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A Girl In The River: A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Honor Killing

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to critically analyse the documentary A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness and explore the phenomenon of honor killing as presented through discourse in the documentary. In order to carry out critical discourse analysis Fairclough's 3D model (description, explanation and interpretation) provided the framework of the research. The discursive strategies employed by the participants involved in honor killing both as agents and victims were explored. It was observed that the antagonists considered themselves to be the victims who were compelled to act in the name of honor by the protagonist (Saba). They also rationalized their actions through their language and discourse.

Keywords: Honor Killing, Gender Equality, Women Studies, Documentary.

تلخیص

اس تحقیق کا مقصد ایک دستاویزی فلم "دریا میں ایک لڑکی" کا تنقیدی تجزیہ کرنا ہے۔ اس تحقیق میں معافی کا ناقابل تلافی معاوضہ اور غیرت کے نام پر قتل جیسے پہلوؤں کا گہرا مشاہدہ اور مطالعہ کیا گیا ہے، جو کہ دستاویزی فلم میں بیانات اور مکالموں کے ذریعے واضح کئے گئے ہیں۔ تحقیقی نتائج تک پہنچنے کے لئے تنقیدی مباحثے کے جائزے کے لئے فیئر کلوہ کا سہ سمتی نمونہ استعمال کیا گیا ہے، جس کے تینوں پہلوؤں (تفصیل، وضاحت اور تشریح) نے اس تحقیق کے لیے ایک بنیادی ڈھانچہ فراہم کیا ہے۔ ان استدلالی طریقوں کی چھان بین کی گئی ہے جو کہ غیرت کے نام پر قتل میں ملوث کارندوں اور متاثرہ شخص دونوں نے استعمال کئے ہیں۔ مشاہدے میں یہ بات سامنے آئی ہے کہ قتل میں ملوث کارندے (حریف) اپنے آپ کو مظلوم سمجھتے ہیں۔ کیونکہ اُن کے مطابق دستاویزی فلم کے مرکزی کردار (صبا) نے انہیں غیرت کے نام پر ایسا گھناؤنا قدم اُٹھانے پر مجبور کیا تھا۔ اُنہوں نے اپنے اِس گھناؤنے عمل کو اپنے بیانات اور مکالموں کے ذریعے درست ثابت کرنے کی کوشش کی ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ: غیرت کے نام پر قتل، جنسی مساوات، مطالعہ نسواں، دستاویزی فلم۔

Introduction

Human Rights Watch describes crimes committed in the name of honor as "acts of violence, usually murder, committed by male family members against female family members, who are held to have brought dishonor upon the family."A woman may become target of honor killing if she chooses to marry someone by her choice, seeks a divorce, or commits adultery. It is not necessary to actually commit adultery or act in a particular way, "the mere perception that a woman has behaved in a specific way to 'dishonor' her family, is sufficient to trigger an attack" (Pope, 2012).

In the case of honor killings the male is usually father, brother or an uncle. Unlike domestic violence, honor killing is not motivated by revenge or hatred. It is not a personal act rather it is an act to ensure the community that the male member of the family is in control. According to Eva Reimers (2007), "Honor killings are defined as acts of violence based on a conception of family honor as related to the chastity of women to the effect that when a woman is suspected of breaking a chastity code, the honor of her collective family becomes severely damaged, and the only way to restore it is to eliminate the woman."

The United Nations Population Fund estimates at least 5,000 women around the world are victims of honor killing each year(Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, 2006). In Pakistan alone, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 1096 women were killed on the basis of honor killing in 2015 (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's website). This may be an underestimation of the actual incidents because many such incidents are not reported in order to save the family's honor and also to preserve the cultural practice. In another study conducted by Aplin, sixty-two cases out of hundred cases of honor killing in England between 2012 and 2014 were of Pakistani origin (Aplin, 2016).

The relationship between language and the societal norms cannot be overlooked. According to Fairclough, language and society have a dialectical relationship. They both have an impact on each other. "Whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects" (Fairclough, 2015). Every text contributes to the characteristics and structure of a society. Discourse helps maintain the power relationships in a society. Through language powerful people can manipulate and influence the attitudes of the less powerful members of the society. All this can be done through language without bringing to the knowledge of the people. Therefore, it is important to analyse language of honor killing to elucidate the ideologies of the people involved in honor killing.

Fairclough states, "Discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped…in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it

contributes to transforming it." In other words, language is viewed as 'shaping' and being 'shaped' by society and its social structures (Fairclough, 1995). According to Fairclough (2003), discourse is not 'individual activity' rather it is a 'social practice'.

Inequality, prejudice, discrimination and dominance manifest in the form of discourse. Critical analysts focus on the implicit ideologies that are suggested by and are hidden in the language use. They also pay attention and highlight the implicit aims and objectives of people that maybe achieved through discourse (Chafai, 2013).

The goal of this study is to analyse the language used by the people involved in honor killing in the Oscar winning Pakistani documentary, '*A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness*' directed by Shirmeen Obaid-Chinoy. Chinoy has given voice to a woman who was a (possible) victim of honor killing.It is based on a true story of a 19-year-old Pakistani girl, Saba, who survived an act of honor killing. The use of language produces and reproduces the power relationship manifested in honor killing. It also establishes the practice as a norm in the society. Hence, it is essential to analyse the discourse involved in honor killing. In addition to Saba's discourse this research will focus on men's linguistic and discursive strategies that sustain and promote honor killing. According to Fawcett, "For too long, men have been considered and taken for granted norm…" Like other super ordinate categories of society men and their discourse has been spared critical inquiry (Fawcett, 1996). This research will analyse discourse of men involved in honor killing.

It is important to mention here that discourse in linguistics refers to 'language use' whether spoken or written and in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) it refers to the 'social process' (Fairclough, 2015). Therefore, in CDA discourse is the social practice that forms identities and reproduces ideologies. The investigative focus of CDA is to look at the bidirectional connection between language and society, keeping in mind the link between language and socio-cultural aspects of discourse. CDA throws light on the connection between textual structures and their function as a result of interaction with the society. It focuses primarily on social problems and political issues, rather than on current paradigms and fashions (van Dijk, 2008). It not only aims to explore how language helps to produce and reproduce ideologies in a society but also aims to uncover the role of language and discourse in social change.CDA is mainly looking for "the origins of social problems and finding ways to analyse them productively" (Bloor & Bloor, 2007).

Significance of the Study

This study aims to analyse the discourse of the victim, namely Saba, and agents of honor killing, including her father and the neighbourhood elders. Language can serve to propagate the phenomenon of honor killing. Through this research it can be shown that

agents involved in honor killing use language to promote and justify the act of honor killing. Through discourse, the agent becomes the victim and the victim becomes the perpetrator.

Previous research on honor killing has been carried out by students of law or students of anthropological studies. This research is different in two ways. It has analysed a documentary based on a true case of honor killing and it took into consideration the linguistic aspects of honor killing.

The study is essentially qualitative in nature as it is the analysis of a documentary that deals with the social issue of honor killing. While conducting the current research it was kept in mind that the topic chosen is a sensitive one in the Pakistani culture and context. The researcher grasped meaning of the language and paralanguage used in the documentary through sensitivity. The concepts and the themes that were grounded in the data were taken into consideration while being sensitive to the issue of honor killing and to the data provided in the form of language.

When analysing a documentary, it is possible for the viewer and the researcher to observe people and view the settings first hand. This forty-minute long documentary provided the discourse for in-depth analysis and is embedded in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

"A critical perspective on unequal social arrangements sustained through language use, with the goals of social transformation and emancipation, constitutes the cornerstone of critical discourse analysis (CDA)and many feminist language studies" (Lazar, 2005).

In order to bring about a social change, it is mandatory to explore the linguistic and discursive aspects of honor killing. The issues associated with ideologies and approach of the society will be highlighted through in-depth analysis of the discourse of honor killing. This analysis will create awareness and shed light on the discourse of the dominant group and the dominated individual. In this case, the dominant group includes Saba's father and the neighbourhood elders whereas Saba is the dominated individual.

This study employs Fairclough's 3D model that is linked at three different levels: description, interpretation and explanation that is linked to the socio-cultural aspects of the society. According to Fairclough language and the society are interlinked. His aim is to make people aware of the hidden relationship between language, discourse, power, and society and the effects of the relationship (Chafai, 2013). Analysis of discourse of the society will reveal the hidden ideologies of the society.

Research Questions

1. How does the language of agents of honor killing legitimize honor killing?
2. How does discourse of agents reverse the role of the agent and the victim of honor killing?

Background

The 2015 documentary, *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness* is an extraordinary story of a girl who survived an attempted murder. In the middle of the night, nineteen-year-old Saba was taken to a river near the place where she lives in Gujranwala, Pakistan. She was shot and put in a sack and thrown in the river. Fortunately, Saba survived the attack because the bullet just touched her cheek and failed to kill her. Saba was courageous and struggled to get out of the river and was taken to a hospital. What was Saba's crime for which she was being punished so brutally?

At 5 a.m. on the day Saba was thrown to die in the river, she had left her father's house to get married to her fiancé she had been engaged to since the past four years. Her uncle was against this marriage and wanted Saba to marry his brother-in-law. Since Saba defied the male members of her house, her destiny was to die by the hands of these male members.

This documentary may seem to have a deceptively simple straight story line but a closer look reveals the complicated societal issues of gender and power. Saba has risen above her dire situation only to be thrown into darkness by other women and men of her society whom she considers to be her saviors and protectors. What shines through the narrative is a strong determined woman, Saba, who was able to fight the physical battle of saving herself from dying in the river in the middle of the night but unable to save herself from the metaphorical river of people in the society that drowns her hope to have access to justice.

A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness has been critically analysed by movie critics but it has not been analysed in any research paper. In the literature available, the social issue is discussed but no comments have been made about the language used by the agent and victim in the documentary.

The documentary has been critically acclaimed by the international audience but some Pakistanis have raised concern about the documentary portraying a negative image of Pakistan to the international audience. Overall the documentary has received mixed reviews. Chinoy confronts the status quo and takes up a sensitive topic. She does not suggest cultural changes by saying anything to this effect in the documentary but she does touch a sensitive nerve and the main objective of the documentary like the aim of

this research is to create awareness about honor killing and bring about cultural change albeit a gradual one.

Literature review

Documentary

Non-fiction movies are gaining popularity because of technological advancements. In today's era of computerized movies, documentaries are unique since they try to capture what is real. For the audience, documentaries can serve as a gateway to the issues that are not tackled in mainstream movies. A documentary film is different from other films because the people on screen are not actors rather they are actual people who have experienced the issue in reality.

Honor killing

"The woman has always been the subaltern across cultural boundaries. Men need her, love her, adore her and write about her but they do so in relation to their own lives." (Sengupta, 2006).

The centuries old tale continues and women are still considered the properties of men in the form of wife, daughter, sister or mother. They have been used in literature but they have never been given a voice. Any story is incomplete without them but they are never shown as the important figures that possess the ability to think for them and differentiate between right and wrong. This perception about women pervades through all cultural and national boundaries and honor killing is a by-product of this perception.

Honor and Shame

Honor is the characteristic for the male and shame is reserved for women. All over the world millions of boys and girls are raised with the concept of honor. This honor unites the tribes and keeps the girls on the path that the men approve. The honor/shame system is the ideology that ensures power for the male.(Dogan, 2011). In Pakistan honor is roughly translated to '*izzat*' (Gill, 2014) or '*ghairat*' and shame is '*sharam*'. In Arabic '*sharaf*' is social prestige and a separate term '*ird*' is reserved for a woman's chastity. The Urdu equivalent of honor killing is *Gairatkayna'am pay qatel.*It is also known as *'karokari'* and '*siahkari'*. According to (Gadit& Patel,2008) that Karo means black man, and Kari means black woman; in Pakistani culture the color black is seen as morbid or dark. The Urdu phrase that is used for people who commit shameful acts is *'mounkaalakarna'*. This also means to bring shame to oneself and the family. *Kaala* means black. The phrase literally means to blacken one's face. Metaphorically it means

to bring shame to the person herself and her family. Honor is a collective characteristic in patriarchal societies like Pakistan.

Honor Killing and the Society

The honor of the male member of the family is perceived to be sacred and it is more precious than life itself. “The loss of honor is the loss of life and an ideal man lives for his honor” (Dogan, 2011). The society makes sure that people act upon the norms and carry out the act of honor killing. If they do not go ahead with it, the neighbors will exert pressure and the entire family of the girl will be punished. “People who do not wish to follow the norms are criticized, ridiculed, condemned, or excluded by the community, and those who follow them are admired and respected” (Dogan, 2011). This concept has been passed on from generation to generation in a way that violence seems a norm and is accepted and propagated by the society itself.

Scholar Leila Ahmed (1992) explains in her landmark book, *Women and Gender in Islam*, “As people settled into tribes and began to acquire land and other assets, the patriarchal family, designed to guarantee the paternity of property-heirs and vesting in men the control of female sexuality, became institutionalized, codified, and upheld by the state.”

The fact that women can bear children and continue the bloodline makes them prone to and victim of honor killing. Men had no other way of making sure to preserve their bloodline and keep the land and wealth within their tribes. The women who defied them were hence made examples for the world to see centuries ago and are still treated in the same way.

Critical Discourse Analysis

“Discourse is an analytical category describing the vast array of meaning-making resources available to everybody.” These meaning-making resources can be oral conversations, written texts, designs, symbols, colors, and gestures (Pyland, K & Paltridge, 2011).

Fairclough’s main focus is on the two dimensions of power: the power in discourse and power behind discourse (Fairclough, 2015). An example of power in discourse can be the power relationship between a teacher and student and media whereas an example of power behind discourse can be the discourse of institutions and organizations. ‘Discourse is a place where relations of power are actually exercised and enacted’ (Fairclough, 2015).

Fairclough explains that 'language is a form of social practice'. There are three implications of this notion:

1. Language is a part of society and not external to it.
2. Language is a social process.
3. Language is a socially conditioned process.

Language is a part of society and not external to it. According to Fairclough, language and society have an internal and dialectical relationship. They are not independent entities that can exist on their own. "Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena of a special sort and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena." When people communicate they do so in a language that is socially determined and acceptable. The words they utter or write also have a social purpose and effect (Fairclough, 2015).

Language is social *process.* The text is just part of this social process and as it is the 'product of the process of text production.' Hence, this social process includes not only the text but also the *process of production* and the *process of interpretation.* Text is the product of the process of production and a resource for the process of interpretation.

According to Fairclough (2015) the producer of the text draws upon his or her MR and the interpreter interprets the text based on their MR which includes their 'knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on.'

The processes of production and interpretation are determined socially that is it is 'conditioned by other non-linguistic parts of society.' The MR are cognitive but they are social because they are socially generated, transmitted and equally distributed. They are the product of social relations and social struggles (Fairclough, 2015). Hence, Fairclough claims that discourse involves social conditions 'which can be specified as *social conditions of production* and *social conditions of interpretation*…. These social conditions shape the MR people bring to production and interpretation which in turn shape the way in which texts are produced and interpreted' (Fairclough, 2015). Corresponding to these three dimensions of discourse Fairclough (2015) designed the three stages involved in the process of critical discourse analysis. These steps are as follows:

1. Description: In this first stage of analysis linguistic and formal features of the text are described.
2. Interpretation: The second stage explores the relationship between the properties of the text and MR involved in discourse.

3. Explanation: This last stage of analysis connects the process of production and interpretation with their context.

Fairclough (2015) affirms that by using this framework for critical analysis of discourse of a society, one can describe, interpret and explain the underlying structure and processes of a society. The three stages of the framework begin with the linguistic analysis that is the description of the linguistic tools employed in the text which provide the tools to take interpretive step. The interpretive stage involves the inter-textual analysis that culminates into the third and final stage of discourse analysis. This stage called explanation considers and draws a relationship between the discourse, social and cultural situations.

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is concerned with the meaning people attach to things in their lives (Bogdan& Taylor, 2016). Hence, qualitative research is understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Since the information under investigation was recorded, the data could be replayed and language and behavior could be analysed by empathizing with the characters in the documentary. It is important for the researcher to identify with the people or actors in the documentary. It is not possible to stay aloof in order to remain objective.

During the research it was kept in mind that people and settings were looked at holistically (Bogdan & Taylor, 2016). Saba and her father could not be reduced to variables and the human side of social life was not ignored. It was important to take into consideration the socioeconomic factors and look at the people holistically.

This research is a case study of the documentary *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness.* To analyse the documentary, Norman Fairclough's 3D model was used. The language text used was the spoken text and the written text. Nonverbal language was also taken into account. The spoken text was in Urdu and English. It was important to analyse the text in Urdu also because sometimes the meaning is lost in translation. The written text was in the form of subtitles in English.

The tri-focal approach of Fairclough (2003) enables the analyst to interpret texts, processes and their social conditions. Fairclough's three-dimensional model is interlinked at three levels: description, interpretation and explanation.

Discourse

The discourse selected for analysis was the forty minutes long documentary A *Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness* directed by Shirmeen Obaid-Chinnoy. The characters in the documentary speak in Urdu and it is made comprehensible to the international audience by the use of subtitles in English. The main female character in the documentary is from the underprivileged areas of Pakistan. Saba belongs to the low-income class of Gujranwala, Pakistan.

The entire movie was not transcribed. Only the discourse that was necessary to analyze the power relations, ideology and other aspects of the documentary were transcribed and used. The discourse of the following people was most important in the order they are mentioned so as to arrive at the conclusion for this research:

- Saba
- Saba's father
- Saba's brother-in-law
- The neighborhood elders

While transcribing, the important non-verbal gestures like meaningful gestures and expressions were also mentioned. The documentary was watched more than fifteen times from beginning till the end. Later, it was watched in bits and pieces for its nuances.

Discussion and Analysis

Fairclough points out "ideologies reside in the text and are open to multiple interpretations" (2015). This research focuses on the discourse of the survivor of honor killing attack, Saba who is the main character of the documentary. It also analyses the discourse of the perpetrators and supporters of honor killing.

Description

The first stage of Fairclough's (2015) model is description of the text used. Keeping Faircough's guidelines for text analysis in mind, in-depth analysis was carried out. Fairclough has laid down the following guidelines for discourse analysis in his book *Language and Power.*

Wording. At times, 'the wording is systematically replaced by another one in conscious opposition' (Fairclough, 2015). For Saba's family Saba eloped (ran away) from home but from Saba's perspective she left home in order to get married to the person she was engaged to by her own parents. The words 'ran away' or '*bhaagjaana'* have negative connotation whereas 'left home' (ghar say chaligayee) does not have similar negative connotations.

Also, Saba's father asks, "Didn't she get fed three times a day? Didn't she have a bed to sleep on?" The wording of these questions is rhetorical. Maqsood is trying to imply that Saba or any 'honorable girl' should not have done this since her basic needs such as provision of food and shelter were met. He implies Saba is a rogue element and that's not what is expected of girls.

Pronouns

The father used the pronoun 'we' for himself instead of 'me'. In Urdu 'hum' is used in two cases: when the person is talking about more than one person, as is the case in 'we'. In the other case, the person uses 'hum' when talking about himself or herself in a respectable way or when someone is in power. In this case, the father was using 'hum' as a pronoun and not 'main' (me or I) showing that he believed he was an honorable and a respectable man, who has a high social status.

The father also says that the neighbors say,ا"*aapizzatdaaradmee ho*."آپ"*Aap*" in Urdu is a pronoun that shows respect. In English 'you' is used as a pronoun that will refer to the person in second person whether the person is younger or older or whether the person is a respectable member of the society or a criminal. The relationship between people does not alter the use of the pronoun 'you' in English. In Urdu however, آپ '*aap*' is used when people talk about someone they respect. Children can never use the pronoun تم '*tum*' for elders. Similarly, people of higher social status are also referred to with the pronoun *'aap'* and not '*tum*'. The latter pronoun is reserved for people with lower social status or if the person is younger to the person using the pronoun 'tum'.

Repetition

The significant words are often repeated. The important words in this documentary are '*ghairat*', '*izzat'* and '*maaf*'. Repetition of words reflects the beliefs and ideologies of the individuals (Fairclough, 2015). Word like "neighbourhood" has been mentioned many times which reveals that the society which Saba belonged to, is the collectivist society where the people from the neighbourhood are important. Throughout the documentary '*maaf*' (forgive) has been used 17 times. Characters in the documentary were asking for forgiveness and some were convincing Saba to forgive. The entire documentary revolved around honor and forgiveness. The repeated words appeared in the documentary as follows:

Word	**Number of times it appears in the text**
Respect (*izzat*)	13
Honor (*ghairat*)	8
Forgiveness (*maaf*)	17
Neighborhood (*muhallay*)	6

Metaphor

The title of the documentary A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness,has literal and metaphorical meaning. The main characters in the documentary use some important metaphors. These metaphors are explained below.

"Crossing this river"ایک دریا سے گزر رہے ہیں (Aikdarya say guzarrahayhain) which means struggling to get through a difficult situation. Saba uses the metaphor 'crossing the river' to indicate the tough time her brother-in-law was going through when he had to face the people of the neighbourhood.

"Haathbaandhay" means to ask for forgiveness. In Urdu, it means to beg and implore for forgiveness. It is the last resort when someone is asking for mercy. According to Saba, her father and Uncle begged for forgiveness in this manner but this was not visible on camera.

Euphemism

No euphemism is available in Urdu for the termبھاگ جانا 'bhaagjana(run away)'.

'Ghar say bhaagjaana' is loaded with negative connotation. 'Ghar say bhaagjaana' is associated with bringing shame to the entire family. This same concept can be expressed as 'married by her choice'. This expression is not loaded with negative connotation and can serve as a euphemism but it is reserved only for boys who marry by choice. For girls, the term 'ghar say bhaagjana' is used.

Saba's father says, 'Whatever we (hum) did, we were obliged to do it.' He does not use the words 'attempt to murder'; instead he uses euphemism 'jobhihuahai'. This conceals his act of trying to murder his daughter.

Interpretation and explanation

Fairclough (2015) employs the term *interpretation* as the name of the stage of the analytical procedure and the interpretation of text by the discourse participants. The participants' processes of text production and text interpretation are taken into account in the current stage of analysis.

Since the characters are aware that a large number of people will see the documentary they will have a different relation with the audience and the answers may be biased. The participants being analysed in this research paper speak Punjabi as their mother tongue.

They struggle to speak in Urdu and they are more comfortable in their mother tongue.In the beginning Saba starts speaking in Urdu but she quickly shifts to Punjabi because she could tell her story comfortably in her mother tongue. Ideas are best expressed in L1 (mother tongue, first language) therefore, it was a good decision by Chinoy to let them speak in their L1 and not make them speak in Urdu.

Saba explains her stance:

> Saba: *The world should see this- brothers, sisters, parents, uncles and aunts so this doesn't happen again.*
> *They should be shot in public in an open market.(Sar-e-aam)…….*
> *(Yes, InshaAllah) With god's will I'm going to fight this case.*

Saba is determined to fight the case. Her purpose is to create awareness like she says; "The world should see this- so it doesn't happen again." She is hopeful that she will win the case and this will be a lesson for all the uncles and aunts and parents of girls to never repeat this. Unfortunately, this case could not become a lesson for the society.

She uses the words'*sar-e-am bazaar main'* سرِ عام بازار میں because in Urdu language '*sar-e- am'* is used when you want the people to see something significant which can serve as a lesson for the society. This is not an idiom that is employed in English language. Although, she is uttering these words in a soft tone, the words themselves are loaded with vehemence. '*Sir-e-am bazaar main'* people are punished for their wrongdoing so that the rest of the society learns a lesson and does not repeat the same mistake. Saba's father wanted to make her an example so that none of the other girls in the society run away from home whereas Saba wants to make her father an example for the future fathers who try to murder their daughters. It seems like a battle that only time will settle.

> *Qaiser is against the understanding but his older brother handles everything since he is the eldest of the family. He is going through such big river. He is going through such a tough situation and has the ultimate decision (making power). (Saba)*

As mentioned above Saba lives in a joint family system that is part of the Pakistani culture. Saba's brother-in-law who appears to be in his early thirties, is the head of the family. He decides to forgive the perpetrator because of the influence of the neighbourhood. Saba says, 'He (Shafqat) is going through such a big river'. This is how women are raised in patriarchal societies. They are always concerned about the male member of the house. She does not take into consideration the agony that she has gone through. She will go against what her heart desires. Her brother-in-law has to make a tough decision so she will support him although in her heart she believes it is not the right thing to do. She is ready to compromise on her beliefs. Khan and Saeed (2017) explain,

"When it comes to women, their social identity is constructed through active as well as passive socio-cultural influences since childhood that they don't even find the oppressive discourses shaping their lives as unnatural."On the contrary, since the process shapes them so naturally they themselves become agents of their own oppression (Lemley, 2005).

In the next scene Shafqat (Saba's brother-in-law) says:

> *A compromise must be reached. There's no other way. We live in the same neighborhood and one must abide by the laws of the community. How long can we live in conflicts like this? Two, four, ten years? There's no alternative except compromise. Let's reach an agreement. If this escalates no one benefits. We will be upset. They will be upset.*

Shafqat is dominated by the people in the neighbourhood. He says let 'us' reach an agreement. Saba is definitely not included in 'us'. Saba does not want to reach an agreement. He also says that there is no other way. He is part of the society where going against the members of the community will only bring him harm and he knows the law cannot protect him or his family. For him the laws of the community are more important than any other law. He does not see any other option but to compromise because he fears he will not be supported by the neighbourhood in time of need if he stands up against their decision. He says that a compromise *must* be reached. He may feel powerful in making this decision but it is obvious through the use of the modal verb 'must' in this line that he does not have an option to decide otherwise. As Saba mentions in the documentary, her husband Qaisar is against the reconciliation but he is also helpless. They are men in a patriarchal society but they are also powerless when the neighbourhood elders come in the picture.

> *Whatever we (hum) did, we were obliged to do it. She took away our honor. I am an honorable man. Why did she leave home? I labored and earned lawfully (huq halal) to feed her. This was unlawful (haram) of her. I am an honorable man. I couldn't bear that…. Destroyed everything. My lawful labor. So I said no I will kill you (aap) myself. You are my daughter, I will kill you myself. Why did you leave home with an outsider?*(Saba's Father, Maqsood)

Saba's father rationalizes his act through his discourse. He creates an image of himself as being an honorable man who earned lawfully. The word he used is *halal.* A pious Muslim throughout his/her life works hard to adhere to the prescribed rules of the religion. His choice of the word *halal* for his act and *haram* for Saba's act makes him a good Muslim and makes Saba a bad Muslim. For him, Saba has not only dishonored her parents but also has violated the rules of the religion.

He is locked behind bars and he can be convicted for an attempt to murder but he says, 'I will kill you (Saba) myself.' He is not intimidated by the consequences. He uses the word 'aap' that shows he is trying to act like an honorable and an educated person. He does not change his stance because he wants the world to see that he has tried to restore his honor by trying to kill the daughter who ran away from home. At this point, he is willing to die for his honor just like he was willing to kill for his honor.

Maqsood: *I haven't seen that man but if I had I would have killed him too. I would have killed them both. Qaiser destroyed our lives. I am locked up because of him.*

Interviewer's Voice: *You are locked up because you tried to kill your daughter.*

Maqsood: *Islam doesn't allow girls to get out of the house. Why should she go? Was she dying of hunger? Didn't she get fed three times a day?*

Interviewer (I): *Does Islam permit murder?*

Maqsood: *No, but where is it written that a girl can run away with a stranger?* (Vehemently)*Where is it written?* (Repetition)

Interviewer: *Are you ready to spend your life in jail?*

Maqsood brings in the role of religion and the interviewer puts forth one of the most important questions in the documentary: "Does Islam permit murder?" Maqsood has no concrete answer. He avoids answering andhedges the question. He in turn puts forth more questions that are rhetorical in nature. For example he asks, "Where is it written that a girl can run away with a stranger?" He is aware that someone belonging to the Pakistani society knows it is unacceptable to run away. The interviewer does not answer the question.

Saba's father says proudly that the people of the neighbourhood say he is an honourable man. When he was locked up behind bars he did not fail to convey the message through Chinoy's camera that what he did was right. In his mind, his audience was the neighbourhood in which he lived. He knew that his society will accept him and this is what they expect of an honourable man. He assumes an ideological connection between him and a group of the possible viewers while ignoring the other group of people who consider honour killing appalling. This is the process of negotiating a relationship of trust and solidarity with assumed viewership. For him the viewers are people who share similar ideologies with him.

"I haven't seen that man but if I had I would have killed him too. I would have killed them both. Qaiser destroyed our lives. I am locked up because of him." Maqsood considers himself

innocent. He feels that he was compelled to kill his daughter because she ran away with Qaiser. For Maqsood, Qaiser is the villain who has destroyed their life. There is no regret in Maqsood's voice and tone. On the other hand his tone sounds powerful even behind bars. He is threatening to kill another human being, Qaiser. The court fails to see this and in the end Maqsood is honorably released from prison because Saba succumbs under the societal pressures and forgives him. This highlights the loopholes in the judicial system that allows people like Maqsood to walk free without genuinely repenting for their sins.

> *People who visit my father tell me that he is asking for forgiveness. He says he will not repeat his mistake. But I said no Iwill not forgive him. 'Hum nay kahanahin.' When I went to court to set a trial date my Chachu begged me to forgive him. He begged and pleaded but I said I won't forgive myself if I forgive you. Get lost, I will not forgive you. It is not right*.(Saba)

From Saba's conversation, it appears that her father and uncle have pleaded for forgiveness but Saba's father did not admit it on camera throughout the documentary. He would rather die than ask for forgiveness on camera. Once out of jail he will not be able to live in that community if he asks for forgiveness on camera. Like her father, Saba also uses the pronoun ہم'*hum*'(me or we depending on the situation). The pronoun *hum,* as mentioned earlier has power and respect associated with it. In this case Saba uses it to show power because she believes that the power to forgive her father and Uncle lies in her hands. She also mentions that if she forgives them she will not be able to forgive herself. She wanted justice to be served but unfortunately, it is visible in the end that she could not face the opposition alone.

She also says, 'dafahojao' which is roughly translated to get lost. This phrase reveals that she is full of anger towards her father and uncle but in the next scene the situation changes. She is shown clad in burqa and her body language reflects her despondence.

> *But some of my neighbours appealed to my in laws. Forget prosecution and go for a compromise. They say we must listen to the influential and dominant MEN of our neighbourhood. We live in this neighbourhood and we must listen to the advice of these men.* (Saba)

She says that the dominant men of the neighbourhood have approached her in-laws. Saba also understands that in order to survive in this neighbourhood they will all have to act according to the dominant men. She has to forgive her father because of the pressure exerted by the neighbourhood on Saba's in-laws. Saba lives with her in-laws and is dependent on them. The in-laws in turn live in the neighbourhood that does not consider honour killing as an illegal act. As Dogan has pointed out if the immediate family does not take action against someone who has risked the honour of the family, the society exerts pressure (Dogan, 2011).

> *Our society doesn't respect girls who run away. People say (taunt) look their daughter ran away. People with such a tarnished reputation lose all respect in the community. Parents put in so much effort to nurture support and care for their children. Don't parents have the right to decide the future of their children?* (The Elders)

The elders of the neighbourhood are clear on this issue. They are completely supportive of Saba's father and his actions. They are part of the collectivist society and cherish the centuries old patriarchal traditions. They understand why the father tries to kill Saba. Saba's father's reputation is tarnished because of Saba's act. The only way to restore this honour was to kill Saba. Although, the neighbours did not say this explicitly, they did not stand against the act of killing. On the other hand, they supported the person who tried to murder another human being and made sure Saba forgave him. This shows that the neighbourhood implicitly supports honour killing. They further support Maqsood's actions by appealing to the people through arguments like, 'Parents put in so much effort to nurture, support and care for their children.' It is a logical fallacy. Raising kids does not give parents the right to kill them if they defy your orders. They also seem to be united and powerful who can influence Saba's in-laws. The powerful men of the neighbourhood state, 'Honor and land are common disputes here.' Reimer's in her book has stated a similar concept. Centuries ago, the only way to keep land in your own tribe or community was to control the woman's sexuality. Hence honor and land are closely connected with each other.

Towards the end of the documentary, Maqsood states, "I have forgiven Saba and she has forgiven me. We have started a new life again."

Close analysis reveals that Maqsood states he has forgiven Saba before saying that Saba has forgiven him. He states this information in the climactic order (order of importance) where it was important for *him* to forgive Saba first. This shows that Maqsood was in power and he was magnanimous to forgive Saba. Someone who is not part of this society can question this forgiveness. What was there to forgive? He was the person who tried to murder his own daughter and he forgave his daughter. It is paradoxical. He also adds, "After this incident everyone says I am more respected. They say I am an honorable man." His honor has been restored.

Conclusions

A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness is a documentary that presents an important case of honor killing or honor-based violence. It is a type of violence that finds it roots in centuries old traditions and culture in certain parts of the world. It is different from the domestic violence against women because the latter usually involves a husband or a male partner whereas honor killing may also involve a father, brother or uncle. These men stay

loyal to the centuries old traditions in patriarchal societies where women have little or no say about their own lives. Acts like marrying someone of your own choice or seeking divorce can merit honor killing.

The objective of the study was to explore how discourse of the characters represents their ideologies and supports honor killing. The discursive strategies of the characters involved in the documentary blamed Saba for being the rogue element who had brought dishonor and shame to the family. Although, in the eyes of the court Saba was asked by her father to forgive him but during the father's interview no remorse is visible in the discourse. The words uttered and paralanguage exhibited did not show an ounce of guilt.

Chinoy has highlighted the social aspect of honor killing and she has tried to clear the misconceptions. The society itself will need to rethink its traditions and strategies to eradicate honor killing.

The conclusion of the case depicts the homogeneity and solidarity of the community that supports and promotes honor killing. In the court Saba's statement was important but that statement was influenced by the male members of the neighbourhood. Women are expected to be subservient to the men and hide behind their *burqa* (veil). Any deviation from the conventional roles will lead to dire consequences as in Saba's case. Throughout the documentary, the male family members and the neighbourhood elders supported Maqsood implicitly and explicitly. In the end, Saba did not have a choice but to forgive the person who tried to kill her. The agent became the victim and vice versa.

This research focused on the incident that involved real life people and issues. The discourse and people involved were non–fictional and naturally occurring as opposed to invented examples. This places the research in a significant position because it connects CDA to the media discourse.

Recommendations

Through this research it was found out that the discourse of the rural Punjab as shown in the documentary supports and promotes honour killing. The same community has different laws for the male and female members. Whereas the male member in the documentary was left unharmed the woman was shot in an attempt to murder. It is recommended to view the documentary as a medium that reflects the unbiased truth about the Pakistani society. The documentary has served to highlight the issue of honor killing.

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Appendix A

Transcription of the Movie:
Saba: “I remember trembling with fear and begging them but they didn’t listen to me. They put me in a bag and threw me in the river. Now the wrath of god will fall upon them. Even if someone powerful asks me to forgive them I will not forgive them. The world should see this- brothers sisters parents uncles and aunts so this doesn’t happen again.
They should be shot in public in an open market
With God’s will I’m going to fight this case.

Police: Islam teaches us nothing about honor killing. Islam teaches us that we should safeguard the rights of all human beings.
What happened here was totally against religious values.

Aqsa: All our family did was to preserve their (family's) integrity and honor. Who can tolerate such betrayal from their daughter? Who runs away and marries without their consent?

Our family was never questioned by anyone. We were respected by the entire community. People feared us now taunt us. We stopped going anywhere even to friends and family. We keep to ourselves because of the shame she has brought us. People say my father neglected his kids.

Saba's Mother: This is what happens when honour/ izzat is at stake. No woman should disrespect her parents. No no.
No woman should ruin her family's reputation.
If this girl (pointing to Aqsa) does something like this, she will get beaten up.
If she stays home she will get married in a 'good way'. Then I will be respected as well.
She has disrespected us. My daughter has done this; Allah make me die.

Maqsood (Saba's Father behind bars): What I did was absolutely right. Everything is about respect. I am an honorableman.hummajboorhokarkiya. Hum ghairatmand log hain. Is nay haram dikhayahaimujhy. Hum huq halal kemazdooriekarkaykhilatatha. She destroyed everything. Destroyed my honest labour. You are my daughter. I will kill you myself. Why did you leave home with a (ghair) man.Ghair/ghairat.

I haven't seen that man but if I had I would have killed him too. I would have killed them both. Qaiser destroyed our lives. I am locked up because of him.

Interviewer's voice: you are locked up because you tried to kill your daughter.

Maqsood: Islam doesn't allow girls to get out of the house. Why should she go? Was she dying of hunger? Didn't she get fed three times a day?

Interviewer: Does Islam permit murder?

Maqsood: No but where is it written that a girl can run away with a stranger? (vehemently)
Where is it written? (repetition)

Interviewer: Are you ready to spend your life in jail?

Maqsood: Yes absolutely. I'm ready for respect and honor. I am ready to spend my whole life in jail.
(He says it with so much conviction).

The One who gave life provides for it as well. (He seems philosophical?)
I will spend my entire life in jail for my honor.
(Messy house is shown which depicts they are very poor.)

MIL: She is just like my own daughter. She is happy here. We have told her that we are poor and have a lot of mouths to feed. Whatever is acceptable to God she can eat with us.

Saba: I haven't spoken to my mother or sisters. I don't know what they feel about me. People who visit my father tell me that he is asking for forgiveness. He says he will not repeat his mistake. But I said Iwill not forgive him.Hum nay kahanahin. When I went to court to set a trial date my chachu begged me to forgive him. He begged and pleaded but I said I wont forgive myself if I forgive you. Get lost, I will not forgive you. It is not right.

(Saba is shown clad in burqa outside the house. Then she is shown very sullen sitting in her house.)

Saba: But some of my neighbors appealed to my in laws. Forget prosecution and go for a compromise. They say we must listen to the influential and dominant MEN of our neighborhood. We live in this neighborhood and we must listen to the advice of these men.

The Elders: Our society doesn't respect girls who run away. People say (taunt) look their daughter ran away. People with such a tarnished reputation lose all respect n the community. Parents put in so much effort to nurture support and care for their children. (Does that give them the license to kill?) Don't parents have the right to decide the future of their children? (Individualistic vs collective society)
Asad Jamal (Saba's pro bono lawyer; hereafter will be referred to as 'Lawyer'): Yes but I want to know how you will uphold the rights of the girl. Her own family tried to kill her and throw her away. She got shot she survived. This decision is about her life.

Elders: Honour and land are common disputes here. Look both families are our close neighbors. That's why we intervened. We told Qaisar's family to compromise quickly. W told them if you prosecute this case your neighbors will look down on you. There might be more fights between families. We pleaded with both families to compromise.

Lawyer: to compromise?

Elders: Yes compromise.

Lawyer: So you sat together in one place to discuss this dispute?

Elders: Look the girl should be able to live in peace with no more disagreements. Her family says that they wont harm anyone and legal documents are being prepared so both parties will have written rules to follow. If they violate them, then we will sit together to make things right.

Lawyer: Do you want Saba's statement recorded tomorrow?

Elders: Yes, as soon as possible.

Lawyer: (Mother), do you know what we are talking about?

MIL: Yes I understand.

Lawyer: They want you to go to court as early as possible and have Saba forgive her attackers. So the hearing is set for tomorrow. Have you asked Saba if she will be ready to give her statement?

MIL: we will have to ask her.
Police Criminal investigator: If there is forgiveness, the case is finished early and a message is sent that this crime is no big deal. You can kill ad go free. Look at the reality (sensitivity) of this case,. The very people asking for forgiveness are the ones who shot her and threw her in that river. Only she knows what she went through in that darkness. Saba should pursue this case so a message can be sent so that laws are the same for everyone. And anyone who commits such a crime will be punished.

I don't believe the girl herself wants to forgive but society might pressure her to forgive.

Saba: Qaiser is against the understanding but his older brother handles everything since he is the eldest of the family. He is going through such big river. He is going through such a tough situation and has the ultimate decision (making power).

Shafaqat: A compromise must be reached. There's no other way. We live in the same neighbourhood and one must abide by the laws of the community. How long can we live in conflicts like this? Two, four, ten years? There's no alternative except compromise. Let's reach an agreement. If this escalates no one benefits. We will be upset. They will be upset.

Saba is sitting with her head covered and bent looking melancholic.
Shafaqat continues: It's important that we reconcile because we all have to live in this neighborhood. We have to live in this. Sometimes we might need our neighbor's help and

they might need our help. So we have to listen to them now in times of happiness and sadness. We have to deal with these people.
(Saba is visibly upset)
So if we ignore their advice now why will they ever cooperate with us?

Saba: Yes, that's true. However you do this, I am happy with it.

MIL: God will make everything right. We have faith in the Quran. We believe in the Quran. If in the future they try to harm us the Quran will save us. Our hearts are clean.
Brother in law: We don't have a choice.

Saba: Do whatever you want. I am okay.

Court Day: Wearing her burqa.

Lawyer: when you go to the court and give your statement for forgiveness, you realize that your father will be free.

Saba: yes

Lawyer: And your uncle will be free too. You understand the meaning of this?

Saba: Yes. They will be forgiven and set free.

Lawyer: Are you mentally prepared to forgive them?
Long pause and no answer.
{shown covering her face and leaving the court}
Investigating Officer: If Saba states she forgives the accused and doesn't want the case to continue, then this case stops right here.
And if there's no justice you can imagine how terrible we police will feel.

Lawyer: I can understand why she is inclined to reach a compromise. Our justice system is not strong enough to provide her security. The accused are convicted and sent to jail for five years. They come out. Who is going to protect her? Her father is the only red winner of the family. It makes worldly sense to forgive him. (He is shown in jail with a rosary and seems like he's worshipping god.)

Hafizabad Courthouse
The neighbourhood elders had appointed a new lawyer for her without her knowledge.

New Lawyer: It's upto Saba. She can just say that I got angry and I took my father's name.
The next day the judge released her father and her uncle.

Lawyer: The law allows for this kind of settlement. The court in such cases have become mere post offices. They record the statements of the victims. This is something that needs superiority.

Saba: God did not want me to die from their hands. They tried but I survived. My fate didn't let me be killed by the. In the future, if it is written I will be killed by them.
She despises them so much that she doesn't take their names and uses pronouns.)
Only God (Allah) knows all these things. (She feels unsafe already)

MIL: She shouldn't meet them (her parents) and they shouldn't visit us. I feel scared but life must move on. We have to live on.

Saba's mother: We have reconciled with our heart. Whoever has an impure heart God can see it. We wont blackmail the or disturb them. We've been in touch on the phone. I've talked to Saba and her in-laws
I wanted her to understand that children don't separate from their parents forever. She will visit us one day.

Saba's father: I have forgiven Saba and she has forgiven me. We have started a new life again.
After this incident everyone says I am more respected. They say I am an honorable man.
Brother you are right. Whatever you did was the right thing to do. I have other daughters too. Since the incident my daughters have received many proposals. They say I am a good man. They want my daughters hand in marriage. I can proudly say that for generations too come none of descendants will even think of doing what Saba did Insha Allah. I am proud of this with the will of allah.my daughters will have fear in their minds that if one of their sisters did something like this and if we do the same god knows what our faith will be (very calm facial expressions)

Assertive: he felt like an honorable man.

Saba: if the elders hadn't pressured me I would have never forgiven them. I said to myself the longer they stay in prison the better. Everyone knows I forgave them for people for everyone around me. I listened to my family and forgave them. But in my heart they are unforgiven. I am very hoppy after meeting my mother. (she's shown crying for the first time. Her mother was covering her head.)

Saba continues: I want a girl who will be educated. She can do whatever she wants to do get a job or do whatever she wants to do.

Saba's Uncle:
What my brother did was absolutely right. I guess she survived. It was her destiny. (melancholic). Everything is about respect. Whatever he did was (for honor and was) absolutely right.

Saba's uncle was an accomplice in this act of honor killing. He is behind bars but he has no regret. The only remorse that the viewer can sense is that Saba survived. He was unhappy that because of Saba's destiny she survived. He speaks a few sentences in the documentary and these few sentences reveal his ideology. He completely supports his brother because according to him his brother is an honorable man and an honorable man has to protect his honor. Using the word honor time and again emphasizes the role of honor and serves as justification for murder.

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