

# Religious Identity vs Pakistani Identity: Naming and Identity of Christian Minorities in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Muhammad Hanif

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**Abstract**— This research investigates shifts in the practice of naming and (de)construction of an identity based on names by the Pakistani minorities to attain equal citizenship as their Muslim brethren. Mohammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2012) is researched under the theoretical frameworks of Lacanian Symbolic Order merged with Louis Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (2014), respectively. This paper explores the basis of the contemporary Islamic Ideology in Pakistan. How and through what ways the Christian minorities in Pakistan suffered due to the dominant ideology and the role of names in the assigning of subject positions in the symbolic order (language). The practice of naming that takes place and the religious identities that accompany these names due to their linguistic affiliations and further social marginalization is discussed and investigated.

**Keywords**— Naming, Ideology, Language, Symbolic Order.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Religious discrimination is a serious issue/threat to the minorities living in Pakistan. Their demarcation as minorities is based on their religion and hence in order to resist it, many individuals from Christian minority community resort to naming and adopting names that do not herald their religious or personal identities. Names play a vital role in the construction and representation of a human being's identity. The language politics utilized by the people is the language employed for onomastic practices.

In this paper, names are highlighted as a marker of an individual's identity within the independent state of Pakistan. This becomes equally important for the individuals of the minority community because they struggle to fit in and be recognized as equal to those of the majority citizens of the state. They wish to be recognized as Pakistanis just as their Muslim brethren claim this national identity. However, they are generally regarded as Pakistani minorities or Pakistani-Christians/Parsees/Hindus/Sikhs (the hyphenated identity). There have been many attempts at the political front by different political party leaders to address the minorities during the election campaigns for securing their vote bank. Minorities are portrayed as equal and valued citizens of Pakistan, while this research paper intends to prove otherwise through the analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Muhammad Hanif. Alice Bhatti's character primarily faces the intense scrutiny in her interview for the nursing position at a Christian hospital named Sacred Heart. She is in danger of

losing the nursing interview mainly on the basis of being a Christian woman.

Within this context, this research raises the following key questions: What is a Pakistani identity? What are the merits that grant the right to this majority acclaimed citizenship? Why is holding a Pakistani National Identity card not enough to provide the 'sense' of being a Pakistani? Why is it never enough to eliminate the inequality and injustices of being called and recognized as a Pakistani Minority and not as citizens of Pakistan irrespective of the religious differences.

As compared to other academic initiatives focusing on the similar themes using ethnic, cultural, religious, social or political dimension, it is argued that Pakistani minorities are born Pakistanis. Their dress code, language (spoken and written) is the same as the place of their living. Hence, they are not immigrants and do not provoke racial or color discrimination. The textual and contextual analysis of the fictional text discussed in this paper reflects on religion-based exclusivity. The focus of this discussion is the politics (social or religious) that necessitates or generates the need to employ names that provides them (minority subjects) the opportunity to merge within the majority Muslim population in Pakistan.

The underlying politics, although mentioned as politics of naming in this research, is in fact also the politics of language. Names are constructed in logos (language), and as language is the basis of identification, because the 'I' is uttered and made a reality through and in a certain language. While describing the construction of the subject, Catherine Belsey (2004) debates what constitutes a subject (Emily Beveniste's idea). She states that subjectivity is made possible due to language and that language is the very medium through which a subject, positions himself/herself as 'I', "as the subject of the sentence" (Belsey, 49). In order to introduce this 'I', the existence of the 'other' is a must. As Jacques Lacan (2001) theorizes, 'I' finds its existence in the presence of the 'you' or 'other' in the mirror stage. Hence, for a person to introduce him/herself, names are mandatory as they complete the sentence beginning with the 'I' and ending on a proper name.

There is an intrinsic connection between the process of naming and identification. The terms 'identity' and 'identification' find their differentiation in the following words by Angel Castineira, "Identity is a state or a disposition of the self, while identification is a process that leads us to this

state.” (Gagnon et al, 45). Identification, becomes a process that develops the notion of the self and when that completion of ‘self’ development is attained, humans acquire ‘identities’ which are articulated in the utterance of name(s) of the person(s). Through the analysis of the primary text *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2012) by Muhammad Hanif, this research focuses on Pakistani minorities by presenting a character study. The time frame is that of contemporary Pakistan. This research highlights the politics of naming, where a minority community realizes and employs to shed off their minority status in order to fuse within the majority population of the country. This strategy is intentionally employed in order to avoid socio-political and economic discriminations as argued through the textual analysis of the primary sources.

In short, this research contends that there is a strong relationship between the onomastic practices and ontological constructions of names amongst the Pakistani minorities. This research also highlights the plight and tragic end of the fictional character, Alice Bhatti, while residing alongside the majority population.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to construct an individual as a subject, ideology is a necessity. According to Belsey, “The destination of all Ideology is the *subject*.” (49) The medium of ideology is realized in language, which is also necessary for the symbolic order as theorized by French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan. The subject in Lacanian psychoanalysis enters the symbolic order through the use of language. Symbolic order is constructed in language and is also known as the big ‘Other’. For the subject to realize itself as an individual, his/her establishment of ‘I’ is necessary. This ‘I’ forms the basis of a subject with an identity of his/her own in relation to ‘you’. The utterance of this ‘I’ originates in language and marks the child’s entry into the Lacanian Symbolic Order with Language as its center. This structure is also the realization of the ‘desire’ that language creates in its subjects known as ‘lack’ that has resulted in the psyche of the child when the realm of the Real was left behind by the child on his/her entry into the Imaginary realm. Mary Klages in her readings on Lacan, writes that for Lacan, the focus is on the relations the signifiers have to their signs and that there is no one signified. (Klages, 75) There is a distinct relation between Lacan and Althusser’s notions of a subject. For Lacan, since the Symbolic is governed by language, the signifiers are ‘floating’ and constantly changing. Language is in a constant state of flux. All the subjects in the Symbolic Order are trying to attain that one signified or the center of the Symbolic Order but it constantly eludes them. The need to remove this ‘lack’ created from the detachment from the realm of Real, located outside the consciousness, symbolizes fulfilment of the ‘lack’ through the attainment of that one signified located at the center of the Symbolic Order.

For Louis Althusser, Ideology is the “relation between the state and its subjects.” (Klages, 131). Whereas, Lacan locates it in the cultural and social phenomena of the individual, Althusser recognizes it in economic and political relationships of a subject. The government bases all individuals as subjects

of the ruling capitalist ideology where notions of equality and brotherhood are interpellated in the subjects through ISA’s (Ideological State Apparatus) and RSA’s (Repressive State Apparatus) that also act as regulators for the state Ideology. According to Althusser, these state apparatuses convey different forms and functions of many and varied sub-ideologies that are all united under the State Ideology (Althusser, 177-199). These ideologies represent the social, political, religious cultural and institutional ‘concrete’ realities from their ‘imaginary’ form of relationships with the subjects. These relationships are also ‘imaginary’ which construct the ‘reality’ for the individual subjects. Like language, Ideology also creates the notion of free will in its subject as free agents of the society who have their own choices in life to make and are masters of their own fate. (Klages, 132). But in reality, Ideology’s task is only to produce imaginary relations of its subject in the Ideological structure to represent Reality. This is also a differing point between Lacan and Althusser. For Lacan, Symbolic Order is a thing of the concrete material reality that is constructed because of language. While Althusser states his Ideology in the realm of the imaginary or the unconscious. Just like the notion of an absolute signifier in the symbolic order, there is an ‘Absolute Object’, which is projected through the Ideology into its subjects.

In order to recognize oneself as a subject of Ideology, one must have a name to be recognized as a “unique individual” belonging to a particular ideology. (Althusser, 190). These names are what regulate the subject under the different and many discourses prevalent within the ideology. Discourses like religion, politics, societal etc. help a person gain this ‘identity’ as a unique individual within the working state Ideology. It can, therefore, be argued that names announce individuals in various sectors of working ideologies (religious, political, social etc.) establishing his/her position as unique individuals of the State Ideology. It is possible to assume that to leave a certain subject position as a unique individual, one must change name, and adopt a name that seems to be in favor by the ruling Ideology because of the dominant language. This is one way to change one’s assigned subject position in an ideological symbolic order –a point that is excluded (overlooked) by both Althusser and Lacan. Since names are constructors of individuality and identity, a subject of ideology and operating within the symbolic order of language can adopt a name to acquire a better accepted subject position.

Furthermore, while, Lacan’s symbolic order operates in the real world, Althusser’s Ideology stays in the imaginary. The real life is just a reflection of those relations that were constructed in the imaginary. Carsten Strathausen in his reading of both, Lacan and Althusser, highlights the point of difference between the two theorist’s notions about who is excluded from being the subject of ideology. For Althusser, scientific analysis helps the individuals (Marxists) to escape their subject positions in an ideology. Whereas, language believes in its own lack and is regulated in the subjects of the Symbolic Order and thus made impossible to recognize and achieve its own center. Carsten Strathausen’s arguments are based on Slavoj Zizek’s readings of both Lacan and Althusser, for whom Ideology deceives even its own producers and

enslaves them all the same. (Strathausen, 71). He concludes his paper by saying Althusser ‘misread’ Lacan, but his idea of interpellation has become the backbone of the contemporary modifications in the Marxist philosophy.

The Absolute Subject, according to Althusser, “Unique, Absolute *Other Subject*, namely, God.” (195), who is the absolute Object for the religious absolute subjects, occupies the center of all (religious) ideology. This notion is extremely relevant in the presentation of the prevailing ruling religious ideology in Pakistan and its effects on its subjects. The analysis and reading of the primary texts portray how the minorities are located in their marginalized subject positions as named ‘unique’ subjects. Since language plays a very important part in the establishment of the current Ideology, the Symbolic Order is used to identify the effects that politics of language played in the naming practices in the minority communities.

For the purpose of the research, both the Lacanian and Althusserian concepts are used to analyze the creation of individuals as subjects in the Symbolic Order, since the time of British colonization in the subcontinent. The Two-Nation theory gave realization to the religious ideological differences in the subcontinent and was interpellated into becoming ‘subjects’ in order to realize the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslim minority before Partition.

My argument is based on Bill Ashcroft’s et al. suggestion that “Language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language.” (283). The use of translation in the conversion of local knowledge(s) in to English and then the perception about the natives for the West, brought into focus the ultimate supreme position of language. This important and fundamental role of language is further elaborated as an insidious and subtle form of power acquisition “through the function of naming.” (283). Colonization of the Indian subcontinent saw subversion of the native languages of the heterogeneous India into a homogeneous British India with an establishment of English as the ruling official language. This colonization implemented a Symbolic Order in the British India with a discourse of becoming ‘civilized’ speaking subjects of the State and for this to happen, one must master the ruling ‘official’ English language.

Braj B. Kachru (2008) has worked elaborately on the role of English in the post-colonial South Asia, and according to him English in the subcontinent was a vehicle or the driving force through which an individual was ‘taught’ that its acquisition grants “power, domination and elitist identity” (Ashcroft et al., 291). This era is important to realize the current practice of naming and the major shifts that occurred in the political climate of Pakistan in relation to how naming practices were realized and changed accordingly. But since name is a lingual construct, which might differ from the ruling language, this thesis brings forward the ideological prejudices, discriminations and exclusivist practices that impacts the members of the minority community.

This research goes beyond the descriptivist theory proposed by Bertrand Russell on proper names that define names as “cluster of descriptions” (Dolar, 21). I establish

language as implementing of the ruling ideology and use of another language (for employment of names other than Arabic or Urdu) within a Symbolic Order can be discriminatory in nature primarily for the minority community in Pakistan because it might give away their religious identity. This thesis, therefore, realizes Saul Kripke’s (1972) the idea that names are ‘rigid designators’ of an individual’s identity. I argue that the history of colonization, Partition and Islamization have collectively impacted the naming practices amongst the minorities in Pakistan.

The introduction of the first constitution of Pakistan (1951), named the country as Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The head of the Islamic state was to be a Muslim and a citizen of Pakistan. The position of the minorities was defined and understood as those of Pakistani minorities and not just Pakistani because of the emphasis on religion. The social, economic and different developmental sectors of Pakistan reserved seats of power for the majority religion population because of the orthodox religious ideology prevalent in the country. When India, a secular state, protested against this political move, they were worried about ‘their’ people (the Hindus) who had been left behind during the Partition (Ispahani, 2015). This indicates that the Hindus and Sikhs could lay claim to Indian protection through religious affinity. In a mirror worry, the Muslims left behind in the Partition on the side of India, could lay claim to the worry and intervention of Pakistan if they were mistreated or maltreated. This practice once occurred when both countries made hostages of both the religious groups so that they could do ‘negotiations’ for different economic or welfare matters (Ispahani, 2015). What separates Christians of Pakistan from any other minority group existing in Pakistan, is the absence of any power who would hold Pakistan or the people from the majority community accountable for any misdeeds done to them. The letter that Joseph Bhatti writes to the Vatican, pleading the sanctioning of his murdered daughter (Alice Bhatti) for the title of a ‘saint’, represents the grim truth and the stark realities of hopelessness that the Christians faced in Pakistan (Hanif, 328-339). In order to escape such hopelessness and inequality reserved for the non-Muslims, Christian minorities chose to use names in order to camouflage their religious identities. Naming has become an act of avoidance from discriminatory exclusivist practices against the religious identity accompanying a particular name constructed in a particular language.

Moreover, in Gen. Zia ul Haq’s regime, there was a sense of religious intolerance for the Christians compared to the other non-Muslim communities, because the emotions were still running high from the bloody and mass massacres seen during the Partition. During and after this traditionalist and rigid regime, of which Maudaudi was the mentor, intolerance, inequality and harsh treatment of the non-Muslims at the hands of the State and general population escalated. Ahmed (1987), carefully points out the traditional notions of how the non-believers were to be treated in the State of Pakistan if the government were to be based on the Quranic Laws and model. The term that he uses is ‘*dhimmi*’, reference to non-Muslim minorities of non-idolators, as described in the Islamic

doctrines. Ahmed analyzes the absolutists (Maudaudi and others) stance in maintaining discriminations between the Muslim and the non-Muslim people of the state. The argument revolved on the granting of equal citizenship rights to the non-Muslims. The absolutist's stance was in negation of equal citizenship rights because it went against the orthodox, fundamental Islamic principles for an Islamic State. They should be given the status of 'slave citizens', justifying this discrimination by claiming that since they (non-Muslims) are not expected to be loyal to the State Ideology; 'how can they remain faithful and loyal to the state secrets?' (180). This mindset became popular during Zia's regime. Because of their unequal claim to political, social and religious rights, non-Muslims suffered the brunt of the crimes that they 'committed'. The situation escalated to the point that to refuse would be deemed hostile and to accept would certify punishment. Farahnaz Ispahani (2014), writes that in their drive to purify Pakistan, they had enforced a religious exclusivism and marginalization of those people who did not practice the state religion.

Non-Muslim communities find it hard to survive on the sufferance of their Muslim fellow citizens. They are considered 'slave citizens' and treated in the literal sense of this word. As Yusuf Rao points out that it is pointless to envy anyone who comes to power after Zia ul Haq's regime (Sidhwa, 213) because the damage done to the ideological perceptions and thinking of the people and that of the country was greater and can take several decades to be erased.

As mentioned above, a large percentage of Pakistani Christians belong to the labor-class (Sweepers). There is a class system even among the minority community of Christians, as it exists anywhere in a society. There is a lower, middle and higher class. The best term to describe this mirroring of the big Order into the smaller order is 'structure within the structure', class system within a socially assigned subjective position among the Christians. Alice Bhatti is from the lower class of the Christian community who wishes to escape her lower-class status by acquiring a respectable job as a nurse at Sacred Heart Hospital Karachi. Her journey from the lower class to the higher class is marked with hardships and cruelties. The novel is a study in the interpellation through ISA's (Ideological State Apparatus) and RSA's (Repressive State Apparatus) of not only the female gender but that of the male gender as well. Joseph Bhatti (father of Alice Bhatti) very eloquently puts the role of the Symbolic Order and Ideology in the following words: "These Muslas will make you clean their shit and then complain that you stink," Joseph Bhatti had said. 'And your own brothers at the Sacred? They will educate you and then ask why you stink.'" (Hanif, 1). These lines sets the ground work for the whole novel depicting Alice's struggle within the Symbolic Order and her coping methods with and within the Islamic ideology of Pakistan. She uses education to climb up the social order inside the Symbolic Structure. This climb can be observed as a way to strip away her freedom of a lower-class woman because of her position at the periphery of the Symbolic structure.

The above discussion is further highlighted through the analysis of the three major characters of the novel mentioned

earlier. There is a sharp contrast between Alice, Joseph and Hina Alvi. These three figures have three different subject positions in the Symbolic Structure i.e. the Pakistani Structure. Hina Alvi is a senior sister (nurse) at the Sacred Heart and as such ranks higher in the Pakistani Social Structure than Alice, who ranks after her and Joseph Bhatti who is at the very bottom of this social structure. Hina Alvi is what Alice aspires to become and Joseph Bhatti is what Alice wants to leave behind. Teddy Butt represents the majority Muslim community and as such, retains the highest subjective status of the three characters already mentioned.

The subjective positions of these characters are analyzed in the light of naming and the identities that get determined through naming. Also, it is through the study and analysis of Pakistani Symbolic Order, explained in the above sections, showcase the implementation of ideological concepts that were cemented over the years and answers the question of minority placement in the system. The investigative study of Ideology and the Other (Symbolic Order), and experiences of Alice Bhatti and Hina Alvi are discussed in regards to their named identities. Along with that, one cannot completely overlook gender biasness and inequality as a result of the patriarchal practices in the Pakistani society. Women represent a minority in terms of status as compared to that of the men in Pakistan, but the religious minorities are further or doubly marginalized in comparison to the already marginal status of women. What is quite interesting, and also an important factor of Ideology, is the portrayal of Teddy Butt as another victim of the Ideological subject at the hands of the interpellative force that is the 'police' force. The doubly marginalized character and thus the victim of the 'phallogocentric' nature of language.

Furthermore, naming and identity markers relates to language and identity because naming produces words and utterances that are based on a certain language. The bilingual nature of names employed by the Bhatti family, showcase the nature and confliction of their identity problems in the modern-day homogeneous society of Pakistan. The origin of names is easily accessible through the use of internet, and Alice, being a French name, doesn't show her nationality or national identity, but her religious affiliation.

The social and political as well as ideological realities that her name imposes on her is part of her identification process. 'Naming and words' according to Juan Eduardo Tesone (2011), "are indissolubly connected" (2). Alice's identity had been created for her when she was named at birth and her identity depends on her name. Whenever she introduced herself, people identified her religious identity and relying on their learning of subject positions through the interpellation, recognized her as one of the lower-class minority community. She became the 'other' for them the moment she introduced herself. Alice Bhatti does not want to own the identity narrative that comes through her familial association but she never considered changing her name to suit/hide her low status, her past or to gain access into the higher status through name changing.

### III. NAMING AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

Judith Butler (1991) expounds on the identity and sexuality narrative that is disclosed through 'I' (369). Her speciality focuses not on the explicitness of the 'I' but that which is concealed through the unveiling of the 'I'. Let us take this concept and separate it from its specific sexuality studies and view it in light of this thesis. When Hina Alvi introduced herself, the identity that people perceived generally was that of a professional and aged Muslim woman, who is likely to be a member of the majority community of Pakistan.

Her exact identity is revealed to Alice when she finds her worshipping Catholic prayer table layout that was in the closet. In a scene where Alice takes in the orphan child and brings him to Hina Alvi's apartment, without the knowledge of Teddy Butt (her husband), she spies 'a cupboard, right in front of Hina Alvi, is an altar, a simple affair, plaster- of- Paris Yassoo figurine on a tin tray, some withered marigolds and a tea candle' (295). This figure/statue is a makeshift catholic prayer table, which is found in the Catholic Churches and then their replicas are found in Catholic homes. When she discovers this hidden identity of Sister Hina Alvi, she experiences no amount of excitement or fellowship whatsoever, but, 'a bit let down' (Hanif, 295). This feeling of disappointment might be the shattering of a notion about building friendly relations with a member of the Muslim majority community. She does not feel any sort of compatriotism with Hina Alvi upon discovering that concealed closeted identity. She feels offended, which is projected in her thoughts about Hina Alvi. She wonders what kind of a woman is Hina Alvi, to employ a name that is "less Musla than Muhammed, and then goes home and prays to a Yassoo hidden away in a wardrobe?" (296). This shows that Hina might come out of a closet accidentally but as Judith Butler demands, "so we are out of the closet but into what?" (121).

For Sister Hina, leaving her closeted identity was not to breathe the air of freedom. When Alice instantly labeled her as a woman who uses false identities by employing a certain kind of name. This reveals the mentality of both the majority and the minority classes in Pakistan and augments the contention of this research that names are identity constructs, in a Pakistani Symbolic Order and that changing and adopting a name can ensure higher protection and social status as is seen by the example of Senior Nurse Hina. In a Pakistani society, the identity of a woman is, first and foremost, through her father and after marriage through her husband. In order to explain this further, the name of a father and then the husband, is what gives a woman her identity. This reflects in the character of Hina Alvi, who has acquired the name of her dead husband and lives under the protection of that name even after his death. Alice Bhatti, on the other hand, presents an extremely tumultuous condition. Her father's name and identity is what she wishes to leave behind in her life, while refusing to adopt her newly wedded husband's name. She is trying to live in that third space or ambivalence which disturbs the equilibrium of the social structure, and Ideology either tries to make her subject to the 'phallic' authority which fails to turn her into a victim.

When Alice inquires about Mr. Alvi and her name 'Alvi', Hina Alvi's response is that since she slept with him, married him, 'hence the name' (Hanif, 296). One thing gets clear in this novel that was missing in Elizabeth's plight in *The Season of Rainbirds* (2012), was the event of name changing to herald one's new identity as a Muslim in Pakistan. But as mentioned above, a woman's identity is first and foremost through her father and then her husband. At the urge of the 'respected females' of the area, regardless of their past, Mujeeb Ali (local landowner and political figure of the town), visits Elizabeth Massih's house in the absence of Azhar (the Deputy Commissioner). As Elizabeth opens the door, Mujeeb Ali roughly pushes her aside and walks in the door without invitation or greetings. She is offered no respect. This behavior is very abrupt in comparison to the usual respectful behavior that Mujeeb Ali displays in the presence of the Muslim women of the town. He admonishes her to drape stole (*dupatta*) on her head. Elizabeth was, mistakenly, under the impression that since she lives in a house with a Muslim man, she was to be accorded the same amount of respect and time to properly cover herself while the visitor waited outside the door. This rouses her defiance, which is a dangerous and a suicidal thing in a marginalized lower-class position for a woman. When she inquires whether he would like a cup of tea? He curtly refuses to which she informs him that he need not worry, he shall be served in the utensils reserved for the Muslims in this house (Aslam, 127). This is a sore point for her because it shows that Azhar shows discriminatory behavior towards her despite being her lover. Mujeeb Ali reprimands her while saying that he only separates the utensils from only those who 'clean gutters and sewers and sweep' (Aslam, 127), to which Elizabeth promptly informs him of her awareness of these things since her father belongs to that class. Just before leaving, Mujeeb Ali advises her to convert and get Azhar to marry her to which she defiantly replies that she would do it only if Azhar asks her and not to appease the society and the self-righteousness of the people (Aslam, 128). When Mujeeb Ali inquires about her from Azhar, about making so much fuss over a *chodhi* (a derogatory term reserved for the sweeper class). He threatens him to either get rid of her or convert her in order to marry her (Aslam, 196). The reason he gives him is that the people have found out about his affair and not that he is a pious Muslim and as such follow the stricture of Islam. At the end of the novel, Elizabeth is dragged naked in the street and degraded by the 'respectable' men of the society and left at her father, Benjamin Massih's doorstep. The point of referencing Elizabeth Massih's narrative is to portray the heightened social discriminations carried on religious basis in the Islamized era of Gen. Zia ul Haq. However, for the present chapter, the focus is on the life and death of Alice Bhatti.

In order to escape the same types of discriminations as depicted in the narrative of Elizabeth Massih, Hina Alvi feels vulnerable after she has shown Alice her true 'closeted' identity that is not portrayed through her name, and gets defensive when Alice remarks that she took on the name of her husband after her marriage. She questions Alice in reply that 'What's wrong in taking your husband's name?' (297),

furthering that everyone does it (literally) and presents a very interesting scenario in regards to her going back to her maiden name after her divorce to her husband and changing it on the ID cards as well which, according to Hina, cannot be accomplished in a single lifetime. This situation is exactly what portrays the whole social, political and religious order of Pakistan. Obviously, names are not just naming words that have no meaning, reference or relative ties to the identity of a person. Like the language in which they are constructed and birthed, they are not transparent entities but carry the culture of their language.

#### Joseph Bhatti and Hina Alvi's subject positions

Hina Alvi is on an advantageous point of social success and acceptance as an equal citizen of Pakistan. Whereas, Joseph Bhatti finds himself at the very bottom of the social ladder. As Maudaudi expounds, he is a perfect definition of a 'slave citizen' (Ahmed) and is literally a manifestation of the identity narrative that accompany this term or name. The character of Joseph Bhatti is rigid and imperative in the ways and doings of his own community, and change of any sort is abhorred by him. He is the nucleus or 'self' of the Christian labor class minority community who fights to keep his identity as a *chohra* (sweeper) rather than doing anything about his degraded social status. Whenever he is asked about his profession and his living conditions, his reply is, "I am not proud of what I do. I am not ashamed of what I do. This is who I am." (70). In Joseph Bhatti's eyes, moving up the social ladder from the filth hole that you were born in is like catching a bug and betraying one's true identity. He sees that his clan, the Bhatti's, have also acquired ambitions and trying to move up the food chain by becoming, 'cooks in four-star hotels, doctors, guitar players, even professors. He has seen them take on Musla names, move out of French Colony and become members of some other species.' (Hanif, 70) For him, these people having acquired education and good jobs have become too good to remain associated with their past and become 'other' for those with whom they were once linked. They have left their 'self' for the location of self in the previously known 'other'. But what is quite interesting, is that taking on Muslim names seems a rite of passage into the boundary of the 'other'. Joseph Bhatti's behavior sheds light on the current form of relations between Christians and Muslims in Pakistan.

This attitude, where education is deemed as betraying one's religion and 'true' identity, is poisonous and a direct result of the oppression that the majority community has pushed upon the non-Muslim community. Mehboob Sada presents a very stark reality that is growing in Pakistan in regards to Islam and extremism in the social and political sector. He goes on to mention that due to lack of educational institutions that grant education and opportunities to the minorities, literacy rate among the minorities have not improved at all, which forces them to remain at menial positions as peons and sanitary workers (Sada, 8). The reason for this current predicament can be anywhere between poverty, covert forms of discriminations to lack of managing funding. However, Joseph Bhatti's mindset corresponds to the more fundamentalist Islamic mindset that was/is displayed at the marginal level. The tailor in French Colony, Dulhousie,

calls this mindset as a 'Bhatti mindset that enslaves them' (Hanif, 136). But surely, this mindset is a reaction and a resistance to the majority mindset.

Treatment by people of the middle- or upper-class Christians is almost the same for Joseph Bhatti. They want to rescue them from the vile living conditions but when invited into their homes, they have separate utensils for the sanitary/sewer workers and are not even invited inside their homes for refreshment. When talking about those successful Christians, he refers to them as 'they' (Hanif, 75), as if leaving their hereditary profession and the French Colony behind was a betrayal that marked them as permanently 'other' and lumping them with the majority community. Their (referring to Dr. Pereira and all those who have left French Colony residentially and professionally) treatment of their own religious brethren is marked with same biased and prejudiced behavior as those of the majority (Muslim) community. Joseph Bhatti has long ago accepted his marginalized status and the accompanied 'sweeper worker narrative' that was constructed for him by the majority Muslim community. Joseph Bhatti does protest but in a passive way with sentiments like, "we were here before the Christians came, before the Muslas came. Even before the Hindus came. I am not just the son of the soil. I am the soil. Yes, I am Joseph Bhatti Choorha." (71). Soil is synonymous with patriotism for one's country. Joseph Bhatti declares his loyalty and allegiance to the soil that was neither the British India, the Mughal Raj nor the Hindu Empire. This soil belongs to those who takes care of it, who cleans it (that is why the profession is capitalized, because it has been owned by him). He is a man, a son of this soil and thus does not need to rise from his nearness to the soil, into the higher ranks of the Pakistani society in which he is not considered their equal.

Hina Alvi is a foil character to Joseph Bhatti. When narrating her life story to Alice Bhatti, she discloses that her name was Hannah, to which Alice replies that she had guessed as much (Hanif, 298). The reason why Alice responds that way is because more than often, in translation, a translator looks to the closest sounding word in the host language from the guest. In the case of names, Hannah is a Biblical English name and its Biblical Urdu translation is Hunnah (Hina). The pronunciation is a bit different but the spellings are the same in Urdu. Many of the Christians, when they adopt a Muslim or Arabic name, they go for the closest translation available in Urdu or replacement in the translated versions. After Alice's marriage to Teddy Butt, the rumors started that Alice is a closet convert as well with a name Aliya (Hanif, 131). People like Hina Alvi are an outcast in the minority community and also in the majority community. They become completely 'other' for both the majority and the minority communities. This is evident when Alice first visits her apartment, Hina instructs her not to remove the curtains from the windows because of the nosy neighbors. Here is a woman who is socially and religiously cut off from both parts of the world; her past and her present. The self that she has left behind as a daughter of Bishop Massey, the privileged and spoiled only daughter, and now a lonely head nurse at a derelict hospital. Alice wonders at the duplicity her own people employ to gain acceptance and social standing in this Muslim community. For

her the question is, "...who are worse: Catholics or Catholics pretending to be not Catholics." (298).

Hina has found and constructed new identity through the politics of naming. But these names prove to be rigid designators of identity for her because she presents the difficulties present in going back to her old name because of her new identity. Because of the apostasy laws in Pakistan where conversion of a born Muslim to any other religion is a crime punishable by death (Ahmed, 2009), changing her name from a Muslim to the one she already employed would have been a great hassle in explaining and proving her identity as a woman who was not converting her religious identity but just her name.

People like Hina become successful in their fields and gain higher and better living standards are the epitome of those who betray not only their own but also those into which they are migrating. When Alice Bhatti discovers Hina Alvi's true affiliation and allegiance, she is baffled and perplexed rather than rejoicing in the fact that Hina Alvi is a Catholic just like her. She reprimands her that although Alice was no Bishop's daughter (like Hina Alvi was) but changing her name after marriage did not even occur to her. The reason that Alice decided to keep her birth name rather than acquire a Muslim name or her husband's name is to defy the stereotypical mindset of the society. One main psychological factor for that is Joseph and Margaret's always referred to each other as 'Mother of Alice' and 'Father of Alice'. The recognition of Joseph Bhatti and his wife to each other is through their daughter's name. This is a very common practice in rural class and lower class families in Pakistan. The spouses often refer to each other through the relation they have to their children. Alice's Symbolic space is of perpetual 'otherness' from her own community and also the community that she was married into.

#### IV. TEDDY BUTT AND ALICE BHATTI

The perpetual battle that the characters of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2012), display in trying to leave their ideological subjective positions that they have been interpellated, through ISA's and RSA's, is evident in the courtship and marriage of Teddy Butt and Alice Bhatti. Explanation of the function and purpose of Ideology has already been done in section, according to which, the social order is the place of language and since language carries culture (Ngugi wa Thiong'o), it is regulated and constructed through and by ideology. The merging of these two concepts and their placement in Pakistani ideology has already been expounded in the section mentioned earlier. This section of textual analysis highlights the different ISA's and RSA's that were active in the lives of both Alice and Teddy Butt and how their psyches were shaped due to them and their (ISA's and RSA's) subsequent similarities in entering the Symbolic Order.

According to Lacan, entrance into the Symbolic Order of language is the only way one can express lack or sense of otherness that has occurred to the child while still in the imaginary state. The entry into the Symbolic is through the mother because the mother is already there on the margins of the order due to her double 'lack'. This lack is doubled

because she lacks the structure of the phallus. Father/father is closer to the center of the structure itself because he possess the structure of the 'phallus' biologically at least, but is still in pursuit of the center. The Phallus is Language itself, that governs the symbolic from the central position, and just like language, is shifting and sliding out of the reach of the subjects that are in the symbolic order. The child observes the authority of the father and the mother's subject position in the way his/her parents behave in their relationship to each other and the society. Since the mother is nearer to the margins, the child thus enters the symbolic through and closer to her. Depending upon the gender of the child, whether he is placed a step higher and closer to the center or she is placed behind her mother in the symbolic order. (Lacan, 2011).

Both Teddy Butt and Alice Bhatti lost their mother at a very young age which shows how their psyches turned out to be in comparison to Noor (the clerk boy with a cancer battling mother). Teddy Butt lost her, not because she died, but other than giving birth to him, he remained in the 'training' and conditioning of his father. His mother had a very small, observant role in their household. She is a shadow presence in his life as she happens to be a non-salaried maid. So, under his father's tyrannical parenting at home and at home as a PT master, a term used for physical training instructors in government schools. Teddy Butt displays a fractured psyche of a mentally and physically abused child. He employs language at a minimal level and is not much of a conversationalist. Teddy was beaten, severely, whenever he talked back at his father's cruel treatment of him in order to create a 'man' (Hanif, 199) out of him. He is abused with names like 'sissy puss', 'faggot' (Hanif, 199) and other such degrading names for his sensitive and kind nature. So Teddy Butt erases these soft sentiments from his life and tries to become insensitive so that he could act in a way that would make his father happy. He sheds his real personality just to appease his father, which never happens. So, Teddy grows up to be a man in need of constant ordering and commands as his affiliation with Inspector Malangi shows.

Alice Bhatti was very young when her mother died at her work place due to slipping on the stairs and breaking her neck. What she remembers from those formative years was the phrase "He took her" (175). This phrase was constantly uttered by Father Philip of French Colony, who tried to pacify the Bhatti family as a form of condolence. This phrase constantly rang in her head when different form of burial rituals was being performed for her mother. As Alice grew up, she realized the many meanings this single phrase can acquire. Her mother's body displayed clear signs of being raped, and this morphs the meaning and tense of it from 'He took her' to when "He was taking her" to "How did He take her?" (174-175). This phrase launches the narrative of the tragic tale of Alice's mother Margaret Bhatti. As a beautiful woman, like her daughter, she was sure to catch the roving and lusty eyes of the opposite sex. This is exactly what happens to her at the house where she worked as a maid. Alice details the narrative very sarcastically, that it was possible that when:

He wanted to take her from this earth, He would have made you wash the marble staircase with soap and

water. It was also possible that you could have put more than the usual amount required of soap for the washing and thus could have slipped and cracked your skull and died. But what is not possible, is that He made you scratch your left breast with such brutality that the ones washing the body for the burial noticed those marks and it was entirely unlikely that He made you to spill someone's sperm on your thighs when you were falling? (174-175).

The above quote indicates that Alice comes to the conclusion that it was Him (either God or her rapist) who took her, changing the sense and the meaning behind that phrase and thus exposing the grim and harsh reality of this society.

The most prominent form of ISA in both Teddy and Alice's life is through parental institution (Teddy) and religious institution (Alice) to make them subjective to the ruling ideology /subjugating them to the patriarchal nature of the Ideological structure. Alice was sent to nursing school that was provided by Father Philip as compensation money by the family for the death of Margaret Bhatti. Alice regards it as blood money to avoid any sort of blame and police inquiry into the whole matter. Father Philip accepts it and gives the reason that what could the community have done for they were poor and a minority and unequal. However, this displays the fickle nature of the system that favors the mighty and victimizes the victim further by putting the blame on the unfortunates.

While in the service of 'G Squad' or the Invisible Squad he is in direct contact with the RSA side of Ideology, and his blind and child-like obedience to whatever Inspector Malangi commands him to do baffles one's mind. His last interpellation occurs when Malangi tells him that women '...are fake even when they are dead... you can't trust them...' (308). Especially when he offers Teddy Butt the vial of acid to splash onto Alice to teach her the lesson with extreme pain so that she is unable to forget it and lives with a constant reminder of the event. This is almost a process of complete defragmentation of one's own psyche and sense of right and wrong. Teddy is an English word used to describe 'Teddy Bears'. Teddy Bears are children's toys and are lifeless, dumb looking and big. Bears possess destructive and raging temperament. So the name Teddy, describes the personality of Teddy Butt as a man who is so ingrained in following the ideological patterns told to him through the interpellation of RSA, that he has no conscious or sense of his own. He does what he is told and force has become his *modus operandi* (mode of operation).

Alice Bhatti first realizes the Law on her first encounter with the Muslim girls studying at Sacred nursing School. Although this is a Christian institution, the only institution which accepted her, she thinks that she can practice her religion with the same freedom that she did when living in French Colony. She shares a dorm room with other girls of her religion, who tries to shut her up. She scoffs at their cowardice and displays open signs of her religious affiliation. One rule that the Symbolic Order displays, is that the more a subject acquires education and knowledge and moves away from the periphery of the Order, the tighter the control of the Law of

Language or the Phallus becomes. The more a subject's freedom is undermined. For Alice, same thing happens, she is shut down forcibly (by a bullet to be sure) from their Muslim fellow students in the school. After a talk with Dr. Pereira, who informs her of the laws governing this section of the society, she forces herself to be passive and obedient. Her nursing reputation is destroyed after she was sent to Borstal jail for women: for assault on the surgeon of the hospital, where she worked. There she meets Noor, the third narrator and observer of her life from the Borstal jail to Sacred Hospital. These were the ISA's and RSA's that interpellated them into the Symbolic Structure.

Noor is a peon and an errand boy employed in the hospital through the generous nature of Dr. Pereira's upon discovering him at the gates of Sacred along with his sick mother. Now Noor's mother is getting the best treatment that could be afforded with his position at the Sacred Hospital as the junior (only) clerk. When Noor is told of Alice and Teddy's romance, he lists all the differences between Alice and Teddy as to why their love story is a 'fucked-up' (Hanif, 118) and a doomed relationship. His first thought about the status of their relationship is, "Together what will they become? Alice Bhatti Butt? Alice Butt? Alice Teddy Butt?" (122). These lines display the important nature of an observer of this society (Noor can be taken as the one who represents the Pakistani society), whose thought about the new identity matrix between Teddy and Alice centers on the factor that Alice needs to change her name and acquire the name of her husband. So, he thinks of a few combinations to determine her identity as a married woman. This leads to the representation of a crucial fact of both the Pakistani Symbolic Order and the role of the prevalent Ideology which creates minorities as well as positions of favor for the men of this society. Continuum with this thought of the consequences of the name change and what each certain types of name combinations might mean for Alice. He knows that in Teddy Butt's life, there are some people who call him Teddy, some who call him Butt Sahib, while for those who call him Teddy Butt Sahib, he is required to perform a humiliating task (Hanif, 122). But what he wonders is the absence of any other names in Alice Bhatti's life. She is either, "Alice Bhatti, Alice, Sister Alice or Sister Bhatti" (122). The majority of the population call her 'sister' or 'daughter' and then treat her exactly the way they treat their own sisters and daughters; treating her like a bought commodity on sale. "This whole business of love, he concludes, is a protection racket, like paying your weekly *bhatta* (money paid to the goons) to your local hoodlum so that you are not mugged on your own street." (Hanif, 123). Noor is a very practical young man and he sees the tragedy of Alice Bhatti's love story even before it culminated into marriage.

For Noor, this match is very problematic and full of difficulties for Alice. He wonders at this type of love, thinking that, "...if there are laws against non-believers pretending to be Muslims..." (116), there should also be laws against people who pretend to be blind while having a perfect eyesight. This line cements home the difficult predicament of Hina Alvi who cannot come forward with her true identity which does not go



with her name and the reason Alice does not take up her husband's name, although she does respond to "Mrs. Butt" (234) when Teddy calls her in an amorous mood. She does not want to project any identity other than what her name proclaims; Alice Bhatti, a Catholic.

Noor concludes the fate of this match in the following words: "He can't imagine reading their names together except maybe in a tragic news headline." (123). As if the doomed result of their joined names had also foreshadowed their destiny, but it was only the play of ideology managing and righting the upset that the marriage of Teddy Butt and Alice Bhatti had invoked.

## V. CONCLUSION

This research sheds light on the reasons for the plight of the minority community through the analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2012). To properly convey an important shift in the Ideological stance of Pakistan, bringing into light, Zia ul Haq's regime as necessary. Most of the prejudices and biases faced by the minorities in contemporary times are a legacy of the Zia ul Haq era. This research culminates the contention that an individual's identity is a construct reliant on the type of name that he/she carries. Names are lingual constructs and carry with them the cultural, religious, political and social identities, as can be seen by the investigations done under the Lacanian Symbolic Order and Althusserian Ideological interpellation as theoretical paradigms. The most important outcome of this discussion is in the parallels drawn between the characters of Hina Alvi and Alice Bhatti. Hina Alvi played by the rules of ideology and takes on the names of the males that she was even remotely associated with. Alice on the other hand resisted this one requirement of Ideology, and obeyed every other social and religious laws. Her resistance to own her husband's name made a hole for Teddy that was filled by Malangi's poisonous words in which he also mentions that she is not faithful precisely because she has not taken up Teddy Butt's last name to show that she is not a free woman but a taken/married wife/slave of Teddy Butt. In the end, language

and Ideology succeeded in owning and subjugating Alice Bhatti for itself.

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