

Gender and Crime in Shoaib Mansoor's Films

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between gender and crime in director Shoaib Mansoor's work by focusing on two of his films; *Khuda Kay Liye/In the name of God* (2007) and *Bol/Speak* (2011)³⁰. This study, therefore, is an exploration into the ways in which crime is presented in these films, the importance of crime in the narrative of the specific film and the ideologies that are conveyed through the portrayal of crimes such as murder, rape, prostitution and domestic violence. By applying a gender lens to the study of crime in film, this paper argues that crimes committed by women are seen as a reaction to their conditions and circumstances and questions the notions of crime being linked to specific ideas of masculinity. By drawing attention to the events that lead up to the crime being committed in these films, the characters involved in the crime and the social milieu that allows the event to occur, this paper examines whether the director is trying to convey a social message through the portrayal of women as criminals in his films.

Keywords: Crime and Gender, Morality in Film, Crime Cinema, Violence and Revenge, Gender Based Violence

An analysis of gender and crime as a theme in the films of one of the most prominent directors of contemporary Pakistani cinema can help to bridge the gap between the idea of crime in association with women and the reality. My rationale for this study is grounded in my recent interactions with female prisoners at Central Jail Kot Lakhpat which helped me realize that the perceptions of people about the crimes that women commit and the crimes committed against women are far from the reality of the situation. Shoaib Mansoor's films attempt to take the establishment to task and challenge preconceived notions of gender within the society. These films are a departure from the "narrative of the frail maiden" in films and television dramas as a woman that endures abuse and waits to be rescued by a "benevolent suitor" (Carilli, Theresa, Campbell 29).

³⁰ One of the reasons that I was not able to include Shoaib Mansoor's third and most recent film *Verna* in this paper as was the original plan was because I was unable to gain access to it which is also of quite some significance because it was banned in Pakistan for its discussion on rape and violence and is not freely available anywhere in the country.

When it was released in 2007, *Khuda Kay Liye (KKL)* was viewed as a “response to the threats”³¹ (Bilal 22) presented by the films from India and as a film that “self-consciously departed from mainstream commercial cinema” in the social issues that it brought attention to and the ways in which these issues were dealt with (Ahmad 397). It was a stepping stone into the ways of critical thinking through film and questioning topics that seemed controversial then and remain taboo even today. *KKL* presents several different viewpoints, offering perspectives of different Muslims from the West and from within Pakistan and their views on religion. The plot of the film centres around two brothers: Sarmad (played by Fawad Khan) who comes under the influence of religious leaders in Pakistan and Mansoor (played by Shaan Shahid) who remains a musician and studies music in America, and the ways their lives are affected following the events of 11 September, 2001. The character of Mary (played by Iman Ali), who will be discussed in detail in this paper, is a British-Pakistani woman who is taken to Pakistan and tricked by her father into marrying Sarmad. Following these events, Mary attempts to escape her situation but is caught and the punishment she faces is in the form of marital rape. Mary eventually takes on Sarmad as well as her father in court to appeal for justice. For this paper, the event that will be analysed in depth is Mary’s escape and the consequences of her crime.

Similarly, *Bol* laments the treatment of Pakistani women and their movement to resist the system that they are being raised in. These roles, however, are not limited to that of the protagonist, and I will analyse the way in which other supporting characters act in their individual ways to defy the system. These supporting characters are central to the storyline as actress Mahira Khan plays the protagonist’s sister Ayesha and actress Iman Ali plays the role of Meena, a prostitute who the protagonist’s father later marries. The plot revolves around a family of six sisters, their parents and their transgender child (Saifee). Although quite a few crimes occur throughout the film, the one that will be considered for this analysis is the fatal blow by Zainub (Humaima Malick) that causes the death of her father, Hakim Sahab. This act is the reason that she has been put on the death row and is being executed. This paper aims to understand the context in which the crime occurred and the messages that it conveys about the representation of gender in Shoaib Mansoor’s work. The central characters—Iman Ali as Mary in *Khuda Kay Liye* and Humaima Malick as Zainub in *Bol*—are both bold characters that demonstrate ways in which these women are forced to negotiate their positions not just in the society as a whole but even in their homes and private spheres. I will analyse the way that these women opt for some form of crime often as a reactionary response and the way that they are made to suffer for this crime as greater commentary on the portrayal of women and crime by Shoaib Mansoor over the years.

Murder is considered a “statistical rarity” when the discussion centers on crimes for which women are portrayed as perpetrators (British Crime Cinema 71). In the instances in *Bol* and *Khuda Kay Liye*, while women are seen violating a legal code, these are not necessarily violations of moral codes. A crime and a wrongdoing in terms of morality are understood differently. A crime is understood as a violation against the rules of a state that is punishable by the state versus a sin that is a violation of morality and may be looked down upon or be punishable by God³². The acts that are a focus of this paper are mostly crimes in terms of legality as they are punished by the state but not necessarily moral sins.

³¹ Threats here refer to the animosity between India and Pakistan and the constant threats from one to another.

³² As is the belief in Islam and a few other religions

Literature Review

Bilal describes *Bol* as a “social drama based in the Urdu tradition of critical realism” (22) but argues that the messages being conveyed through these films may not necessarily appeal to the mass public that “had grown up watching lavish Bollywood thrillers, rom-coms and pot-boilers” (Paracha 2013). In terms of ideology, films like *Bol* and *Khuda Kay Liye* which have overt social messages are relatively more “targeted towards educated, pro-establishment or liberal middle-class viewers” (Kirk 36). This notion of using any form of entertainment as education in order to create social impact has been discussed in detail in mass communication literature under the heading of “entertainment-education strategy” (Brown et al. 30). This entails the concept of production of “pro-social messages” to affect the audiences and educate them specifically through film (ibid.).

Apart from Shoaib Mansoor’s work, we see entertainment being employed to encourage education about morality as well as advance “social consciousness” in film industries across the globe (Brown and Meeks 31). A multitude of existing literature makes the connection between the treatment of women and crime in other cinemas as well as the way in which other cinemas use films to raise important social issues. The need for crime and violence as a part of film in general is not particularly unexpected because this “saturation of popular culture with images and stories of victimization, trauma, violence and death...allows the consumer a sense of control over the source of fear – through information and through narrative resolution” (Young 2). The sense of control that Young is referring to can be applied to films such as *Bol* and *KKL* using the eventual narrative resolution that takes place whether it is in the form of Mary taking her father to court or Zainub being able to tell her story to the media before she is executed.

In *Bol* and *KKL*, the acts of crime that take place center on the gender and power relations that exist within the family. Faith, in her essay on female crime and prison movies, draws from films produced in Hollywood to build on the argument that the voices of “real women” are barely ever voiced and in cases which they are seen as being outside the law, “the characters are metamorphosed into masculinized monsters” (1). Bouclin also builds on a similar argument in her paper on “women-in-prison” (WIPs) movies. She elaborates on the ways in which WIPs, at times, offer approaches of imagining “violence of state and legal practices” and “the inhumanity of total institutions” all the while implying gender injustices on a wider level (Bouclin 2009). These injustices are ones that expose certain females to increased vulnerability to “criminalization and incarceration” (ibid.).

In their article based on a participatory research study, Bhatla and Rajan offer another nuance to the argument that revolves around domestic violence especially within the South-Asian context. Their study aids the understanding of the setup in both movies analyzed and presents insights into the Indian home that can, to a certain extent, be used to draw a parallel with Pakistan. The authors question the ultimate belief that the “family is the safest space for women”, critiquing the normalcy associated with domestic violence as an “integral part” of any marriage. They describe how “domestic violence is not seen as an aberration, let alone a crime” (Bhatla and Rajan 1659). This widespread acceptance of domestic violence, however, does not eliminate its nature as a crime. The connection that this study has to the films under analysis is that the crimes under question are rooted in issues that stem from the domestic sphere or directly for domestic abuse.

Mexican films have also been productively analyzed in terms of their portrayals of crime and gender. Hershfield explores two films in particular: *Sin dejar huella/Leaving No Trace* (dir. Maria

Novara, 2000) and *Perfume de Violeta : Nadie te oye/Violet Perfume: Nobody Hears You* (Maryse Sistach, 2001) and identifies their central subject as the issues of “aggressive, brutal violent acts against women” (174). In the Mexican entertainment industry, examples such *Ven Conmigo/Come with Me* (dir. Irene Sabido, 1975), their “first pro-social telenovela” (Brown and Meeks 32), became the reason for an increase in yearly enrollment of “600,000 illiterates into adult-education” classes the same year it was shown on television (Coleman and Meyer 77). This is just one example of the many ways that films and television are used as carriers of important social messages that target the audience that is viewing them and affect them, overtly and subconsciously, to alter their lives accordingly.

The various crimes committed by women can be understood as responses to factors such as “poverty, racism and sexual discrimination” that force the women to react in a manner that paves their way to prison (Chesney-Lind 93). Whether or not a person being charged for murder as a response to violence committed against her is an inadequacy of the legal system is a discussion beyond the scope of this paper, but it should be noted that a majority of these crimes are committed as self-defense and as responses to continued domestic violence. Although it can be problematic to frame women merely as reactionary victims rather than having the agency to commit evil acts simply out of malice, this paper focuses on the majority of the victims that are punished for a response to a situation and does not generalize this assumption to all women that are imprisoned or punished. While the “role of anger in women’s responses to domestic violence remains relatively unaddressed”, movies such as *Bol* and *KKL* instigate debate around the idea of crime as a response to any form of violence committed against women (Hanmer and Itzin 133). These crimes or acts of violence do not exist in isolation and are, concomitant with broader “sociopolitical forces” in the context of which the “pervasive and enduring institutionalized form of patriarchy” is a major force (Hershfield 174). On a similar note, *Bol* and *Khuda Kay Liye* have both been successful in garnering international as well national praise and continue to be acclaimed for their distinctive viewpoints on social issues and for being able to resonate with the circumstances that women face on an everyday basis.

When we think of crime in these films, the act that comes up the most is that of rape. Pakistan is a patriarchal society in which all too often “women are treated as chattels, 'given' or 'acquired' through arranged marriages” (Alavi 125). The function of rape in films is widely associated with “audience voyeurism” (Dönmez-Colin 75) and titillation or as “gratuitous entertainment” (Ahmad 388). In her book *The Scene of Violence: Cinema, Crime, Affect*, Young presents the idea of “fascination” as the “doubled relation, oscillating between censure and desire” which explains the reason that crime and violence are often employed as tools to captivate the audience’s attention as the anticipation and excitement is bundled with the complexity of and distaste for crime (3). Pang also refers to the idea of violence as “seductive” to imply the extent of the influence that it has on its viewers (161). Ahmad notes in her analysis of rape in Pakistani cinema that Saifee’s rape in *Bol* is the only instance she can find where a woman was not the victim (388). Another theme that is prevalent in Pakistani cinema is that the raped or abused women eventually die during the film, as a representation of the end that the immoral woman must meet and the consequences she must face. Drawing further from Sadaf Ahmad’s research on the portrayal of rape culture in Pakistani cinema, *Khuda Kay Liye* can also be seen as an exception as the woman does not succumb to death and is shown as a victim of marital rape that has no legal recognition in Pakistan (397). Sadaf Ahmad also identifies Shoaib Mansoor as an individual within the film industry of the country

who is employing his films to “challenge the dominant understanding of particular social issues”, a quality that is not regularly found in commercial filmmakers (397).

Methodology

For the purpose of understanding the relationship between gender and crime in these films, this research includes an in-depth film analysis of *Bol* and *KKL*. The films are analysed in terms of both their visual and narrative content in order to observe and understand the ways in which different behaviours and demeanours contribute to characterization and the crimes committed. This paper closely examines the narrative, aesthetics, and language used in the film that underscores relationships between crime and gender. Analysis of the narrative includes the story, plot, and dialogues employed in *Bol* and *Khuda Kay Liye*. Zainub’s narration from the hanging deck while she addresses the television channels and cameramen is crucial to the understanding of the crimes that have occurred throughout the story. The way that the characters are involved in the crime and the cultural point of view that the film shares is also employed to better understand the overlap of gender and crime in these films. The settings and sets, for example the prison, gallows, court room or airport, are central to the films and the message they are conveying. They will be analysed at points when it is pertinent to the crime or character that committed the crime that is under discussion. Sounds including certain dialogue and songs are analysed at points where they supplement the narrative and the idea of crime.

Data and Findings

The opening credits of *Bol* (2011) show melting candles³³ which provide an ominous setting for the moving narrative that is to follow. This is achieved through the absence of bright light, the element of fire that is present and the fact that the candles are melting to the ground. The scene that follows is in the prison and the dialogue that is exchanged between Zainub and Mustafa conveys the issue that can be understood as the underlying message throughout the film:

“Hamary ma’ashry main bohat sari buraiyan sirf is liye khatam nahin ho rahain kiun keh hum boltey nahin. Khamosh ho jaatey hain. kabhi apni izzat kay liye aur kabhi kisi aur ki izzat kay liye” (So many issues within our society are not resolved because we don’t speak up; we remain quiet at times for our own honor and sometimes for the honor of another person). Within the first few minutes of the film, we are aware that a crime has apparently been committed and the punishment for the crime which is in this case, *saza-e maut* or death penalty. The appeal for forgiveness has been rejected but the final request of the woman being punished has been approved. While these opening scenes set the precedent for the tone of the movie that follows, the film is permeated with several crimes that come up throughout the development of the plot. Not all, like the final murder of Hakim Sahab are considered crimes punishable by the state or even acknowledged as criminal acts.

³³ Talking about Indonesian Cinema, Hellwig refers to candles as a metaphor for life and extinguishing/ melting candles are understood as symbols for rape/death (See Hellwig, Tineke. "Nostalgia in Yogyakarta: The Film Biola Tak Berdawai (Stringless Violin)." *Arts, Popular Culture And Social Change In The New Indonesia* (2007): 101.)

Murder is an act that is brought up frequently throughout the film by different characters. As soon as Hakim Sahib, the father of seven daughters is blessed with his intersex progeny – Saifee, he suggests that the child be killed and upon his wife’s surprise and disgust at his reaction questions her rhetorically “*tumhay pata hai keh issay zinda rakhnay ka matlab kya hai?*” (are you aware of the consequences of letting this child live?). Revealing the dichotomies and contrasting identities that make up Pakistan as well as the contradictions that can exist within the same family, *Bol* leads up to the murder of Saifee. Although the murder occurs almost two decades after the father had suggested it at the time of his birth, the events that marked Saifee’s life during that life were also full of pain and danger.

The event that is of utmost importance for the focus of this paper is the murder of Hakim Sahab, which occurs at the absolute end of the film. Zainub has been the most vocal daughter throughout the film and has never stayed silent about any of the injustices happening in their home as well as on the outside. The fact that Hakim Sahab’s murder occurs in order to stop him from asphyxiating his newborn daughter serves as a greater commentary on the importance of the life of the woman within the society, from the moment she is born up until she breathes her last breath. The crime that Zainub is imprisoned for is a reactionary response to the injustice and violence that she has had to face every day in her household that runs on the orders, wrath and minimal earnings of the patriarch. At this point in the film, crime and morality are again portrayed as opposites. Interpreted as a comment on the importance of the state, it can be understood to overpower morality and judgment according to the individual’s values.

The events that take place within the household presented in *Bol* do not remain limited to the personal sphere of the characters but transcend to the realm of the social. Shoaib Mansoor successfully creates a narrative and employs language that forces the audience to see beyond the walls that keep the women inside and understand these controversial topics as an interpretation of the society. Crime, in this sense, can be understood as an outburst of sentiments and frustrations building up within the characters as a result of restrictions, be they restrictions of freedom or restrictions of speech. This can also be analyzed as a note on the idea and practice of morality being superior to the orders of the state. This idea of morality³⁴ being superior, however, cannot be applied to any film or even to all Pakistani films and can be understood as the message that the filmmaker, in these films, is conveying. Understanding that morality is superior and above the law is a representation of the people that hold the most power³⁵ in society, seen through characters such as Maulana Tahiri from *KKL* and Hakim Sahab in *Bol*. The consequences of such reactionary responses that can alternatively be viewed as ideas of defense, as portrayed in this film lead to further suffering for the woman. The importance that is placed on *izzat* (honor) throughout the film is a call to come face to face, even if it is on the screen, with the realities of the society that are denied or ignored. The real issues of literacy, tolerance and basic humanity are ones that come across as the aspects of life that the society portrayed in *Bol* is ready to compromise on in order to be able to keep intact the façade of morality and high ground.

The perspective that Shoaib Mansoor takes for *Khuda Kay Liye* is a contrast to the political as a part of the personal or domestic sphere and reflects initially on a much broader, international level. As the narrative builds around the 9/11 terror attacks, it reflects the impact that the political

³⁴ Morality in the Pakistani context is closely linked to religion as most people in *KKL* and *Bol* seem to view the more religious people as morally superior as well.

³⁵ Can be understood in terms of influence on people or following

environment had on the lives of Mansoor and his family. The focus of this paper, however, is the character of Mary (Maryam). Mary's forceful marriage to Sarmad and her attempt to escape from her situation can both be viewed as crimes for the purpose of this paper. Maryam's attempt to escape her circumstances are more of a reactionary response than the murder committed by Zainub in *Bol* which conveys a degree of sententious rhetoric. Women in both the films are being ruled by force and are coerced into conforming to societal rules against their will but Shoaib Mansoor uses the element of crime to further their agendas without taking away the aspect of their individuality. Without being labelled or portrayed explicitly as heroines or rebels in conventional terms, the binaries within the characters of Mary and Zainub carry their messages of reactionary response and underlying rebellion to the audience.

Following the increased portrayal of the "westernized woman"³⁶ (Ahmad 117) and films that were marked by bosom-swaying dance sequences that were produced solely for entertainment purposes, *Khuda Kay Liye* came as a "surprise hit" film and was received as a breath of fresh air in the Pakistani film industry as it departed from the "ways of old Pakistani films in style, plot and marketing; (Shoaib Mansoor) also almost completely bypassed remnants of the country's film establishment that were still seen as being authorities on the film business in the country" (Paracha 2013). In order to understand the context of the events that occur throughout *KKL*, it must be kept in mind that the first scene of the movie is set in Chicago in the Autumn of 2002. This date becomes increasingly important as the events of the film unfold. 2002 was a crucial year, not just for Muslims all over the world but for anyone living in America as the 9/11 attacks had severed relationships amongst people living in America as well as negatively affecting the America-Pakistan relationship. Although this film directly confronts the notion of religious extremism and the "ideological and moral confusion" that occurred as a result of these unfortunate events, the focus of this paper is the crimes that were committed within the movie and more specifically, the consequences that Mary had to deal with (ibid.). As a part of the first few scenes, we see an interaction that occurs between Hussain Khan-Mary's father and another Pakistani Muslim living in London. He not only accuses Hussain Khan of being an immoral and indecent man but also questions his intentions that seem to be an attempt to ruin religion and culture.

"Naam Rasool Allah kay nawaasay ka aur harkatein abbu jahel say bhi ghatiya. Tumharay jaison kee wajah say musalmaan aaj iss haal ko pohanchay hain. Aap tou tumnay poora zindagi goriyon kay peechay guzaar hee dee, ab beti kou bhi uss line par lagaa diya hai? Gori biwiyon say dil nau bhurra tha tumhara? Ab damaad bhi gora laa rahay hou? Kyun deen kou kharaab kar rahay hou?"

(You are named after the Prophet's grandson, but your actions are even worse than Abbu Jahal's³⁷. People like you are the reason that Muslims are in this condition today. You have spent your whole life chasing white women, is this what you have

³⁶ Understood by Sadaf Ahmad as the "maghrabzada" or Westernized woman – a Pakistani woman who embodies Western values and characters and manifested herself through characters such as the camp and cabaret dancer in the postcolonial era (See Ahmad, Sadaf. "Morality And Desire The role of the "Westernized" woman in." *The Postcolonial World* (2016): 117.)

³⁷ Abu Jahal was a member of the ruling Quraysh of Mecca and one of early Islam's staunchest enemies. He is believed to have been at the forefront of those who tortured those weaker people, especially the slaves, who had embraced Islam and is used to refer to someone who has the desire to instigate evil and bring about hatred and enmity against Islam and Muslims.

taught your daughter too now? Were white wives not enough for you that now you need an American son-in-law as well? Why are you ruining our religion?)

The interaction mentioned above and the anger of the father that follows this scene is the first insight to the gender dynamics that are at play within the Khan household. Although the father's girlfriend lives in their house, he tells her that the relationship between Mary and Dave (her boyfriend) "is not in our interest. I am her father and my decision deserves respect. I don't want her to marry someone from outside". When the father comments on the repercussions of his Muslim daughter marrying a non-Muslim boy, he mentions the fear of becoming "the laughingstock" of the entire Pakistani community in London that they associate with. Similar to some of the moments mentioned in *Bol* that question the idea of *izzat* (honor) being directly tied to the woman or daughter, Mary's father also decides to take Mary to Pakistan and trick her into getting married once they are there in order to avoid any mark on his reputation and honor.

The distinction between morality and crime in *KKL* is portrayed through the contrasting views of the woman who has been raised in the west and the religious leaders or *maulvis*. *Burayi* ('wrongdoing', 'evil') is mentioned repeatedly by Malauna Sahab (the head *maulvi* who guides Sarmad to abandon music) throughout the film. "*Jhoot, sharaab, jua tou choti burayi hai. Inka nuksaan un kou hee hota hai jou yeh kartay hain, mauseeqi woh lanati cheez hai jou hazaron laakhon logon kou barbaad karti hai*" (Lying, alcohol, gambling are small acts of wrongdoing. These acts only affect the person who is indulging in them. Music is such a cursed act that it affects thousands and millions of people and ruins them). Almost over 30 minutes into the movie, when Mansoor's uncle (Mary's father) shares the plan of getting her secretly married to him and asks for his help, Mansoor outrightly refuses to be a "party to such crime".

From this point onwards, the overlap between gender and crime begins to come to the surface in *KKL*. Mary is tricked into going to the tribal area of Pakistan, Waziristan by her father to marry Sarmad, her first cousin. Not only was Sarmad being commended for forcefully marrying Mary against her will, he was being told that "*aisa mauqa kissi khush naseeb kou hee mil sakta hai*" (only a lucky man gets such an opportunity). The opportunity under discussion is stopping a "*na samajh musalmaan larki*" (unwise Muslim girl) from marrying a non-Muslim man which is assumed to be one that will grant Sarmad a direct ticket to heaven. The father, however, understands that what he is doing is a crime and earlier in the film he tells his brother "*yeh jurm bhi tha tou aapkou chahiye tha aap mayra saath detay*" (even if this was a crime, you should have supported me). At this point, the characters represent the belief that the reward of preventing Mary from marrying Dave is a lot more than letting her do what she wills and consider it their moral responsibility to play their part in stopping the immoral act. This will protect the reputation of their family and Mary's father but also be recorded as a good deed according to their approach to Islam.

The acts of resistance against the violence and crime in these films seem to be done out of more social pressure than the act itself. Language used such as "*Ab yeh larki hum kou waapis karni hee hogi. Yeh dhunki nai, majboori hai*" (We have to return this girl now. This is not a threat; it is our compulsion) and the pride associated with a crime i.e. forced marriage in "*Alhumdullilah. Aik baar nai huzaar baar karrar hai (keh mainay Maryam ko zabardasti sarmad say nikkah karwaaya)*" (Praise be to God. Not once but a thousand times I will be proud of the fact that I got Sarmad to marry Maryam forcefully) in *Khuda Kay Liye* prove the hesitance to protecting the victim and the social acceptance that the one committing the crime receives in this case.

Even during the scene in which Mary tries to escape her home in Waziristan, we see that the women within that household tell her when a good time to run is and support her so that she can regain her freedom. These are the same women (Shershah's paternal aunt and sisters) that referred to Mary as "*Besharmi*" (indecent) when she was brought for the first time in her fitted jeans and shirt and worried about how much they would be judged by the rest of the village. At no point in the *KKL* is Mary unaware of the injustices she is facing and even when she is asked what she thinks about all day she replied with a stern and confident "*Bhaagun gee tou main zaroor laikin sirf bhaagun gee nai. Jou Jou tumnay mayray saath kiya hai uska hisaab bhi hou ga, you'll have to pay for it (I will definitely run from here, but I will not only escape. I will hold you accountable for everything that you have done to me, you will have to pay for it)*". This accountability is what we see in the final court scene in *KKL* and see that Mary does not give in despite the failure of her attempt to escape.

As punishment for trying to escape, Sarmad is guided by the words of his religious teacher Maulana Tahiri and his words "*Subsay pehlay apnay dimagh say yeh baat nikalou keh woh tumsay barri hai. Kuch bhi you Jaye aurat murd ka barabari nai kar sakti (Firstly you need to get rid of the idea that she is older than you. No matter what happens, a woman cannot be at the level of a man)*" and as a response to Mary's "I hate you", Sarmad replies "*aaj tumhaari nafrat ka bhi elaaj hou Jaye ga. Main tumharay saath zabardasti nai karna chahta tha, tumnay mujhay majboori kardiya hai (Today your hatred will also be treated. I did not want to force myself upon you, but you have forced me to come this point)*". The way that this hatred is dealt with is implied by the black out of the screen preceding the shot that shows Mary praying in a shrine for her baby to be a boy. As she repeats "no more girls please, no more girls", the crime of marital rape that has occurred is made evident by the filmmaker without any explicit scene and the injustices that the women in the society are facing is highlighted simultaneously.

The link between religion and state functioning is also explored in these films and not assumed to be in line with one another. For instance, in the final scene of *Khuda Kay Liye*, Maulana Tahiri tells the judge "*Hum yahan aap kay ihtaram main aa gaye hain. Warna naa tou aap kee Adalat sharayee hai aur aur naa hee yahan hum say zyaada kissi kou Islam ka ilm hai*" (I have only come here out of respect for you. Otherwise neither is your court in line with the Shariah/Islamic laws, nor does anyone here know more about Islam that I do) and "*Bedeem muashra hai. Bedeen hakoomat hai. Sharayi hakoomat aanay dee jiye Phir dekhiya ga, kurray parayn gay kurray*" (It's an un-Islamic society. The state is un-Islamic. Wait till Islamic/Shariah rule comes and then you will see, people will get lashes for these acts), highlighting the opposition to the ruling authorities by the religious leaders as well. As discussed earlier, a more explicit connection between crime and state is based on the fact that crime is not just a moral issue but primarily a legal one. This means that committing a crime may not even be a morally problematic or problematic act at all but merely an act of defiance against the state in most cases.

Conclusion

The ideology that associates honour with the women of the household and restriction of their freedom of movement or of choices contributes in the legitimisation of patriarchal roles within the domestic sphere. Where crime may be employed to assert power or superiority over another party, the women that were a part of these movies used crime to effectively establish their ground. The

crimes associated with the women in *Bol* and *Khuda Kay Liye* are a response to the violence and crimes committed against their bodies and their agency. In this sense, these crimes can be understood as being acts against the state but not sins against the moral code espoused by the filmmaker. The way that these crimes affect the lives of the women on a personal as well as social level are reflective of the consequences that women face as a result of their action. A majority of the messages that were being communicated in these films through the use of crime and gender were backed by a set of cultural values and norms that are prevalent within Pakistan and these women represent a minority that is present and active. In Pakistan, acts such as domestic violence are “considered a private matter...not an appropriate focus for assessment, intervention or policy changes” (Ali et al. 198). Some cultural values that direct the way women within the Pakistani society behave may even support violence. Resistance to the patriarchal system in place may be categorized as disobedience and understood not just as immorality but as a threat to family and social order as well. This minority, despite everything, exists in the form of women that refuse to lose hope, continue to fight against the circumstances that surround them and assert their voice whether it requires hanging from the gallows or being able to educate a whole village of women to get their message across.

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Filmography

Khuda Kay Liye/In the name of God (dir. Shoaib Mansoor, 2007, Pakistan)

Bol/Speak (dir. Shoaib Mansoor, 2011, Pakistan)

Verna/Else (dir. Shoaib Mansoor, 2017, Pakistan)

Ven Conmigo/Come with Me (dir. Irene Sabido, 1975, Mexico)

Sin dejar huella/Leaving No Trace (dir. Maria Novara, 2000, Mexico)

Perfume de Violeta: Nadie te oye/Violet Perfume: Nobody Hears You (dir. Maryse Sistach, 2001, Mexico)