

“*Muu Dekhanay Kay Laik Nahi Chhora*”: Filmic Portrayals of Honor-related Violence in the Pakistani Diaspora

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Abstract

The three films *Khuda Kay Liye/In the Name of God* (dir. Shoaib Mansoor, 2007), *Noces/A Wedding* (dir. Stephan Streker, 2016), and *Hva Vil Folk Si/What Will People Say* (dir. Iram Haq, 2017) vary in terms of language, cultural context, and intended audience. They are chosen for this research because they have a story arc in common: that of a girl in the Pakistani diaspora accused of tainting her family’s honor by developing a relationship with a white boy. The films follow these women as they are subjected to violence by their families. In my paper, I examine the portrayals of violence inflicted upon women at a perceived breach of honor within a diasporic context in these three films. This paper aims to add more to the discourse surrounding these concepts, especially since honor-related violence (HRV) is a prominent issue facing diasporic communities. To that end, I analyze the narratives of all three films and point to common elements between them. My analysis is focused upon the themes of honor, marriage, religion, and tradition, and also explores the significance of settings, costume, and language. The analyses are contextualized by a discussion of actual incidents of honor-based violence within diasporic communities. I attempt to explain these issues in light of Bourdieu’s theories of habitus, masculine domination, and language, along with Grzyb’s work positing honor-related violence as a result of patriarchal backlash due to a change in values from home to host country. I also build upon extant literature based on honor and violence, such as the work of Nafisa Shah. I conclude that although the films vary when it comes to numerous factors, there are some aspects in terms of themes, settings, costume, and language that are common to all three; these elements serve to portray HRV in similar ways throughout the films.

Keywords: Honor, *Izzat*, Honor-related Violence, Pakistani Diaspora, Patriarchal Backlash, Gender Order, Public and Private Language

Introduction

On 22 October 2007, 20-year-old Sadia Sheikh was shot and killed by her own brother. She was a Belgian woman with a Pakistani background. She was killed because she had run away from home and moved in with a Belgian man after being forced to marry a Pakistani cousin she had

never previously met (“Pakistani Family Stand Trial for ‘Honour Killing’”). Sadia’s case is not the only one, as countless other such murders take place around the world annually. These murders are all instances of honor-related violence. They have also inspired numerous films such as *Khuda Kay Liye/In the Name of God* (dir. Shoaib Mansoor, 2007), *Noces/A Wedding* (dir. Stephan Streker, 2016), and *Hva Vil Folk Si/What Will People Say* (dir. Iram Haq, 2017).

All three films follow a similar storyline in which the female protagonist is punished because she is considered to have tainted her family’s honor, either through involvement with an unsuitable boy or by disobeying her family when it comes to marriage. *Khuda Kay Liye* follows the story of Maryam (Mary), who lives in Britain and is caught dating a white boy. Enraged by this, her father takes her to visit family in Pakistan. Once there, he coercively takes her across the border to Afghanistan and forcefully marries her off to her radicalized cousin, Sarmad. The rest of the film portrays her attempts to escape and her eventual freedom, followed by court proceedings against her father and cousin. Although there is a parallel narrative involving Sarmad’s brother in the film, I only focus on Mary for this paper. The main character of *Noces* is Zahira, a Pakistani teenager living in France who finds herself pregnant. After secretly disobeying her family’s orders to get an abortion, she is made to choose between three Pakistani men to marry. The film follows her conflicts with her family regarding this marriage. When she is ultimately forced to marry one of the men via Skype, she refuses to go to Pakistan to be with him and instead plans to move in with a white boy, culminating in her brother shooting and killing her. Finally, *Hva Vil Folk Si* follows Pakistani-Norwegian teenager Nisha, who gets caught with a white boy in her bedroom. She is then coerced into going to Pakistan, where she is treated very harshly and becomes romantically involved with a cousin. Getting caught a second time makes her situation worse, and she finally has to run away in order to avoid an arranged marriage against her will.

In this paper, I ask the following questions: How is honor-related violence (HRV) against women portrayed within the diasporic context of the films *Khuda Kay Liye*, *Noces*, and *Hva Vil Folk Si*? What role do themes, settings, costumes, and language play in these films? While answering these questions, I engage with Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic violence to explain HRV as it takes place in these films. Although a fair amount of academic work has been done on honor crimes in the diaspora, as well as the portrayal of honor in cinema, my engagement with Bourdieu’s theory of masculine domination provides a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, Magdalena Grzyb has built upon this theory to explain honor-related violence in Europe. In this paper, I refer to both their works and apply them to the selected screen texts. To answer my research questions, I analyze the films’ thematic and stylistic elements, showing how they contribute to the portrayal of HRV.

Honor-Related Violence

Most cases of HRV involve young women, with the perpetrators frequently being men from their own family. The point of the violence is to punish or coerce the victim. HRV is often rooted in wider cultural notions of honor and morality, which are patriarchal in nature and serve to constrict women’s lives in the name of respectability. At times, the family’s reputation is more important than the actual transgression itself, as made clear by the fact that many extramarital relationships are secretly transformed into marriages, whereas in other cases merely rumors are sufficient to warrant HRV (Oberwittler and Kassel 652-654). In her work, Nafisa Shah analyzes

the practice of *karo kari* (literal translation: black man and woman) in northern Sindh. *Karo kari* is a custom that punishes extramarital relations with death (Shah 1). *Karo kari* often takes place within the immediate family, where justice is transferred from the state to the victim's *wali* ('heir') or closest living male relative, who has the right to pardon the killer. Since this is more easily done when the killer is related to the *wali*, a system of vigilantism surrounds the woman wherein the killer and *wali* frequently have the same (often violent) agenda (Shah 23).

When it comes to the diaspora, the actual case of Fadime Sahindal, a Kurdish-Turkish woman living in Sweden closely resembles Zahira's story in *Noces*; they both disobeyed their families by refusing to marry the men chosen for them and were both murdered by their families in the name of honor. British teenager Shafiliea Ahmad's real-life story follows a similar trajectory (Grzyb 4-5). After rumors of honor killings and forced and underage marriages surfaced in the early 2000s, these issues became a primary focus for much of the discourse surrounding the South Asian diaspora in Britain. Most of these marriages involve the South Asian Muslim community. Moreover, some victims are coercively taken to Pakistan under the guise of a holiday and are then forcibly married off to a relative (Werbner 168-169). Below I describe and explain such cases by drawing parallels with the chosen screen texts as well as by engaging with Bourdieu's theories.

Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu and Grzyb's works serve as the theoretical framework for my analysis, and I extend their work to the diaspora as depicted in the films. Bourdieu posits that the domination of women is imposed by systems of *doxa* and *habitus* (*Masculine Domination* 1). He defines *habitus* as "a way of being, a habitual state, and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination" (*Outline of a Theory of Practice* 214). *Doxa* here are any beliefs or values held to be objective, systems of classification that are taken for granted and are unquestionable (Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* 164). These form a basis for symbolic violence, imposing a world-order onto women based on social divisions which are taken for granted and reproduced (*Language and Symbolic Power* 51). Moreover, this domination is upheld by social structures, including language, education, and the judiciary. Finally, Bourdieu clarifies that physical violence is a product of symbolic violence; it is an intrinsic part and extension of patriarchal masculinity (*Language and Symbolic Power* 34).

Grzyb uses these concepts as the foundation for her explanation of HRV in Europe as backlash upon the failure of symbolic violence caused by living in the host country. In this context masculine domination over women weakens as a result of immigration, which causes stricter surveillance and control of women in the community. Where previously HRV was thought to be justified in cases of extramarital pregnancy, and non-virginity of a new bride, notions such as those of the victim supposedly becoming too westernized can trigger HRV in the diasporic context. Here, material change does not correspond to ideological change, where disposition and *habitus* are no longer the same in the new context; in the home countries, the *habitus* was based on objective structures that become void in the host country. Thus, there is a dissonance between *habitus* and disposition in the home country and in the host country. Moreover, because young girls within the diaspora find themselves in a more liberal *habitus*, they realize that they have more opportunities available to them than they did back home. As a result, they now have more opportunities to disobey and thus purportedly dishonor their families, resulting in an effort

towards stricter control over them. Therefore, the increase in women's choices is accompanied by masculine insecurity about the influence of the culture of the host country on women (Grzyb 8–12).

Filmic Portrayals of Diaspora and Honor

The disconnect between home and host habitus is a common theme in diasporic films. Using the example of the *Bhaji On the Beach* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 1993), Peart explains that the equation of women's bodies with the motherland and family the nation renders the body itself a site of diasporic struggle; moreover, specific cultural laws are projected onto the woman as well (54). These laws include that of *izzat* ('honor'), where in this case the main character is shown to have tainted the family's honor by getting pregnant. Similarly, in another film by the same director titled *Bend It Like Beckham* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002), the main character finds the cultural values thrust upon her to be oppressive, causing rifts with her mother while she is dating a white boy. Echoing Grzyb, Mohanty argues that girls in the diaspora must deal with the fact that in order to protect them from the host culture and maintain cultural values, the men of the family end up curbing the freedom of the women (1917).

Moreover, honor has also historically been portrayed in South Asian films in specific ways. Slaps in popular Urdu and Punjabi films, explains Ahmad, reflect the normative values of mainstream society, most of which convey gendered ideas about the connection between *izzat* and women's bodies (264). Male characters express disapproval of the willful behavior of women by slapping them. An example from the film *Choorian/Bangles* (dir. Syed Noor, 1998) is when Bhakhtu slaps Nargis, commenting that the slap is the best response to Nargis' shamelessness (Ahmad 266). Furthermore, these films refer to women as the *izzat* of their kin, thereby reducing them to commodities of honor rather than individuals. The *izzat* of the men in the family is also portrayed to be more important than the *izzat* of the woman (Ahmad 267).

Questions of honor underscore Donmez-Colin's overview of cinema as well in her discussion on the film *Yol/The Way* (dir. Serif Gören 1982), in which the main character, Zine, is accused of tainting the family's honor while her husband is in jail. She is punished physically as well as by ostracism from the community. Here, Donmez-Colin connects Zine's punishment to Islam by taking recourse to a verse of the Quran in order to explain it (48). As I will discuss later, religion is used to supposedly legitimize HRV in the chosen screen texts as well. Honor plays out differently in *Khamosh Pani/Silent Waters* (dir. Sabiha Sumar 2004), which shows the atrocities of the communal violence of the 1947 Partition during which, in order to avoid rape at the enemy's hands and to protect the family's honor, many families killed their daughters or forced them to commit suicide. The film's main character, a Sikh woman called Veero, refuses suicide and runs away, changing her name to Ayesha when she later converts to Islam and marries her Muslim abductor. Donmez-Colin describes her "not as a victim, but as an individual who is able to come to terms with her life" (72).

Honor, Marriage, Religion, and Tradition as Main Themes

Honor is an ever-present and primary theme for the screen texts selected for this paper. Breaches of honor are considered to bring shame to the whole family, and so the family's honor must be restored. Honor and shame are therefore quite closely linked. Mary's father in *Khuda Kay Liye* expresses shame at Mary's clothing, rebellious behavior, and boyfriend. He forcefully marries her off to her cousin to protect his honor, so that she may be prevented from marrying and having the children of a white man, which would cause him further shame. Similarly, when Zahira refuses to get married in *Noces*, her parents lament that she has left them unable to show themselves in society; this is also the dialogue included in the title of the paper, which translates to "she has left us unable to show our faces anywhere." This is a common expression of shame, variations of which are heard throughout all three films. *Noces* ends with Zahira's brother shooting her for honor after she runs away with a white boy. Similar dialogues about showing face and bringing shame to the whole family are heard in *Hva Vil Folk Si* as well. In one particular scene, Nisha's father tries to force her to jump off a cliff so that she may die in order to protect his honor. Therefore, honor is dealt with in parallel with other themes of the films.

Marriage also plays a central thematic role in the films. Traditionally, some South Asian parents believe that their honor lies on the shoulders of their daughters' reputations; they are swift to curb premarital sexual activity by getting their daughters married at an early age (Ballard 22). It then follows that they would resort to an arranged marriage when they find that their daughters are sexually active; marriage would limit extramarital sex and consequently restore their honor. This is precisely what happens in *Khuda Kay Liye*; marriage is thought to separate Mary from her white boyfriend and ensure that her father's bloodline is Muslim. Similarly, in *Noces*, after Zahira becomes pregnant, her parents start searching for prospective husbands for her. Finally, in *Hva Vil Folk Si*, when Nisha is caught with her cousin, her father proposes her marriage to him. When his parents reject this proposal, her marriage is arranged with a man of her family's choosing. Her to-be fiancé's aunt is quick to mention that the wedding will stop all gossip, thus regaining the family's honor.

The theme of religion, too, plays a constant role throughout the films. It is the main force that drives Mary's father to forcefully get his daughter married to her cousin in *Khuda Kay Liye*; he is afraid that if she were to marry a white man, her children would grow up non-Muslim. Similarly, Sarmad is lauded by the maulana for raping Mary and forcefully consummating their marriage; according to him, Sarmad's act is considered one of religious honor. Finally, Mary's lawyer uses the argument that peaceful religion is misused to inflict damage, as is the case with Mary's abuse, resulting in Sarmad withdrawing the case. In *Noces*, we see both Zahira and her brother praying during times of hardship. Moreover, Zahira is averse to aborting her child after forty days because she believes it has developed a soul. This is in line with Islamic beliefs that the soul enters into the embryo after forty days (Zindani and Ahmed 114-126). In *Hva Vil Folk Si*, Nisha is often ordered to pray while living at her aunt's house in Pakistan. Initially, she resists. However, as we notice her character becoming more and more subdued with time, we also see her praying. The theme of tradition is as significant and at times linked to that of religion. Mary's father in *Khuda Kay Liye* mentions tradition, saying that Mary is a Pakistani Muslim girl so she cannot marry a white, non-Muslim boy; traditionally, Pakistani Muslim girls marry Pakistani Muslim boys. Several references to tradition are made in *Noces* too when discussions of whom Zahira should marry take place (the answer is a Pakistani Muslim boy). When Nisha talks back to her aunt, an appeal to *tehzib* ('culture'), which stems from tradition, is made; *tehzib* dictates that women should be submissive and defer to their elders.

Furthermore, the importance of the theme of community is apparent in these films. At the beginning of *Khuda Kay Liye*, a Pakistani man scolds Mary's father for her defiant behavior, saying it has adverse effects for the rest of the Pakistani community; Mary would influence the rest of the Pakistani youth to be rebellious as well. In *Noces*, we hear Zahira telling her friend that her father can no longer be accepted by his community in Pakistan and thus can never return; if a man promises his daughter's hand to someone in marriage and she does not marry him (or in Zahira's case, return to Pakistan to be with), the whole community shuns him. When Nisha is caught with a boy in *Hva Vil Folk Si*, her father sits with other men from the community to discuss the effects of Nisha's behavior on the rest of the diasporic Pakistani youth. This aligns with Bourdieu's theory which understands controlling a kinswoman as a sign of manliness (*Masculine Domination* 48). Any lack of control is a threat to a man's masculinity and consequently, his social position in the community (Grzyb 8).

Perpetrators and Accomplices

Fathers and brothers were mainly complicit in the high-profile European honor killings described by Grzyb (4–5) as their masculinity is called into question at breaches of honor (*Masculine Domination* 48). Mary's father is the one who coerces her into marriage because he considers his honor to have been stained; all this occurs while he himself is living with a white girlfriend. This illustrates that his honor is placed upon his daughter's shoulders and not his own. While Zahira's brother Amir is initially her confidant, as the film progresses, we see him getting more agitated by her behavior. In one scene, he scolds his sister for her resistance to traditional norms. At the same time, he goes out at night himself and spends time at a club. His agitation finally culminates in him shooting Zahira. When Zahira runs away with a white boyfriend, the breach of honor angers her father so much that he has a heart attack. In *Hva Vi Folk Si*, Nisha's father is the one who sends her to Pakistan, spits on her when she is caught with her cousin, and almost forces her to kill herself. Men are perpetrators of physical coercion and violence as well. Nisha's brother is an accomplice to their father's plans; he drives her to the airport when she is forcefully being taken to Pakistan and manhandles her when she tries to run away.

However, female characters are also complicit in HRV. Bourdieu believes that when it comes to symbolic violence, the dominated group contributes to power relations by ascribing to the cognitive categories applied onto them (*Masculine Domination* 35). Sarmad's grandmother in *Khuda Kay Liye* fully supports and encourages his radicalization as well as Mary's forced marriage to him. In *Noces*, it is Zahira's mother who arranges the forced marriage and coercively plans Zahira's trip to Pakistan. Zahira's sister also plays a role by convincing her to accept what is happening to her and get married. Similarly, Nisha's mother calls her on the phone and tricks her into coming home under the guise of reconciliation after she runs away. She also arranges her forced marriage and often reprimands Nisha for resisting norms. Nisha's aunt is also active in her subjugation and control back in Pakistan.

Settings that Betray the Gender Order and Ever-Changing Costumes

Settings further enhance the power relations played out in the films. In *Khuda Kay Liye*, Mary's forced marriage takes place in Afghanistan; there are several dialogues about the marriage being

impossible in Lahore because Sarmad's family would never allow it. Afghanistan is too isolated for Mary to run away from, and political conditions of the region post 9/11 make it impossible to escape. Thus, this change in setting enhances the sense of powerlessness that is thrust upon her. While in Afghanistan, we mostly see Mary within four walls along with other women; she cannot leave. This confinement of women to an enclosure highlights the demonstration of what Connell calls the gender order, which is an established pattern in gendered relations that dictates the way individuals behave specific to their gender (Connell 72). Mary's relegation to these four walls then symbolizes the gender order of that society, where women remain within the home. Just as she cannot escape the compound, she cannot escape the gender order of the society she is forced to be part of. The only time we see her in open air while in Afghanistan is when she is attempting to run away, symbolic of her attempt to escape this gender order. Once she is apprehended and caught, she is once more confined to an enclosed indoor space.

We mostly see the brother and father in *Noces* conversing and making decisions in the father's grocery store, which is the public sphere. The public sphere is a realm of politics and the marketplace of ideas. Zahira's sister and mother are usually at home, the private sphere. The private sphere here refers to the realm of family and home life; it is an enclosed space where only those with permission may enter. The position of men and women in terms of public and private spheres contributes to the gender order; women remain in the private sphere while men belong to the public sphere. While these arrangements may be evaded at times, this is only done rarely. The only time this happens in *Noces* is during exceptions on celebratory occasions, for instance when Zahira's mother goes to the grocery store to tell her husband and son that Zahira has agreed to marriage. On the other hand, Zahira actively rejects this gender order when she sneaks out to go to a club or runs away into the fields with her boyfriend.

Similarly, in *Hva Vi Folk Si*, Nisha's father is out of the house, while her mother remains at home. Like Zahira, Nisha rejects the gender order when she sneaks out at night. Furthermore, before she is caught, her family is much more relaxed about her presence in the public sphere; she goes to see her father at his workplace and spends some time with her friends outdoors. However, this presence comes with conditions; after a certain time of day, her mother calls her and asks her to return home. No such restrictions are placed on her Norwegian friends. Like Mary, Nisha too is sent to Pakistan once she is caught, and her freedom is more constrained there. The transition from wide roads in Norway to narrow streets in Pakistan further enhances the oppressiveness of the situation. Once in Pakistan, we only see her in her aunt's house or the market, buying food. When she tries to escape the confines of the home (and by extension, its gender order) with her cousin, she is assaulted by the police. This attack may be seen as a punishment for attempting to evade the gender regime.

The public sphere and private sphere have very specific activities associated with them; since one's presence in these spheres is extremely gendered, so too are the activities that take place within them. The public sphere is one where leisure, work, and even fighting take place. We see Afghan men in *Khuda Kay Liye* engaged in battle in an open space. Furthermore, Zahira and her brother are shown enjoying leisure time and dancing at a club. Zahira's presence in this space is not allowed, as is emphasized by the fact that she runs away when she sees her brother. Finally, Nisha's father is seen in his store, a part of the public sphere associated with business. The private sphere, on the other hand, is primarily shown as a place of domestic work. The women living with Mary in her compound are usually engaged in household chores such as washing utensils. Zahira's mother is very often shown cooking in the kitchen, as is Nisha's mother, who

asks for Nisha's help while cleaning up the dinner table; this same request is not made of Nisha's brother. Similarly, Nisha is made to carry out chores while at her aunt's house, the private sphere, in Pakistan. Her male cousin is not included in these activities. The gendered nature of the two spheres reinforces gender norms about the division of labor. All three main characters try to subvert this division as well. Mary attempts to convert the private sphere into a place of education when she tries to teach the Afghan women she is living with how to write English. Zahira simply sneaks out of the public sphere to go to a club. Finally, Nisha rejects the division of labor within the two spheres when she refuses to help her mother with chores, saying she is too tired.

The costumes worn by the characters change with settings to represent a change in habitus; Mary wears jeans in London but traditional clothes when she is in Afghanistan. This change indicates a complete alteration of her circumstances and the agency she has over them. After she is rescued and is in Lahore, we once again see her in jeans and a shirt, thus indicating a restoration of her lost agency. Once Sarmad becomes religious, he too switches over from jeans to *shalwar kameez* (traditional Pakistani clothing) along with sporting a turban and a beard. This costume change is symbolic of a change in the values of the character from liberal to conservative, or even radical. Similarly, Zahira wears jeans at school and *shalwar kameez* at home, thus symbolizing the conflicting values (which can be read as conflicting habitus) of the settings. She has more agency over her dress, body, and self at school while she is made to comply with traditional values that she does not necessarily agree with at home; she is living two different lives. Zahira wears a scarf over her head when she leaves home, yet it is off when she is at school. The further away from home she is, the more it is likely that the scarf is not covering her head. In this way, the scarf may signify her family's control over her, which loosens when she is far away from them. When her brother shoots her at the end of the film, we see the scarf at her neck. Nisha's clothing may be seen as indicative of values and habitus as well. One of her mother's friends, a member of her own diasporic community, comments on her shirt, implying that it is too scandalous to be going out in because it shows off her belly. Her mother promptly covers her with a sweater and forcefully buttons it up, admonishing Nisha for resisting this covering in front of everyone. Nisha dresses in jeans and crop tops in Norway but *shalwar kameez* in Pakistan. Like Mary, her clothing reflects her circumstances, too. However, even when she returns to Norway from Pakistan, she is still clothed in *shalwar kameez*, which may be symbolic of her family's control over her.

Urdu as a Private Language of Intimacy and Tension

All three films switch between Urdu and the host language. At the beginning of *Khuda Kay Liye*, the Pakistani man verbally attacks and insults Mary's father in his grocery store for Mary's seemingly westernized behavior in Urdu. He is furious at the effect that this may have on the rest of the Pakistani community. This admonishment is what drives Mary's father to exercise violence on her by coercively marrying her off. In *Noces*, Urdu is used instead of French during moments of seriousness and tension, such as the conversation that plays out when Zahira's brother tells their parents that Zahira has run away. The discussions surrounding honor take place in Urdu as well, emphasizing that honor is a notion that is separate from their host country and is rooted in their Pakistani culture. Urdu is also used during moments of intimacy; Zahira makes

her brother promise her that he will remain by her side in Urdu. Finally, close to the end of the film, Zahira's boyfriend tells her he loves her in Urdu.

Moreover, the notion of private language versus public can be observed in these films. Although Mary and her father speak English with other people, they converse in Urdu amongst themselves and at home. Similarly, in *Noces*, the French-speaking family otherwise communicates in Urdu while at home. In *Hva Vi Folk Si*, Nisha's family speaks Norwegian with other people (such as the social worker who initially deals with Nisha's case immediately after she is caught), but Urdu with each other and with members of the South Asian Muslim community (like at the community gathering that takes place early in the film). Urdu may then be considered the private language reserved for the family and close-knit community. In contrast, the host languages would be the public languages to be used with everyone else.

According to Bourdieu, language has symbolic value because of its organization based on hierarchal systems of difference. Speaking in a particular language marks the speaker as a member of a specific social group (*Language and Symbolic Power* 54). Moreover, members of a unified linguistic community use a single language to avoid any miscommunications (*Language and Symbolic Power* 40). Language is thus very intimately tied to one's identity, bringing one closer to the community whose language one speaks. Moreover, the dominant language a person speaks also affects the language they think in. Therefore, a person's whole consciousness is determined by their language. Conversations around honor take place in Urdu and reinforce that the speakers belong to the same community and social group. When Zahira's boyfriend speaks to her in Urdu, it is an expression of closeness and acceptance, bridging any differences that may exist between the couple.

HRV as the Result of Disconnect Between Habitus

Grzyb's theory that violence ensues when the habitus of the home country is no longer present works to explain the HRV in these three films since a large portion of their narratives takes place in a diasporic context (8-12). In the home country (Pakistan), the habitus of women is one where they wear modest clothes, remain segregated from the opposite sex, and are mostly complicit when it comes to domestic affairs. This is shown in the habitus of the minor female characters we see who comply to these norms, such as Gul Banu in *Khuda Kay Liye* and Salima in *Hva Vi Folk Si*. In the host country (that is, the host country of the parents, but the home country of the young characters as they are likely born there), there are changes in gender relations in that the main characters in the films find themselves in a liberal habitus with values different from those of their parents' home country. They are surrounded by young people their age who smoke, drink, and date. In such a situation, "honour killings may now be motivated not only by evidence of extramarital relationships, but also by females being 'too western,' refusing arranged marriage, or seeking divorce, etc." (Grzyb 10).

In *Khuda Kay Liye*, the suggestion by a man from the Pakistani community that Mary has supposedly become too westernized drives her father to coerce her into marriage. In *Hva Vil Folk Si*, the mere possibility that Nisha had sex before marriage makes her father violent. Members of the community advise him to take strict action against his daughter, prompting him to punish her in the way he does. The fact that other men from their community confront these fathers is a blow to their egos and masculinities, and, as Grzyb has explained, this makes the backlash even

more intense (Grzyb 9-10). In some cases, (like that of Mary), the transgression is ignored by their families until they are called out for it by a member of the community. When this happens, their public reputation is called into question, and thus they attempt to restore it by disciplining their daughters. Another example is Zahira's case; her family is supportive of her until she refuses marriage and runs away, involving other people (like her friend and a schoolteacher), thus making the matter public. This hypocrisy is consistent with the literature on HRV, which outlines that in some cases, the family's public reputation has more primacy as a motivating factor than the woman's actions (Oberwittler and Kasselt 653-654).

Conclusion

These films portray how the idea of honor serves to constrict the lives of the characters on screen. This is done so through changes in settings, costume, and language as well as thematic elements. Grzyb's theory, which builds upon Bourdieu's work, can be used to explain the events unfolding on screen as a result of changing habitus and patriarchal backlash leading to violence. I posit that despite being very different in terms of year of release, intended audience, and language, the films share common themes like religion, tradition, marriage, and shame. They treat these similarly in terms of nuances in settings, costumes, and language of dialogue. *Khuda Kay Liye* was released in 2007 against the backdrop of the political events related to 9/11; it was released initially at international film festivals and later for Pakistani audiences. *Noces* came out much later (in 2016) and was based on the actual, high-profile honor killing of Sadia Sheikh, which happened to be Belgium's first honor killing trial. It was a French film initially intended for film festivals and then later for French national audiences. Finally, Norwegian-language film *Hva Vi Folk Si* was released just a year later in 2017. Initially screened at the 42nd Toronto International Film Festival, it is now available on Netflix for its global audiences.

The political events that drove these films' production significantly influenced their content; *Khuda Kay Liye*'s whole storyline closely follows themes of radicalization and post 9/11 terrorism, and the events in Zahira's life were explicitly made to resemble those of the Sadia Sheikh case. Moreover, the films had been made to appeal to the tastes of the local or global audiences that they were hoping to cater to. Yet, similar patterns in terms of clothing changes in tandem with setting changes are present in all three films; they all also deal with the themes of honor, marriage, religion, and tradition in parallel. Finally, despite differences in host country languages, all films utilize Urdu as a private language of intimacy and tension. Therefore, in conclusion, despite being so different from each other, *Khuda Kay Liye*, *Noces*, and *Hva Vi Folk Si* portray HRV among the Muslim diasporic community very similarly in the ways mentioned above.

A final point of similarity is that when the three films came out, they stirred quite a lot of controversy and started many conversations in Pakistan as well as abroad. Claims were made that the instances of HRV in the films were portrayed through a western liberal lens and were showing Pakistan in a bad light. The screen texts may be guilty of the first charge in that they were quick to rely on the trope of Muslim girls as automatically more oppressed than girls in the West. In reality, nuances relating to class and individual family orientations towards tradition and religion also come into play. On the other hand, the films do resonate with real instances of gender-based violence and HRV in diaspora communities. In this way, these films are creating

awareness around a problem that does stem from Pakistani cultural values. Rather than casting Pakistan in a bad light, they are shedding light, onto this issue, so that it may be acknowledged and eventually solved.

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Filmography

Bend It Like Beckham (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002)

Bhaji On the Beach (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 1993)

Choorian/Bangles (dir. Syed Noor, 1998)

Hva Vil Folk Si/What Will People Say (dir. Iram Haq, 2017)

Khamosh Pani/Silent Waters (dir. Sabiha Sumar 2004)

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

Noces/A Wedding (dir. Stephan Streker, 2016)

Yol/The Way (dir. Serif Gören 1982)