understanding of the feminist theory and magical realism. The contemporaneous nature of the research gives it a contemporaneous relevance and scope. Hanif has carved Alice Bhatti as a saint by the end of the novel with the help of magical realism. Therefore suggesting that Hanif's feminine characters achieve their place and control over society when they are dead.

KEYWORDS: Magical Realism, Women Empowerment, Patriarchy