

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ALICE BHATTI FROM ECO-CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study employs ecocriticism as a framework to explore the ecological facets of Mohammed Hanif's novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. The novel is set in Karachi which portrays, a Christian nurse Alice Bhatti struggling against patriarchal and religious oppressions in a place of urban space, pollution, and systematic neglect that reflects her social marginalization. Although gender, class, and politics have gained the majority of critical attention, the environmental elements of the novel have not been properly investigated and unexplored. In order to explore this gap, the study examines how ecological imagery in the novel functions as a metaphor for both institutional and cultural decline and as a representation of material reality. This study is based on textual analysis as the primary method, which involves closely investigating the narrative to find depictions of ecological deterioration and how it intersects with social injustice. The study further probes to address how environmental degradation is portrayed in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* and how ecological injustice interacts with marginalization based on gender and religion. Hanif's portrayal of a dirty hospital, irresponsibility of policy-makers, contaminated water, and a collapsing urban setting of the novel underscores systematic decay. This study will help the readers to grasp better Alice Bhatti's hardships by showing how social oppression and environmental decay are intertwined by scrutinizing ecological issues. Overall, this study demonstrates Hanif's writings revealing a deep connection of social degradation in South Asian literature and post-colonial ecocriticism.

INTRODUCTION

In literary criticism, ecocriticism is the study of how texts visualize, create, and interact with the natural world. It involves analyzing how books depict animals, landscapes, climate, and ecological systems and how these representations affect that how people view the natural world. This is why ecocriticism views environment in literature as an

active presence and a vital force rather than as a simple background setting. It also investigates as to whether a certain piece of art promotes ecological sensitivity, awareness, and respect for the environment or if it serves to uphold exploitative viewpoints that put human supremacy and

consumption before the ecological balance (Barry, 2020).

In literary studies, the environment used to be a minor issue, but in recent decades, it has become a major topic of discussion in critical discourse. The 1990s saw the rise of ecocriticism, which offered a framework for analyzing how literature addresses environmental degradation, ecological challenges, and the interrelationship between humans and nature. Glotfelty defines Ecocriticism as "*The study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment*," According to this concept, nature and ecology are active forces that shape story, identity, and power dynamics rather than only serving as neutral settings for human stories (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

Since then, ecocriticism has developed into a variety of branches. According to scholars like Buell ecocriticism needs to expand beyond romantic ideas of wilderness to take into account modern challenges and urban settings (Buell, 2009).

Similarly, Garrard views, there are ecological motifs that are frequently seen in literature that represent societal apprehensions and environmental realities, such as pollution, dwelling, catastrophe, and animals. This expansion allows ecological issues to be analyzed in environments that are far from mountains or woods, such as postcolonial cities where human exploitation, scarcity, and contamination characterize the environment (Garrard, 2012).

Religious hierarchy, gender inequality, postcolonial legacies, and growing urbanization are all intricately intertwined with ecological issues in South Asia. In the light of research study of Huggan and Tiffin "*The histories of colonial exploitation along with contemporary environmental destruction*" must be taken into consideration in postcolonial ecocriticism. Pakistan, is a postcolonial country, provides a convincing illustration of how institutional prejudice, corruption, and socio-political dysfunction fuel ecological disasters. In particular, Karachi, a megacity characterized by population pressures, pollution, water shortages, and institutional negligence, exemplifies the tensions of contemporary urban development (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

The theoretical and academic framework for this study is established by the literature review.

Examining three aspects of scholarship is crucial because this study applies ecocriticism to Mohammed Hanif's novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*: First, the evolution of ecocriticism as a theoretical framework; Second, the ways in which ecofeminism and urban ecocriticism overlap with postcolonial contexts; and the last, the current critical reception of Hanif's work. These fields collectively serve as the study's foundation, emphasizing the field's advancements as well as its limitations. (Hanif, 2011).

A major turning point in literary studies was the emergence of ecocriticism as an academic field in the 1990s, which directed critical attention toward the connection between literature and the environment. Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as "*The study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment*". Ecocriticism emphasizes natural surroundings as active components inside texts, in contrast to previous methods that viewed the environment as merely a background (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

In order to broaden the scope of ecocriticism, Garrard outlines the main themes that inform environmental readings of literature, including pollution, wilderness, dwelling, and catastrophe. According to Garrard, his approach emphasizes how literature expresses society reactions to environmental deterioration and ecological disturbance (Garrard, 2012).

Since the ecological crisis is as much a result of urbanization as it is of the disappearance of wilderness areas, Buell has more recently underlined that urban spaces must be taken into consideration in environmental discussion (Buell, 2009).

These fundamental observations apply to the above-mentioned novel, where Karachi serves as a social and ecological environment that symbolizes systemic mistreatment, pollution, and shortage. The required lens to view this urban environment as an ecological organism knotted with human survival rather than as a neutral setting is provided by ecocriticism (Marland, 2013).

A subset of ecocriticism known as ecofeminism highlights how patriarchal and capitalist systems oppress both women and the environment. Ecofeminism challenges the "*interrelated domination of women and nature*" (Gaard, 2011). Scholars like

Shiva have also emphasized how women's social marginalization causes them to directly experience ecological degradation, particularly in postcolonial situations. Hanif's portrayal of Alice Bhatti revolves around this viewpoint. The ecological abuse of Karachi's environment is comparable to Alice's subjugation as a Christian lady in a patriarchal society. In keeping with ecofeminist principles, both her body and her environment are viewed as disposable. Alice's survival techniques are consistent with ecofeminism's emphasis on how oppressed women create forms of resistance within antagonistic ecological and social structures in the novel (Shiva, 2016).

These issues are extended to the Global South by postcolonial ecocriticism, which examines the ways in which unequal development and colonial legacies fuel ecological injustice. According to Huggan and Tiffin, postcolonial ecocriticism "seeks to connect the histories of colonial exploitation with contemporary environmental degradation." This strategy is especially applicable to Karachi, a postcolonial city characterized by systematic inequality, corruption, and unequal urban growth. These tendencies are reflected in Hanif's story, which connects historical and systemic oppression with ecological degradation (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

Urban ecocriticism shifts the field's attention from wilderness to cities as ecological systems, which has been the focus of traditional ecocriticism. According to Slovic, "cities are among the most urgent sites of ecological inquiry" since they symbolize both human ingenuity and environmental destruction. Likewise, Gandy emphasizes the concept of "concrete and dust ecologies," wherein urban environments create distinct ecological problems such as pollution, water scarcity, and waste management (Gandy, 2003). An ideal location for urban ecocritical examination is Hanif's Karachi. The Civil Hospital, open sewers, tainted water sources, and stifling climate are all depicted in the book to show how ecological degradation relates to problems of poverty, corruption, and governance. By using urban ecocriticism to read the book, one could see how the city itself serves as a poisonous ecosystem that perpetuates violence and inequality (Gandy, 2003).

Despite receiving a lot of critical attention, the majority of the study on the novel has concentrated

on political, gender, and religious issues rather than environmental issues. For example, Khan emphasizes how the book criticizes Pakistan's systemic brutality and religious intolerance, while D'Costa looks at Alice as a female subversive inside patriarchal systems. Similarly, Hanif's work is placed within South Asian feminist narratives by Afzal Khan (Afzal-Khan, 2017).

On the other hand, not much research has examined the novel from an eco-critical standpoint. Although they lack a thorough ecological examination, a few studies have alluded to the environment of Karachi's symbolic significance. Raza, for instance, observes how Alice's estrangement is shaped by space and deterioration, but she makes no clear connection between this and ecocriticism. This gap gives rise the justification of the current study which is to examine how Hanif's book dramatizes ecological injustices through urban ecology and environmental images in addition to criticizing social injustices. Although the feminist and postcolonial aspects of Hanif's book have been studied, few academics have used eco-critical frameworks to study it. Theoretically, ecofeminism has not adequately addressed Alice's dual exploitation as a woman and the Karachi environment. Given the distinct ecological and socioeconomic issues that South Asian cities like Karachi bring, urban ecocriticism is still understudied in these regions. By addressing these gaps, our research highlights the interdependence of social and ecological justice and adds to the expanding topic of postcolonial ecocriticism (Jain, 2021).

According to the examined scholarship, Hanif's novel can be interpreted through the theoretical frameworks of ecofeminism, ecocriticism, and urban ecology. The ecological dimension is still lacking, despite the fact that previous research has emphasized topics of gender, class, and religion. For a thorough eco-critical reading of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, this study draws on established eco-critical theories (Glotfelty, Garrard, Buell) and combines them with ecofeminist and urban ecological viewpoints (Gaard, Shiva, Huggan & Tiffin, Slovic, Gandy).

Our Lady of Alice Bhatti by Mohammed Hanif becomes an essential literary work for eco-critical analysis in this research study. The story revolves

around Alice Bhatti, a Christian nurse from one of Pakistan's most oppressed communities, and is set in Karachi. In addition to religious intolerance and patriarchal dominance, Alice must overcome the harsh atmosphere that is enforced by the society. The congested wards, tainted water, disease-ridden areas, and oppressive heat of the Civil Hospital, where she works, are the perfect example of environmental degradation. Alice's marginalization and institutional neglect are reflected in the city's appearance which is toxic and poisonous. (Hanif, 2011).

Through vivid imagery and narrative symbolism, Hanif's book makes a connection between social injustice and environmental decay, suggesting that the poor, oppressed, and particularly women are disproportionately affected by the ecological collapse. Because of this association, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* can be analyzed from an eco-critical perspective, placing it in both local postcolonial contexts and worldwide environmental discussions. The study highlights the ecological aspects of Hanif's book and broadens the critical response beyond political and gender discourse by using ecocriticism to analyze *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. The study adds to the expanding corpus of environmental humanities literature by incorporating ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and urban ecocriticism within a postcolonial South Asian framework. The analysis highlights how ecological harmony and social equality are inextricably linked, demonstrating how underprivileged groups especially minorities and women bear an unfair share of the costs associated with environmental degradation.

A significant portion of the research on *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* has focused on how it addresses gender, religion, and sociopolitical criticism. The work is read as a critique of Pakistan's institutionalized intolerance and corruption, and Alice is frequently cited as a symbol of rebellion inside patriarchal and religious institutions. However, there has not been much critical focus on the novel's ecological aspects. The novel depicts the deteriorating urban landscape of Karachi in ecological way. Rather than being inconsequential factors, the unclean water, open sewers, filthy hospital, and severe weather are all symbolic of systemic decay. But these elements have rarely been

studied from an eco-critical lens. Owing to this scholarly gap, the ways in which environmental imagery supports Hanif's critique of social injustice are not discussed. This study uses an eco-critical framework to show how Hanif uses environmental degradation as a backdrop and a metaphor for social injustice. This research study investigates Alice's relationships with Karachi's ecology as a marginalized woman, demonstrating the close connections between environmental destruction and issues of gender, class, and religion.

Research Objectives

1. To find out how Mohammed Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* portrays ecological disturbances and environmental degradation.
2. To investigate the novel's intersections of religious and gender marginality with ecological disharmony.

Research Questions

1. How does ecological degradation and environmental disturbances in Karachi get reflected in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*?
2. How does the novel, especially through Alice Bhatti's character, relate ecological disharmony to the marginalization of women and religious minorities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research design based on the ideas of literary textual analysis. The purpose of the study is to investigate how ecological issues, environmental degradation, and the relationships between social injustice and ecological degradation are portrayed in Mohammed Hanif's work *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Textual analysis enables a detailed comprehension of how language, imagery, and narrative structures reflect ecological realities within an urban South Asian context, given the novel's strong roots in postcolonial Karachi. The main research method used is textual analysis. According to Allen textual analysis is "a method of interpreting texts that uncovers the cultural, social, and political meanings embedded in language and narrative.". Applying this to *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, the research finds and analyzes ecological images, environmental metaphors, and narrative situations in which natural degradation reflects oppression by humans (Barker & Prentice, 2017).

The novel was carefully read in order to find passages where environmental imagery is reflected (e.g., descriptions of Karachi's filthy urban spaces, tainted water, and the crumbling Civil Hospital). Key eco-critical interpretation like environmental degradation, water symbolism, toxic ecology, and ecofeminist parallels were used to group the passages. Urban environmental theory and postcolonial ecocriticism were used to understand the ecological images, connecting the novel's imagery to actual ecological degradation problems in Post-colonial South Asian cities. Textual examples were compared to eco-critical research to acquire understanding of how Hanif combines ecological criticism with his depiction of social and political exclusion. The research falls under the theoretical umbrella of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism, according to Cheryl Glotfelty is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

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"When was the last time it rained in this city?"

And when they remind him that it was only last year he says:

"I had nothing to do with that. I didn't order that rain to fall."

A contemporary mindset that views nature as something external, distinct, and unrelated to human activity or responsibility is highlighted by the speaker's defensive detachment, "I had nothing to do with that." This way of thinking is opposed by ecocriticism, which promotes an awareness of the connections between human systems political, economic, and cultural and the natural environment. The belief that someone could "order rain to fall" betrays a conceited view that humans should have the ability to control nature. This anthropocentric viewpoint is criticized by ecocriticism, which also cautions against the dangerous delusion that natural systems can be controlled. Ironically, the speaker's rejection of responsibility illustrates how people tend to claim nature only when it benefits them and to deny it when it becomes unruly or inconvenient. As a reflection of how cultures occasionally ignore or forget ecological facts until they become catastrophes, the speaker appears oblivious or

purposefully ignorant about recent environmental events. Ecocriticism frequently examines the ways in which literature can be used to struggle environmental denial and reestablish ecological memory. The absurd logic of bureaucracies that treat natural occurrences like policy decisions is echoed by the statement, "I didn't order that rain to fall." The way that institutional structures frequently view environmental phenomena as externalities rather than essential components of life on Earth is criticized by ecocriticism. These phrases might be criticizing how politicians or leaders avoid taking accountability for environmental damage if they are taken from a satirical or dystopian work. According to an eco-critical perspective, this would demonstrate how social and political institutions have failed to effectively address ecological problems.

"He is retired now, but they still call him when they can. Haul out what's stuck in the bowels of a gutter. He still goes out during downpours and works voluntarily, because rains are rare in this part and they bring their own unique challenges. Suddenly you are not just making people's lives easier, you are saving lives. The kind of rains they get here would delight Noah."

The relationship between people and their surroundings, especially Karachi's urban ecology, is depicted in these lines. Joseph Bhatti, a sanitation worker, is mentioned; his job becomes crucial during the infrequent but damaging rains. Human reliance on natural cycles. The passage emphasizes how common ecological occurrences, such as rain, which in other locations may be joyful or fertile, become dangerous in urban areas like Karachi due to inadequate infrastructure and clogged drains. Because of the environment, sanitation workers like Bhatti are essential to the safety of the population. Urban ecology and vulnerability. The "bowels of a gutter" represent deteriorating infrastructure of the city as well as the way garbage and neglect entangle people's lives. This is interpreted by ecocriticism as a critique of environmental injustice, in which workers who are marginalized, such as sweepers, bear the brunt of ecological crises brought on by systemic neglect. Biblical/ecological symbolism is evoked by the allusion to Noah's flood: rains that ought to support life instead bring about catastrophe, transforming Bhatti's effort into life-saving work. This demonstrates how ecological

catastrophes are told through myth and religion by fusing environmental disaster with cultural memory. Bhatti is an eco-critical representation of the invisible class that faces ecological dangers head-on. Although the wealthy continue to enjoy privileges, marginalized laborers face social prejudice and environmental degradation, but their labor keeps the city alive.

In the first place, the novel supports ideas of eco-social injustice, which contend that the poor, minorities, and women are the groups most affected by ecology. Alice is in this precarious position because she is a Christian nurse. A physically poisonous and metaphorically cruel atmosphere adds to her everyday hardships. The filthy hospital rooms, the repressive atmosphere of Karachi, and the tainted resources are not neutral environments; rather, they are active oppressive forces that increase Alice's precarity. Karachi by Hanif serves as an example of how structural violence can be facilitated by ecological collapse.

Second, the novel might be interpreted from the perspective of ecofeminism, which connects the exploitation of nature and women. The journey of Alice exemplifies this similarity. In addition to dealing with a harsh, demeaning, and filthy environment, she faces systematic gender discrimination in the form of religious marginalization, domestic violence, and harassment at work. According to readings from ecofeminism, patriarchal institutions view the environment and women as disposable. This is furthered by Hanif when Alice's body is objectified and violated in the same way that Karachi's environment is mistreated and ignored. Her personal pain is never isolated; rather, it reflects her city's ecological anguish.

Third, urban ecocriticism, which examines how cities themselves operate as ecological systems, finds resonance in Hanif's portrayal. In the novel, Karachi is both an ecological crisis and an urban extension. Human carelessness has changed the environment, as shown by the hospital, the slums, and the dirty streets. The story depicts a city where surviving is a never-ending struggle against social prejudice and ecological threats, rather than a state of harmony between human existence and the environment.

In addition, the novel challenges the delusion of modernity. Even though Karachi is a city, its ecological infrastructure such as its health, sanitation, and water supply systems remains

broken. The inability of contemporary urban life to maintain ecological balance is highlighted by this conflict. Through her terrible journey, Alice illustrates how governance, corruption, and inequality are inextricably linked to ecological deterioration.

Finally, the eco-critical interpretation of Hanif's novel advances international eco-critical discussions by illuminating the ways in which ecological concerns appear in postcolonial settings. In addition to environmental mismanagement, the city's neglect is a continuation of colonial legacies of unequal growth and exploitation. Since social and ecological violence both influenced Alice's destiny, it speaks to the larger issues raised by environmental justice movements in the Global South.

The eco-critical analysis concludes that *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is a text that is both social and ecological. Hanif emphasizes how ecological health and human dignity are inextricably linked by fusing environmental degradation with social injustice. The book forces readers to acknowledge the necessity of ecological justice in order to attain social or gender-based justice.

Ironically, the book describes people as a "*endangered species*," especially underprivileged groups like sanitation workers. Ecocriticism frequently examines the place of people in ecological discourse. Hanif highlights how society does not value non-human nature or its own oppressed human populations by comparing the disregard of these workers to the extinction of animals. It is certain that there won't be any rain in March, just as human carelessness toward the environment and human safety is inevitable. This acknowledges ecological determinism: just as natural cycles are predictable, so is human indifference to the environment and life. The reference to motorized vehicles and "*speed restriction signs*" connects ecological discourse with urban modernism. Cities continue to be dangerous in spite of rules. This is similar to how no practical action is done in spite of "*awareness*" of ecological concerns. Modern development has a negative impact on both human and environmental well-being. Hanif exposes the government's disregard for social and environmental concerns through humor. The lack of "*parliamentary subcommittees*" highlights the political nature of ecological issues and the systemic, not accidental, nature of neglect. Those

who are most impacted—workers, the impoverished, and the vulnerable are never represented in the formulation of ecological policies, which is a critique of environmental injustice from an ecocritical point of view.

As a literary framework, ecocriticism examines the connections between literature and the natural world by examining the ways in which works depict environmental deterioration, ecological issues, and the interrelationship between humans and the natural world. Urban ecology and environmental images are essential in forming Mohammed Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* setting as well as its thematic and symbolic foundations. The Karachi in Hanif's story is more than just a setting; it is a vibrant, living city overrun by sociopolitical unrest, pollution, overpopulation, and religious intolerance. The novel illustrates how environmental deterioration reflects social deterioration through the viewpoint of ecocriticism, and how marginalized characters especially Alice Bhatti contend with both ecological and human hatreds.

Throughout the story, there are numerous depictions of Karachi's environmental degradation. The city is portrayed as a place of poisonous captivity, complete with open sewers and stuffy sick wards. Alice's workplace as a nurse, the Civil Hospital, turns into a miniature representation of this environmental degradation. It has overcrowded wards, contaminated water, and a disease-ridden atmosphere. Presumably a place of healing, this hospital actually represents systemic deterioration where the environment and human life are disregarded. It emphasizes how inequality and bad governance lead to ecological collapse, which disproportionately affects the poor, according to Eco critical theory.

Due to her marginalized status as a Christian lady, Alice is much more susceptible to this environmental hazard. She sees nature and the city as oppressive agents rather than as nurturing factors. The stifling atmosphere of the hospital, the heat of Karachi, and the dirt of its streets all represent a hostile environment. Alice is constantly compelled to deal with both environmental catastrophe and human prejudice, which is reflected in her surroundings. Hanif ties social structures and ecological bitterness together, arguing that corruption, exploitation, and a disrespect for

ecological balance are what create the city's disorder rather than it being a natural phenomenon.

Through the novel's symbolic use of water, ecocritical analysis gains a new perspective. In Alice's world, water often is a universal symbol for life and purity. It becomes contaminated and unreachable. The rich enjoy relative safety, while the impoverished are forced to use tainted resources. Both scarcity and contamination are highlighted by Alice's experiences with water, whether in the hospital or in private settings. Discrimination based on religion and class is reflected in this unequal access to clean resources.

Additionally, ecocriticism reveals how violence and its ecological aspects are handled in the book. The systematic aggression against the city's ecosystem is comparable to the abuse Alice experiences from her husband Teddy Butt. Nature is suppressed, exploited, and turned into a commodity, as are women. The environment of Karachi is dehumanized and devoid of sustainability, much like Alice's body is transformed into a place of dominance.

Therefore, the ecological framework makes clear that the tale of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is one of ecological injustice as well as social injustice. Social oppression and environmental images are interwoven, emphasizing how ecological health and human survival are inextricably linked.

In order to explore the ecological aspects of Mohammed Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, this study employed ecocriticism. Its primary goal is to examine how environmental degradation is portrayed in the book and also investigate the ways in which ecological injustice interacts with religious and gender marginality.

Textual analysis reveals that Hanif's critique of structural oppression is centered on ecological imagery in the novel, demonstrating the inseparability of environmental problems and urban degradation from social inequalities and marginalization.

The first significant conclusion is that Hanif presents Karachi as an ecological wasteland in which societal dysfunction is reflected in environmental collapse. With its packed rooms, tainted water, oppressive heat, and subpar amenities, the Civil Hospital serves as a microcosm of Karachi's broader decline. For the impoverished, pollution, smell, and illness are portrayed as commonplace occurrences,

illustrating a systemic disregard for ecological and public health. These descriptions, which shape the mood of hopelessness and hint at Alice's terrible path, are essential to the story and are not only decorative. The rich have access to safe areas, private hospitals, and pure water in Hanif's Karachi, while the poor are forced to live in filthy conditions. This city is likewise an urban ecosystem of inequality. Therefore, ecological deterioration is both a physical reality and a social metaphor, illustrating how the environmental problem is stratified along class lines.

The relationship between gender and religious oppression and ecological injustice is the second important finding. As a nurse and a Christian woman, Alice Bhatti represents several types of marginalization. Whether she is in the run-down hospital or the dirty streets of Karachi, her surroundings are always poisonous, which makes her more vulnerable. Her identity in a patriarchal and intolerable society is suffocated, and this is reflected in the physical suffocation of her surroundings. In the book, ecological spaces are gendered: women are frequently portrayed as caregivers in harsh settings, facing social and bodily contamination. Alice's marginalized status in the city and the hospital is comparable to how nature is oppressed, ignored, and silenced. According to ecofeminist interpretations, there is a systemic connection between the exploitation of women and the environment.

The symbolic use of environmental imagery to criticize institutional decline is another important discovery. The health system's corruption is symbolized by contaminated water, governmental institutions are symbolized by the hospital's crumbling infrastructure, and Karachi's disorderly urban sprawl reflects the moral and social division of its populace. Therefore, ecology functions as both a literary metaphor for systemic breakdown and a physical reality. Additionally, the study concludes that postcolonial ecocriticism is expanded by *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Hanif places his ecological concerns in an urban, postcolonial environment, in contrast to typical eco-critical writings that concentrate on wilderness or rural settings. This shows how poverty, corruption, and colonial legacies are intricately linked to ecological concerns

in the Global South, challenging the Eurocentric perspective of early ecocriticism.

CONCLUSION

Using the framework of ecocriticism, this study aimed to investigate the ecological aspects of Mohammed Hanif's novel, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* emphasizing the ways in which environmental degradation interacts with apprehensions of gender and religious marginalization. The research shows that the novel depicts Karachi as an ecological site in crisis characterized by pollution, congestion, toxic water, and crumbling institutions rather than just as a setting. The wider social, political, and moral breakdown of the city is reflected in these natural realities which are very symbolic. The consequences of systematic negligence are disproportionately felt by the vulnerable particularly women and religious minorities, as illustrated by Hanif's striking images of environmental destruction. The most striking example of this intersection is found in Alice Bhatti's character. The harsh, contaminated, and oppressive surroundings she experiences on a daily basis add to her challenges as a Christian nurse in a patriarchal country. Both a physical location of illness and a symbol of institutional wrongdoing are created by the hospital where she works. Thus, the novel emphasizes that social and ecological inequalities are interconnected and function inside the same repressive mechanisms, making them impossible to study separately. Ecofeminist perspectives, which contend that dominance structures are the common source of both the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women, are reflected in this alignment. By placing environmental issues in the framework of Karachi metropolitan reality, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* adds to a larger postcolonial eco-critical conversation. As a reminder that urban settings are just as important places for ecological research,

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