Vol. 24(2), 2024, pp.41-54, ISSN: 2072-0394(Print), ISSN: 2663-8886(Online)

# 'Wound is the Place Where Light Enters You': En-Visioning Speaking Shame and Shame Resilience in Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*

**Amna Siddique**

**&**

**Khamsa Qasim**
Department of English
International Islamic University, Islamabad

## Abstract

This paper establishes that Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* foregrounds the concept of shame and explores how doubly marginalized Christian woman Alice Bhatti develops shame resilience in a patriarchal society. By identifying the patterns of oppression and marginalization and breaking the barriers of silence, Alice Bhatti becomes resilient to shame-induced trauma. Consequently, she re-affirms her self-identity against the one prescribed by the society. This paper aims to explore the trauma and shame that emerge as a result of alienation because of social stigma. It further displays how such victims can stand against the atrocities of others by recognizing and redefining their identities. By building upon Judith Herman's trauma theory, we intend to investigate how doubly marginalized Christian women in patriarchal societies are subjected to trauma. Moreover, Brene Brown's notion of shame resilience will be deployed to unveil the shame resilience of the marginalized group. The victims of trauma and shame often become resilient by creating safe bonds with their selves and with others, which further helps them move past their shame in a dignified manner, if not completely escape it.

**Keywords:** Trauma Theory, Shame Resilience, Marginalisation, Empathy, Oppression.

## Introduction

*Wound is the Place Where Light Enters You*[1]

This paper demonstrates that women in Patriarchal societies get predisposed to trauma when societies continuously subject them to shame as a supposedly inherent

[1] It is a translated verse from Rumi, a prominent Persian Poet and Sufi philosopher. It means that after any misfortune, the direction that our life goes in depends on our resilience in the face of hardships.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License.

characteristic of their existence, owing to their femininity. Muhammad Hanif highlights this kind of shame in his text titled *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, through the traumatizing experiences of marginalized women in a predominantly patriarchal society. The central character of the text, Alice Bhatti, endures stigma owing to her gender-based inferiority that leads to shameful events in her life when her bodily existence takes precedence over her personality as a human and brings her negative attention from potentially harmful men. However, women can become resilient to shame-induced trauma by identifying the patterns and speaking of their traumatic experiences, which helps strengthen their notion of self.

This research expands on Brene Brown's (2007) concept of 'shame resilience' to highlight how women can overcome their stigmatized status by identifying and embracing their vulnerabilities. Brown defines resilience as the "ability to recognize shame when we experience it, and move through it in a constructive way that allows us to maintain our authenticity and grow from our experiences" (2007, p. 55). Her argument brings forth the importance of recognizing one's status in society and approaching it critically rather than with anguish or fruitless dismay. Brown (2007) asserts that raising one's voice and speaking of one's truths paves the way to redefining the self and becoming resilient to shame. This argument is much in line with Michel Foucault's, who suggests that to resist the dominant hegemonic discourses; it is important to revive the counter version (Qasim & Yaqoob, 2022). Through shame resilience theory (SRT), this paper aims to explore how embracing one's vulnerability can help connect vulnerable victims through a shared sense of empathy generated by common experiences of entrapment and isolation.

Hanif's protagonist embodies Brown's argument by identifying her vulnerable status and having a critical approach towards it. She is not afraid to underscore the unjust and oppressive entitlement of the men and knows exactly how she can evade the consequences of the men's privilege that brings shame to her. Furthermore, Judith L. Herman's trauma theory will be utilized to elaborate on how shameful experiences can lead to traumatization and how women can get over the shame and trauma and heal their sense of self by recognizing and embracing their vulnerabilities. Herman (2012) likens shame to fear and establishes that it becomes a factor in developing trauma among people, which thrives by silencing its victims. In addition, through her trauma theory, Herman (1992) states that trauma robs people of power and control over their lives. However, if people can get over the barrier of silence that surrounds shame and trauma, they can get over it and move on in their lives with dignity. The courage to shatter the notion of silence surrounding the shame of being a marginalized woman is again something that Alice's character portrays clearly, which helps "replace the image of the 'other' with a somewhat more powerful image, which has always been surviving on the edges" (Ahmed & Nasir, 2022, p. 62). In this research paper, we intend to explore Alice's resilience and her ability to recover from shame-induced trauma.

*Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Muhammad Hanif is a novel about the life of a lower-class Christian nurse living and navigating her way through "an androcentric society wherein men play with the lives of women" (Afzal et. al., 2021, p. 310). The text chronicles a series of misfortunes, both in her personal and professional life, that culminate in a shameful existence for Alice. As a lower-class religious minority, and especially as a woman, she faces the prejudice of society everywhere. Be it the hospital general ward, public transport, or even the nursing school; she is always exposed to the piercing male gaze that follows her everywhere. The text is set in Karachi, a city that is "a living entity, a unique and highly individualized living space… that transforms and redefines the female body in multiple ways" (Qasim, 2022, p. 77). Since she belongs to a marginalized community, as a woman, Alice's identity is defined by her body rather than her personality. Such existence, with a female body, is "not less than a curse" (Qasim, 2013, p. 212). This attaches a notion of perpetual shame within herself, which leaves her at risk of having wounded self-esteem and suffering immense societal stigma. However, Alice is resilient towards the shame that is prescribed for her by society. This means that she not only understands that she is vulnerable to shame and violence simply because of her existence as a woman, but she is also conscious enough to make decisions to avoid that shame. Understanding the causes of one's shame can change the victim's reaction towards it. Once the victims realize that they are not inherently flawed or unworthy of validation, they overcome the fear of social rejection (Brown, 2007). Alice identifies the patterns of her objectification and overpowers the trauma that arises from such experiences.

## Review of the Literature

Singha (2015) in her dissertation on caste consciousness in Pakistan writes about the origins of untouchability towards lower-class Christians in Pakistan, which she traces back to the arrival of Aryan tribes in India and their socio-religious taboos. Singha writes that the "Aryans had a complex set of rituals and practices that they brought with them when they migrated to India" (2015, p. 14). However, when they encountered the indigenous people, the Aryans found their practices impure and unclean. Based on such beliefs, the Chuhra caste, owing to their occupation as sweaters and sanitation workers were also considered polluted and untouchables (Pruthi, 2004, p.12). In the nineteenth century, many untouchables converted to Christianity in hopes of getting rid of social degradation (Singha, 2015, p. 23). However, their hopes were crushed when they remained untouchables even as Christians in modern-day Pakistan and India, where they have been marginalized as a lower-class group and pushed into sanitation work (Zuberi, 2023). Simone de Beauvoir's (2015) argument of female objectification lies in the same division of us and them, but between the genders. She studies the history of civilization and concludes that man has always defined woman as the 'other' thus becoming himself

the self or as Beauvoir calls it 'the one'. The portrayal of women as others helps "justify any kind of oppression" towards women (Qasim et. al., 2012, p. 212). Consequently, women become what Gayatri Spivak (1988) calls a 'doubly silenced' group. These groups are often subjugation and suppression, by the dominant forces, causing them to survive as the subalterns[2] (Younus & Qasim, 2015). The marginalization of people, whether based on caste or gender, induces trauma and social alienation. Khamsa Qasim and Farhan E. Y. Khan (2023), argue that the stereotypes attached to the role of women confirm them in certain criteria prescribed by the society, hence depriving them of their power.

Christa Schönfelder, while theorizing the romantic and post-modern perspective of trauma on mental wounds (2013) asserts that trauma can disrupt the perception of self and others, leaving lasting identity crises and ruptured relationships. When the relationship between self and the other is disturbed, shame emerges from insecurity. Moreover, Cathy Humphrey and Stephen Joseph in their research titled "Domestic Violence and the Politics of Trauma" (2004), demonstrate that Herman emphasized the 'dialectic of trauma', where survivors tend to face a conflict between simultaneously denying the reality of an atrocity and remembering and speaking of their experience. To solve their dilemma, Humphrey and Joseph contend that Herman suggests a supportive social context that affirms and protects the victim and joins them in a common alliance is necessary for the healing process against trauma. This includes building connections among people based on empathy due to shared experiences.

Disconnection from others and the self is what fosters shame among the victims of trauma. A strong sense of empathy can help the cause of connection and act as a powerful way to deal with shame, which results from feeling helpless, powerless, and isolated (Robertson & Long, 2019). Sandra Barefoot and Ruth Chitty (2019), in their research on shame resilience among women, while in imprisonment, argue that amidst severely dehumanizing treatment, resilience "came from a growing sense of self" (p. 39). Barefoot and Chitty (2019) further state that women who were able to re-humanize themselves were the ones who had improved their connection to self and others, thus building resilience against the unwanted identities that had been assigned to them by others. Shame resilience functions as a barrier against shame-induced trauma, by helping the vulnerable individuals to reclaim their authentic identity and building productive connections with the self and the other.

---

[2] Originally adopted by Antonio Gramsci, the term 'Subaltern', discusses cultural hegemony to refer to those groups in the society who, in one way or the other were subjected to the hegemony of the ruling class.

## Research Methodology

The significance of this research is highlighted by its nature of inquiry of shame and trauma in Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Being qualitative research, this study aims to elaborate concept through theoretical framework and it supports and identify the patterns of shame and trauma, that vulnerable members of the society like Alice Bhatti experience, and the resilience that such people portray in response. It employs the content analysis by using theoretical framework to focus and study shame and trauma and untold experiences and sufferings of people like Alice Bhatti. The researcher has employed content analysis and library research techniques to analyze the research problem, and primary sources are used to gather data. The primary sources have been analysed thoroughly in order to provide a nuanced approach towards Hanif's exploration of shame and resilience through Alice Bhatti's character.

## Theoretical Framework

This research is a qualitative study of trauma, shame, and resilience in Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Through the lens of Judith Herman's trauma theory from her seminal work titled *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terrorism*, this research focuses on the psychological and emotional impact of traumatic experiences of marginalized women and Christian minorities in Pakistan. To build a nexus between trauma, shame, and resilience, Brene Brown's theory of shame resilience is employed in the research, as it provides a framework for understanding and addressing shame.

## Analysis

The socio-cultural environment with unbalanced power dynamics creates marginalization of some groups which helps propagate and add to their trauma and stigma. Judith Herman (1992), while writing about the history of trauma, contends that the perpetrators of trauma and oppression attempt to escape accountability by promoting forgetfulness and silence among the victims, "the more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality, and the more completely his arguments prevail" (p. 18). If the perpetrators of trauma fail to achieve secrecy and silence, they employ their power to attack the credibility of the victims by creating multiple varying discourses around the traumatic reality ranging from complete denial to blaming the victims for the traumatic proceedings (Herman, 1992, p. 18). In Hanif's text, the protagonist Alice and her father Joseph Bhatti, are subjected to trauma owing to their status as 'untouchables' otherwise known as 'chuhra', a term that "officially translates to "sweeper", is seen by many as derogatory… (and) casually used as a slur for Christians" (Zuberi, 2023). Their

lower-class status leads to stigma, "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from the full social acceptance" (Goffman, 1990, p. 3). In one instance, Joseph Bhatti tells Alice about a visit to an upper-class doctor's house and says that "they fed me in their Choohra dishes and then washed their hands as if I was spreading leprosy" (2011, p. 49). Through the practice of untouchability, society gives the notion of 'caste' a coherence that it requires to thrive as a system and structure (Rao, 2013).

This structure causes a divide of 'us' vs 'them' that serves as the 'models of oppression' which have been affirmed to be "firmly rooted in the either/or dichotomous thinking of Eurocentric, masculinist thought" (Collins, 1990, p. 223). Joseph Bhatti's life centers around this perception of us and them and Alice remarks that, for him, 'they' represent "everyone who doesn't work for the Corporation" (Hanif, 2011, p. 49). He feels disconnected from the others because as a lower-class Christian, he belongs to the subaltern group who are "frequently singled out or deliberately targeted for their religious belonging, and also have less access to resources that could help them cope with these traumata" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2019, p. 58). Thus, affirming Herman's argument that those who stand at the lower end of the power dynamic tend to be traumatized more and suffer more because of that. Alice, on the contrary, belongs not only to the lower-class religious minority but is also a woman; who experiences a matrix of oppression. Qasim (2012) contends that 'the matrix of oppression', resulting from "intersecting oppression of race, class and gender" (p. 85), cripples women's ability to love. Thus, further pushing them towards social alienation. Like her father, she is also rendered untouchable by other people who would refuse to drink from the same tap that she would have touched. Yet those very people would "have no problem poking their elbows into her breast or contorting their bodies to rub against her heathen bottom" (Hanif, 2011, p. 87). She suffers a layered trauma that makes her more vulnerable to shame.

Shame among marginalized communities is instigated through people's vulnerabilities, stemming from their damaged notion of self, and thrives further through unwanted identities assigned to those communities. Herman (1992) argues that a secure connection with people functions as a basis for personal development. However, when such connections are "shattered, the traumatized person loses her basic sense of self" (Herman, 1992, p. 68). This can result from the social representation of victims as stigmatized individuals, which "slowly but surely erodes self-esteem, and threatens identity" (Pathania et. al., 2023, p. 5). As a result, the traumatized people feel utterly abandoned and they lose trust in others (Herman, 1992). Victims of trauma can either mourn their loss visibly or retreat to a safe space in a state of melancholy. According to Freud, "In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia, it is the ego itself" (1947, p. 246). Trauma, which "understandably, rarely leaves people with an open, trusting heart" (Van der, 2014, p. 685), is often rooted in terror and isolation. It affects the emotional and physical health of traumatized humans, affecting their capacity to

form trusting relationships and making them more isolated, even within their communities. This appears clearly through Alice's relationship with her father. The trauma that both individuals have suffered has tarnished their bond and weakened their trust beyond repair. Despite her father's attempts at reconciliation, Alice does not respond enthusiastically. She does not talk to him unless she is mad, or it is necessary, and avoids looking at him most of the time (Hanif, 2011, p. 48-49). When she gets married, she does not tell her father until after the ceremony and she never misses her father's home. Instead, she often felt bad for being "embarrassed to call this place home" (Hanif, 2011, p. 104). Her embarrassment interrupts her relationship with her father.

Her disconnection from her only living blood relative makes Alice more susceptible to vulnerability. Brene Brown identifies vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" (2012, p. 36). Alice's fate in the text is continuously overshadowed by vulnerability. As a woman and a professional nurse, she is repeatedly exposed to the risk of unwanted sexual advancements, which teaches her that "every little step forward in life is preceded by a ritual humiliation" (Hanif, 2011). She bears harassment from young men in VIP wards and old men on field trips. When she rejects those advances quite savagely, she is either threatened with suspension from her job or being cut up and has her pieces thrown in the well. She suffers this fate on a daily because she lives in a male-dominated society wherein "a woman is considered as a commodity, a part of possessions that are returned in society which continues to organize her body" (Siraj, et. al., 2021). Hanif states that Alice knows "too many humiliations and a journey that goes in circles means that her fate is permanently in the red (2011). Which means that she is always at the risk of an uncertain yet possibly horrible fate. Vulnerability works as a breeding ground for shame considering that shame is the intensely deep-rooted feeling that "we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging" (Brown, 2007, p. 29). Madeleine Shield, in her research on shame, states that shaming practices tend to appear as a tool of oppression since most marginalized groups are subjected to shame "not as a result of their wrong-doing but simply because they deviate in some way from the privileged norm" (2023). Alice suffers this kind of shame which Shield (2023) regards as 'unjust shame' as she is ethically innocent but deviates from the socially accepted norms not only owing to her femininity but also because of her lower economic status, as that of the daughter of a 'chuhra'. This is an 'unwanted identity' that according to Brown (2007) makes people vulnerable to shame, yet she cannot change it.

Certain unwanted identities associated with people by others lead to shame, which cannot always be changed, however, the problem of shame can be identified and solved by understanding and making conscious choices. Brown asserts that the first step that leads towards shame resilience is, 'understanding our shame triggers', which is the same as 'acknowledging our vulnerability' (2007). In most cases, what triggers

shame for women is "a web of layered, conflicting and competing social-community expectations" (Brown, 2007, p. 41). When women, who live in a kind of society that "expects a certain kind of social behavior from women" (Qasim, 2022, p. 79), are constantly flooded with the notions of how and what they should be, and a set of rules regarding how they must behave; they begin to fear the consequences of not fitting on the criteria handed over to them by other. This fear leads to shame when women behave in ways that might be disapproved by others as there is a "close connection between shame and disapproval" (Dessi et. al., 2023-24). Alice understands the web of social expectations and the consequences of not measuring up to those. That is why, she does not want to be a girl "who attracts the wrong kind of attraction… who is groped on buses, poked in service kitchens", as she has lived long enough to recognize that violence towards women is a sport that "is full of obscure rituals and intricate rules that everyone seems to know except her" (Hanif, 2011, 88). Brown postulates, "shame is organized by gender" (2007, p. 42), and the expectations to fit the criteria of their gender further lead to women feeling disconnected from their surroundings. Alice experiences intense suffering due to her disconnection from the Muslim majority she interacts with. For instance, at the hospital, she could not relate to her stern and experienced sister Hina Alvi, which made her feel like she was "being accused of not being woman enough" (Hanif, 2011, p. 30). After understanding one's vulnerable status, Brown (2007) argues that the ability to identify and make a choice to solve the problem of shame moves a person towards resilience, which she states is the process of regaining power. She defines power as; "the ability to act or produce effect" (2007, p. 49). Alice's character portrays a show of power by understanding that shame is "related to others' gaze" (Fuchs, 2003). She actively makes conscious choices to deflect that gaze. For instance, when she wears "a loose shirt and then over that shirt covers her chest with a dupatta… then makes sure that her shalwar covers her ankles" (Hanif, 2011, p. 87). By choosing to cover herself she gains power over the shame that her bodily existence brings her through the stares of strangers and men in public.

Along with a grasp on the same problem, people also need to understand why the situations leading to shame occur, how they are perpetuated, and who benefits from them. This is what Brown calls 'practicing critical awareness', which she differs from awareness by contending that "awareness is knowing something exists, critical awareness is knowing why it exists, how it works, how our society is impacted by it and who benefits from it" (2007, p. 122). She further expands on the idea by asserting that "shame works like the zoom lens on a camera" (2007, p. 123). Just like when the camera is zoomed in, the people experiencing shame focus on one point that makes them feel insecure and disconnected. But critical awareness is like zooming out that lens and looking at the bigger picture. When people take a look at the surroundings of their problems, the actual shame looks insignificant and small. The society, that Alice lives in, works by inflicting shame "silently and invisibly through the social norms and political machinations of a dominant social group that marks out certain

behaviors, physical characteristics or circumstances as unacceptable or deviant and, therefore, inferior" (Dolezal, 2022).

Alice is aware that the men are the dominant group of the society who have set the codes of conduct that fit their perception, hence she does not blame herself for the shameful instances in her life. Blaming one's self is another cultivator of shame (Brown, 2007), so critical awareness saves Alice from that. It is because of her critical awareness that Alice does not let herself down when confronted with the male gaze that might push women towards shame. Instead, when the visitors of the VIP ward stare at her, it amuses her "that men, even those on death watch, all think the same thing. One eye on the dying mother, the other on the paramedic's tits" (Hanif, 2011, p. 55). Alice is conscious that women are not at fault and that there is nothing wrong with their existence but with the society "that is deeply embedded in patriarchy which demands devotion, perseverance, loyalty and sacrifice from females" (Baig, 2017, p. 97). Yet, the same society never cares to provide basic human rights to those women, like a place where they "can go and deliver a baby" (Hanif, 2011, p. 48). The society alienates all women, making them stand as inferior beings in relation to men. Thus, if women want to stand against the oppressive society they must first ally with each other.

Making connections with other marginalized and stigmatized people and talking about one's shame-stimulating experiences generates empathy among traumatized people, which completes their cycle of resilience against shame. Reaching out to others for connections made out of empathy is the third step in Brown's SRT. She contends that not reaching out allows people to sit alone and feed their shame "the secrecy and silence it requires" (2007, p. 156). On the contrary, when people reach out to others, they inspire change by sharing their stories (Brown, 2007). At one instance in the novel Alice faces harassment at the hands of an upper-class male visitor of a patient and after the incident and gets called by her senior, Sister Hina Alvi, after she savagely injures the harassing visitor. Sister Hina Alvi reveals that she has managed to dissuade the rich family from pursuing Alice for any further harm and further gives her sincere advice to not go to the police as there she would have to deal with multiple harassers compared to the one in the hospital VIP ward. Although Alice feels disillusioned with Sister Hina at first, receiving a supportive response from her helps her as such responses detoxify the intense feelings of stigma, shame, and defilement among the survivors of shame (Dearing & Tangney, 2011).

The incident further strengthened the connection between Sister Hina and Alice through their mutual empathy for each other owing to their female existence against male-dominated culture. Brown defines empathy as the "ability to tap into our own experiences to connect with an experience someone is relating to us" (2007, p. 57). This is exactly what Sister Hina does when she takes out a small gun that she had owned for years to protect herself against potential abusers and hands it over to Alice.

She understands Alice's situation because she has gone through similar experiences and then offers her the help that she can. Researcher Clair T. Hauser asserts that people "who are resilient to shame can articulate associated experiences and emotions, and are then naturally more comfortable with reaching out" (2016, p. 24). Brown (2007) calls this ability 'speaking shame', the last step in building shame resilience. She states that people speak shame by developing names and terms to explain their experiences and by communicating their needs for connection through storytelling (2007, p. 182-183). Both, sister Hina and Alice form a connection by sharing their experiences and stories. At one point, Sister Hina talks to Alice about Fatima Jinnah, the mother of the nation in Pakistan, and tells he that she was a nurse and the sister of the founding father of the nation yet people do not call her a sister because "then people might have mistaken her for a nurse, one of us" (Hanif, 2011, p. 52). She communicates not only their inferior status as women but as nurses as well since it is not seen as a respectful profession in society.

Throughout the text, Alice Bhatti emerges as a living embodiment of Brown's Shame Resilience, which can be described as an approach not only to deal efficiently with challenges but also to grow through those (Brown, 2007; Duchek et. al., 2022). At the beginning of her career, she was a naive person who couldn't see through people's intentions. Nevertheless, once she faced harassment from an old man (Hanif, 2011, 88), she not only dealt with him fiercely but also learned ways to avoid such situations altogether. She "made her observations and thinks she has identified the type of woman who attracts the wrong kind of attention" (Hanif, 2011, p. 89). She learns to move through society more effectively, "she learns the sideways glance instead of looking at people directly… She sidesteps even when she sees a boy half her age walking towards her" (Hanif, 2011, p. 90). She is not afraid of her vulnerabilities, instead, she acknowledges it. Brown (2007) writes about the responses that she got from many women regarding shame and concludes that fear of being judged by others causes women to hide under the cloak of shame. Contrary to that, Alice's character does not portray any fear of judgment, even in her weakest and arguably most shameful moments. When she was called in front of a judge for the hearing of the case against her, she walked into the courtroom "with her head held high, handcuffs clinking, staring purposefully at the judge as if saying: you?" (Hanif, 2011, p. 47). Alice does not chase perfection in others' eyes, which makes her appear more resilient. The pressures of perfection lead to shame when people either fail to achieve it or when they get too far in their attempts to achieve it (Brown, 2007). Through her connection with others and herself, Alice learns to remain true to her actual identity and deflect the prescribed definition by others.

## Conclusion

Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* provides an inspiring account of resilience against shame and trauma. While lamenting the causes of social alienation

faced by the marginalized groups, the novel selves into a journey of fighting the barriers and moving past the shame that comes along with the reality of living within those. This paper explores how women, who often face discrimination and violence that leads to collective and individual trauma, can become resilient against trauma and shame. Psychological trauma is induced among the minority groups because of their lower social status, and does not just affect the individual psyche or identity of the victims, but destroys the link that connects the individuals to their community by subjecting them to shame. However, the victims of shame and trauma can cultivate shame resilience through empathy, which can help them form close connections with other people. The recognition and acceptance of one's vulnerability can help stigmatized communities develop healthy shame resilience, which can lead to a powerful existence within one's social circle. Thus, leading the victims of shame, from helplessness to empowerment.

## References

Afzal, M., Mushtaq, H., & Naqvi, S. B. (2021). Gendered discourse on women's identity: A discourse analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Educational Literature (PJSEL)*, *7*(1), 308-317.

Ahmed, Z., & Nasir, M. S. (2022). Surviving the edges of periphery: A postcolonial feminist critique of Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. *NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry,* 20(2), 60-70.

Baig, S. (2017). Realism vs magical realism in Mohammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti***.** *Linguistics and Literature Review,* 3(2), 87-102. https://doi.org/10.29145/2017/llr/030205

Barefoot, S., & Chitty, R. (2019). *Exploring Shame Resilience Theory (SRT) and its potential for understanding how shame affects the behaviours of women with lived experience of imprisonment***.** The Griffins Society. https://www.thegriffinssociety.org/system/files/papers/fullreport/griffins_research_paper_2019-03_-_full_paper.pdf

Beauvoir, S. de. (2015). *The second sex*. Vintage Classics.

Brown, B. (2007). *I thought it was just me: Women reclaiming power and courage in a culture of shame*. Gotham Books.

Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. Gotham Books.

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 221– 238. http://www.oregoncampuscompact.org/uploads/1/3/0/4/13042698/patricia_hill_collins_black_feminist_thought_in_the_matrix_of_domination.pdf

Dearing, R. L., & Tangney, J. P. (2011). *Shame in the therapy hour*. American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/12326-000

Dessi, R., Ren, J., & Zhao, X. (2023-24). *Shame, guilt, and motivated self-confidence.* Monash University, Department of Economics. https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/3485427/2023-24.pdf

Dolezal, L. (2022). Shame, anxiety, stigma, and clinical encounters. *National Library of Medicine,* 28(5), 854–860. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7613638/

Duchek, S., Foerster, C., & Scheuck, I. (2022). Bouncing up: The development of women leaders' resilience. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 38*(4). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2022.101304

Freud, S. (1947). Mourning and melancholia. In J. Strachey (Ed.), *The standard edition of the complete works of Sigmund Freud* (pp. 243-258). Hogarth Press. https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud _Mourning AndMelancholia.pdf

Fuchs, M., & Fuchs, S. W. (2019). Religious minorities in Pakistan: Identities, citizenship, and social belonging. *Journal of South Asian Studies, 43*, 52-67.

Fuchs, T. (2003). *The phenomenology of shame, guilt and the body in body dysmorphic disorder and depression*. Psychiatric Clinic, University of Heidelberg. https://www.klinikum.uni-heidelberg.de /fileadmin /zpm/ psychatrie/fuchs/Shame.pdf

Goffman, E. (1990). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Penguin Books.

Hanif, M. (2011). *Our lady of Alice Bhatti*. Random House.

Hauser, C. T. (2016). *Shame and resilience among mental health trainees: A scale construction study* [Doctoral thesis, University of Nebraska]. Public Access Theses and Dissertations from the College of Education and Human Sciences. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsdiss/267

Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery*. Basic Books.

Herman, J. L. (2012). Shattered shame states and their repair. In J. Yellin & K. White (Eds.), *Shattered states: Disorganised attachment and its repair* (pp. 157–170). Karnac Books.

Humphreys, C., & Joseph, S. (2004). Domestic violence and the politics of trauma. *Women's Studies International Forum, 27*(5-6), 559-570. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2004.09.006

Pathania, G., Sharma, S., & Gupta, R. (2023). Caste identities and structures of threats: Stigma, prejudice, and social representation in Indian universities. *Caste: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion, 4*(1), 03-23. https://doi.org/10.26812/caste.v4i1.470

Pruthi, R. K. (2004). *Indian caste system* (pp. 164-165). Discovery Publishing House.

Qasim, K. (2012). Black women's quest for subjectivity: Identity politics in Toni Morrison's novels: *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 1*(2), 85-90.

Qasim, K. (2013). Morrison's black slave female characters and their quest for subjectivity. *International Journal of English and Education, 2*(1), 211-222.

Qasim, K. (2022). "It's Karachi, it's where life and love come to die": Representing gender, space, and identity in *Karachi You are Killing Me*. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies, 22*(2), 66-88.

Qasim, K., & Ebadat Yar Khan, F. (2023). Toni Morrison's politics of feminist mothering and European literary tradition: Discerning feminist matricentric streaks in Morrison's work. *Journal of European Studies, 39*(1), 59-71. https://doi.org/10.56384/jes.v39i1.289

Qasim, K., & Yaqoob, M. (2022). Fear of small numbers: Re-visioning history in broken verses. *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan, 29*(1), 71-84.

Qasim, K., Hayat, M., & Asmat, U. (2012). Black women and racial stereotypes: A Black feminist reading of Morrison's novels. *Language in India, 12*, 211-225.

Rao, A. (2013). Revisiting interwar thought. In C. Zene (Ed.), *The political philosophies of Antonio Gramsci and B. R. Ambedkar* (pp. 43-58). Routledge.

Robertson, J., & Long, B. (2019). Medicine's shame problem. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine, 57*(3), 329-338. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jemermed.2019.04.014

Schonfelder, C. (2013). Spivak, G. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271-313). University of Illinois Press.

Schönfelder, C. (2013). Theorizing trauma: Romantic and postmodern perspectives on mental wounds. In *Wounds and words: Childhood and family trauma in romantic and postmodern fiction* (pp. 27-86).

Shield, M. (2023). How should we respond to shame? *Social Theory and Practice, 49*(3), 513–542. https://doi.org/10.5840/soctheorpract2023627199

Singha, S. (2015). *Dalit Christian and caste consciousness in Pakistan* [Doctoral thesis, Georgetown University]. Georgetown University Library. https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/761014/Singha_georgetown_0076D_13011.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Siraj, S., Anjum, M. T., & Samad, A. (2021). Unveiling women marginalization in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Mohammed Hanif. *Global Language Review, 6*(1), 84-89. https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2021(VI-I).09

Van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Penguin Books.

Younus, Y., & Qasim, K. (2015). Representation of subaltern identities in Urdu progressive fiction (with a special reference to the selected short stories of Munshi Premchand and Krishan Chander). *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 6*, 943-951.

Zuberi, S. (2023, April 9). How death and despair haunt Pakistan's Christian minority. *Al Jazeera.* https://www.aljazeera.com /amp/features /2023/4/9 /how-death-and-despair-haunt-pakistans-christian-minority

---

**Amna Siddique** is a post-graduate student, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad

**Khamsa Qasim** is a Lecturer, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad