

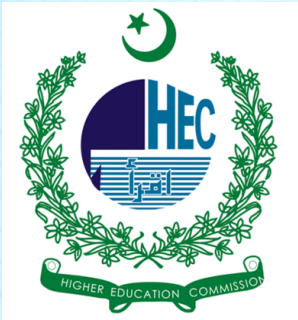
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**THE COST OF AUTONOMY: DECONSTRUCTING
PATRIARCHAL SURVEILLANCE AND HONOUR KILLINGS IN
THE CASE OF CHANDA AND JUGNU**



Nelofur Marwat

*Department of English, City University of Science and
Information Technology, Peshawar*

Abstract

*This research paper tends to investigate that despite a geographical shift and a more enlightened culture of the Global North, the culture of honour killings continued in the fictional community of Pakistani immigrants in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*(2004). Besides other social elements patriarchy has been the active element behind the killings of the couple Chanda and Jugnu in the novel. Using the method of content analysis, this study tends to investigate a deeper understanding of how patriarchy paved its way to the Pakistani immigrant community and instigated the honour killings of Chanda and Jugnu. The researcher will draw their conclusions based on a Betty Friedan's critique of patriarchal structural functionalism to throw light on how the female body and autonomy are seen as collective family status leading to the murders of the Chanda and Jugnu. This study may provide awareness against honour killings and may prove helpful in understanding and accepting the choices that people, especially girls and women make for themselves. It spreads forth the message that certainly there is no 'honour' in killing.*

Keywords: *Patriarchy, Betty Friedan, Feminism, Honour Killings, Global North*

Introduction

The post 9/11 era was a testing and turbulent time for the South Asian community amidst rising anti-immigrant racist tendencies in the United Kingdom. Muslims in general and Pakistani Muslims in particular were singled out and racially profiled and there was a rising sense of disillusionment in the community who were alienated particularly because Muslims were seen as an ally to the propagators of the terrorist attacks. Therefore, the characters in the selected work *Maps for Lost Lovers*, have formed their own community inside the foreign land of United Kingdom to live in tact according to the culture and values of the country of their origin, Pakistan.

Published in 2004, the novel took eleven years of Nadeem Aslam's life to reach its readers. Nevertheless, the toil he invested paid back well as the novel increased Aslam's credibility as a writer and helped him win several awards. In *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), the main characters, Chanda and Jugnu become victims of honourkillings at the hands of Chanda's family. Chanda in the novel, has been married and divorced twice while her third husband leaves her without divorcing her as per Islamic law. This leaves her unable to enter a new marriage because she would need to get a divorce first. Despite that she moves into Jugnu's house neglecting all the traditions and religious boundaries thoroughly watched by the men of her family and community. The consequences of Chanda's personal choice to enter a relationship are grave. As a result of her actions, the couple is mercilessly murdered by the Chanda's family because they believe that Chanda has brought shame to the family's honour by deciding to live with a man without getting a divorce first and without bothering to enter into the institution of marriage with her lover prior to moving into his house.

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Maps for Lost lovers (2004) is a novel that revolves around multiple characters and themes and unravels the gender-based violence in a Pakistani immigrant community. Aslam has meticulously woven the web of social and honour crimes affecting the lives of his characters. Each character is important and each theme of the novel is thought provoking. Each character in some way is the representation of a certain characteristic or some evil or double standard of the society.

Objectives of the Study

This research study is an attempt to bring forth, through the textual study and content analysis of Maps for Lost Lovers (2004), the burning issue of honour killings and honour crimes committed against individuals when they make certain harmless choices in life; and to highlight specifically that the Pakistani immigrants in Britain are not free from the shackles of patriarchy.

- i) To explore the definition of the concept of 'honour' as perceived by the Pakistani immigrants in Maps for Lost Lovers (2004)
- ii) ii) To find out how patriarchal societal beliefs pave the path for honour crimes in Maps for Lost Lovers (2004).

Research Questions

- i) How does Maps for Lost Lovers challenge the 'honor mystique' that treats honor killings as private family matters rather than systemic patriarchal violence?
- ii) ii) How is patriarchy a reason for the honour killings of the immigrant couple Chanda and Jugnu in Maps for Lost Lovers (2004)?

Delimitations of the Study

There are various other social vices and religious bigotry, scattered through the lives of the Pakistani immigrant characters in the novel Maps for Lost Lovers, however the researcher has only taken into account the honour killings of Chanda and Jugnu.

Literature Review

In the case of Pakistan, we do not have accurate data for the number of crimes that are committed in the name of honour. Often cases are not registered in such incidents and the events are hushed up on account of the so-called honour involved at stake. Since the data is not collected systematically, it is hard to collect accurately the scope and volume of the malaise. Nevertheless, according to an estimate by the United Nations, an estimated 20,000 women are killed every year due to honour killings globally.

Moore (2009) throws light on the precarious situations for Muslims and Asians after the terrorist attack of 9/11. She describes the state of living as vulnerable and risky, at the mercy of the will of others in the aftermath of 9/11. However, she misses out the violence caused by the will of men in patriarchy over the women of their family in Maps for Lost Lovers.

Khan (1999) explains the concept of 'honour' in her article Mobility of Women and Access to Health and Family Services in Pakistan. She explains that villagers in Pakistan imply to the concept of honour, which is the English translation of the Urdu word izzat. It conveys a lot such as the girl's chastity and virginity. It implies the good reputation of the family and the woman's non-involvement in the sexual activity that is not allowed to her unless she enters the contract of marriage or nikah with the permission and consent of men of her family.

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According to Pataki (2014), the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* is aptly reflecting the lives and plight of the British Pakistani Muslims. Hence, Aslam intelligently chooses the issue of honour killing, and weaves it in his prose to highlight the burning issue of honour crimes and honour killings among the British Pakistani immigrants.

Loghod (2002), states that honour crimes are explained as the behaviour of a certain ethnic or cultural community. The culture itself is taken to be the cause of criminal violence. Thus, the category stigmatizes not a particular act but entire culture and ethnic communities. Knudsen (2004) says in her study that honour killings are extra judicial murders which are neither legal nor legitimate but yet are a part of traditional or tribal justice.

In the UK, the crimes committed in order to protect or safeguard one's honour or that of family or community or biraderi are termed as Honour Based Violence or HBV. Such honour codes and the punishments inflicted to upon the victims are also occurring in England as the British Crown Prosecution Service defined 'Honour Based Violence' (HBV) as follows:

collection of practices, which are used to control behaviours within families and other social groups to protect perceived cultures and religious beliefs/and or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed and/or community by breaking their honour code. (Metlo, 2012, p.79)

Such honour-based violence is specifically directed against women because the honour revolves around the women of the family but can also target men involved, at times, where as those involved in the crime could be both men and female of the female victim's family (Dyer, 2015). However, Dyer states that the female victims outnumber the male victims of honour killings in the UK.

Research Methodology

The approach of the present research study is qualitative and interpretative in nature. Drawing upon the Second Wave of Feminism (also known as Liberal Feminism) which emerged in the 1960s; textual evidence is obtained from the meticulous textual reading of *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004). Friedan's most important work, *The Feminist Mystique*, which came out in 1963 at a time when the modern feminist movement was molding and forming its shape, focused on the role of women in industrial societies. The text of *Maps of Lost Lovers* is used as evidence to trace the patriarchal elements of controlling women. Freidan's Liberal Feminism is employed to trace the gender-role stereotyping and draw interpretations since this study is interpretative in nature. The researcher has made interpretations from the selected text to trace the reasons that shaped the honour killings of the couple in love.

Research technique involves the content analysis of the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Since literature is the reflection of life and record of time, therefore the researcher bases their findings on the analysis of the text of the novel. The life and circumstances that the resident immigrants in *Maps for Lost Lovers* face are analyzed to throw light on the research questions and meet the research objectives. In the light of Liberal Feminism propagated by Betty Friedan in her famous work of 1964 *The Feminist Mystique*, the present study analyses the reasons active in the patriarchal Pakistani Immigrant community in *Maps for Lost Lovers* which activated the tribal justice of honour killings in England.

Analysis and Discussion

The two main characters, protagonists of the story, Chanda and her boyfriend Jugnu are honour-

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killed as a result of their decision of living in an open relationship instead of entering the traditional institution of marriage as per Pakistani culture and religious traditions. The immigrants have found a community or Biraderi of their own people where they live together following their own religion and cultural values. Since honour or 'izzat' is part of Pakistani culture, it is therefore of great importance to the immigrants residing in Dasht-e-Tanhaii as well.

What Nadeem does in this novel is that he plunges deep down in to the inner pits of the psyche of the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom and graphically portrays their conflicts, tensions, whims, norms and limitations. It is an exploration of what happens when a typically conservative traditional society comes in contact with a modern European society. The result is often unsettling and tense. Jugnu and Chanda, we find out early in the story, are lovers who have disappeared. They are presumed to be murdered by Chanda's brothers in vengeance for living a life of perversion and sin. The murder is considered a justified act to restore the honour of the family and the community. Soon the story unfolds through Shamas, Jugnu's brother who is a rather liberal member of the community. He is married to Kaukab. Nadeem in voluminous details explores the more of the community. The story lays bare the fear, angst and confusion of their world. We encounter a world where characters are struggling to come to grips with faith and community. There are individual looking for a temporary husband to get back to their grieving husband who in a fit of anger mention the triple Talaq words. We encounter a son coming to terms with the act of circumcision and many such examples of tradition colliding with modern Western lives.

Butt detangles the sham concept of honour linked to honour killing by quoting the words of the detective inspector John Reid who was among the investigating team of the brutal murder of Sumaira Riaz. He says, "There is nothing at all honourable about her brutal death" (Butt, 2006, p. 01).

Certainly, locating honour in wrong places remains the main reason behind the practice of honour killing across the globe. Men and women are free to follow their hearts and pursue their life goals. Considering girls and women inferior subordinates creates imbalance in the society. Depriving and robbing off girls and women of their basic human rights is inhuman.

Frieden's Liberal Feminism enables girls and women to choose a life of their own by themselves. It rejects the authority of men over girls and women. Liberal Feminism therefore is the advocate of freedom of women and rejects all forms of male servility. The women are solely responsible individuals who have the freedom to enter a marriage of choice. It ensures that women to pursue their careers and happiness. Therefore, men should not locate 'honour' in the actions, language, dress or life style of women. As individuals, girls and women are responsible for their own actions and choices. Chanda's brothers were culturally chained and conditioned to locate their honour in the actions of their sister. They failed to accept Chanda as an individual, instead perceived her as chattel who was at their command. Chanda's father was in agony and his anger knew no bounds for he believed that Jugnu had disgraced his honour through forming relationship with his daughter. He expresses his hate. He despises Jugnu as well as Jugnu's whole family because he finds them all at fault for the couple's choice to stay together, "I am not sure I would accept his help even if he offered it. His (Shamas) brother (Jugnu) corrupted my daughter! All this mess---it's their fault" (Aslam, 2004, p. 254).

Chanda's father had located his honour in wrong places as he was blindly following his own traditions. He is a staunch believer and has a traditional approach towards the concept of honour. He is the personification of the unwritten codes of honour and it is obvious when he shares his views

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about Shamas and Jugnu's family. His morality compass is stuck on the sham and evil concept of honour that is the motive behind the horrific practice of honour killing among the Pakistani immigrants, "Are all the sons of that family like that---defying conventions, doing what they please?" Chanda's father says with quite indignation. "They can do what they like with white women---we all know the morals they have---but at least leave our women alone. You would think it was across"(Aslam, 2004, p. 252).

Chanda's father clearly expresses his authority over the women of his family in the above lines. Hence Chanda and Jugnu were murdered as a result of cultural conditioning. They both died at the hands of the mentality that considers women as 'belongings' rather as free humans with basic human rights.

Aslam has successfully penned down the imbalance and discrimination of genders in the Pakistani culture. Chanda's third husband was also the tyrannical, insensitive and man of avarice who used his male privilege by fleeing without divorcing Chanda first. This ruined all the possible chances and prospects for Chanda to enter a new relationship as per her religion and tradition. This proved yet another nail in the couple's coffin. The brothers of Chanda feared social alienation and they sensed rebukes running throughout the community of Dasht-e-Tanhai regarding the choice and actions of Chanda. There was a tremor in the community because Chanda had harmed the honour of her family. The ripples reached the ears of Chanda's brother as well. Therefore, they decided to restore their honour through the abominable act of honour killing.

The novel may have its fair share of shortcomings and limitations in terms of the use of language and literary style, but where it triumphs is the depiction of the trials and tribulations of first and second-generation immigrants in an alien land with a radically different cultural, socio-economic, political, religious and civilizational milieu. When it comes to immigration and the promise of starting a new life in a new world, the mental relocation of the mind and the heart from one part of the world that is traditional and conservative to another part of the world which is modern is just as turbulent as the physical relocation. This transformation, this journey, this adjustment, this adaptation is not easy. The violence we see depicted in this novel is a failure of being able to make these changes.

Conclusion

Maps for Lost Lovers is a tragic tale reflecting the toxicity of patriarchal culture and blind pursuit of religion that plays havoc in the lives of Aslam's characters. Each character exists around us, within our communities, in our family or those appearing in the form of tragic headlines in the daily national newspapers. The readers can relate the incidents that are happening in the lives of Aslam's character to have happened in real in their knowledge. The tragic tale of honour killing of Chanda and Jugnu who met an unfortunate fate is the news that spurts almost daily in the Pakistani newspapers and media channels. This is how Aslam has chosen a very serious issue that needs to be addressed in order to make the world free of the implacable claws of honour crimes that wolf down countless dreams and lives every minute.

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