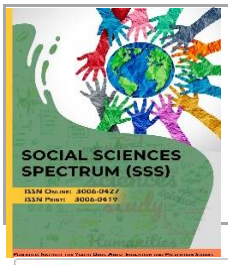

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Mapping the Aftermath of Honour Killing: A Sociological Analysis of Jamil Ahmad's The Wandering Falcon

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Abstract

Despite Pakistan's legal reforms, honour killings remain a gendered violence problem. Drawing from qualitative data, including semi-structured interviews, this study analyses honour killings as a socio-cultural phenomenon through Jamil Ahmad's The Wandering Falcon (2011) and includes interviews from five bereaved families, two legal experts, a senior journalist, and two clinical psychologists from rural Pakistan. Relying on Gramsci's hegemony, Althusser's state apparatuses, Bourdieu's symbolic violence, Galtung's violence typology, and Mbembe's necropolitics, this study extracts four dominant ideas. The first objective analyses honour killings as state-sanctioned, collective, and premeditated violence manifested in the jirga system and state's deliberate inaction. The second one examines the unforgiving aftermath of honour killings through the lens of psychological and social trauma bereaved families endure (fear and trauma becoming their 'new normal'). The third objective inquires the symbolic and institutional control of honour manifested through the entrapment and 'gaze' of hidden, captured, and psychologically controlled elders. The fourth one looks into gender inequality manifested in the commodification of women, socialisation of women as honour-bearers, and posthumous granting of agency to women. The fragmented narratives of the bereaved families are captured through the fragmented narratives of survivors in the novel. The study contains praxes for legal reform, mental health care, and mediatic sensitivity.

Keywords: Honour Killing, The Wandering Falcon, Symbolic Violence, Jirga, Intergenerational Trauma, Necropolitics, Gender Inequality, Pakistan.

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1. Introduction

Honour killing is considered a transgression of basic human rights and gender equality (UNODC, 2018). In the United Nations, it was reported that there are annually thousands of women murdered because of the nature of their lives, according to its term of 'honour-killing' and apparently by family members (D'Lima et al., 2020; Home Office, 2025). Such killings are symptoms of entrenched patriarchal habits, in which values of family honour exceed those of people's rights (Gill, 2014; Hadi, 2020; Naseem, 2021).

The issue of honour killing cannot be understood solely from a legal or a sociological perspective. Literature also has a vital role in this. Literature exudes the experiences of life and social processes that cannot be documented formally (Salman et al., 2025; Zahid & Iqbal, 2025).

In a patriarchal society, characterized both by tradition and by the state (Ahmad, 2011), *The Wandering Falcon* (2011) by Jamil Ahmad is an unprecedented literary masterpiece that narrates the phenomenon of honour killing. Drawing on lessons from a 30-year long career in tribal areas of Pakistan, Ahmad's presentation provides an ethnographic account of customs and practices, including Pashtunwali and the jirga system, that shape people's lives in the region, particularly women and the marginalised (Salman et al., 2025; Khan & Awan, 2021). The novel's episodic framework is about a child who was orphaned, whose parents were killed for leaving the captivity. This nomadic life is an example of the years-long social and psychological effects of honour-based violence, analyzed by Zahid and Iqbal (2025) and Khalid et al. (2021).

Honour killing is documented throughout the Middle East, in South Asian countries, Africa, and by migrant groups in Europe and North America (Heydari et al., 2021). But they are not restricted to a string of religious beliefs and culture, but are woven into social institutions; women's bodies and choices represent family honour (Khan & Awan, 2021; Gill, 2014). The highest number of reported cases are in the countries within South Asia (D'Lima et al., 2020; Gibbs et al., 2019). In Pakistan, for instance, one could not separate family honour from marriage and sexual activity of women under the influence of the strength of kinship, caste, and tradition/codes (Wasti, 2010).

Honour killings continue to be prevalent across the region as per the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2016 in Pakistan that declared honour killing cases as 'Non-Compoundable' (R. Khan, 2018; A. Khan, 2020). Low conviction rates, loose interpretation of laws, and 'grave and sudden provocation' defences have made legal reform difficult in Pakistan, and the continued influence of Jokhios or jirgas is a hindrance (Jokhio et al., 2024; SSDO, 2025; HRCP, 2021). The consequences can follow the initial act long after. Children grow up stateless and anonymous, the survivors suffer from trauma, the victimization and their feelings of loss are unfulfilled, and communities foster a culture of silence (Kumar & Singh, 2024; Abid & Matloob, 2024).

However, there is very little sociological literature comparing the image of honour killing found in literature with the actual statistics after such an incident. The present study sets out to bridge this research gap by analysing *The Wandering Falcon* as a sociological text and comparing the text with the empirical findings of families affected, lawyers, an activist journalist, and psychologists from rural Punjab.

Honour killings have continued at a high level since Pakistan amended criminal law in 2016. Honour killings are still commonly defended as an act committed under "grave and sudden provocation", which is also used by courts. Additionally, jirgas (tribal councils) traditionally authorize violence against women. These issues have been documented in literature such as *The Wandering Falcon*; however, few studies have compared how honour killings were described in

literature to how they affect individuals over time empirically. This paper will bridge this divide by analysing honour killings using both literary methods and empirical data from the field to inform legal reforms, mental health services for victims, and culturally specific intervention strategies.

Honour-based violence (HBV) is considered as a serious condition of gender-based violence, entrenched in the social systems of patriarchy. Honour killing—the most extreme form—is where individual rights are put aside for the sake of family honour and collective identity (Heydari et al., 2021; Gill, 2014). Some of the actions taken are threats, confinement, emotionally abusive actions, physical abuse, and homicide (Home Office, 2025; Vedi & Thapak, 2024). Women's bodies and behaviours become ensouled in men's social status, where the norms of social interaction and the right to violence is bonified as conventional masculine practice (Naseem, 2021; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In the South Asian context, restrictions on female autonomy, the patriarchal family system, and patrilineal inheritance sustain honour-based violence (D'Lima et al., 2020; Wasti, 2010). Informal systems in India, such as khap panchayats, and Pakistan, called jirgas, can trump state law (Wasti, 2010; Muhammad Wasim Jan, 2025).

Honour killing cases nationwide in Pakistan were 547 in 2024 and the rate was 0.9 cases per 100,000 females (which could be much higher) as a result of the stigma and fear (SSDO, 2025; Abid & Matloob, 2024; HRCP, 2021). The killings are supported by the tribal codes and notions of ghairat (male pride) and nang (honour) (Salman et al., 2025; Naseem, 2021). Legal reforms such as the Qisas and Diyat Ordinance (1990) historically served to foster impunity and allowed the pardoning of the offender by the victim's family (A. Khan, 2020; Wasti, 2010). Though subsequent legislative acts attempted to fix this, weak scrutiny and social tolerance of these killings remain, and weakness in conviction rates persists (R. Khan, 2018; Jokhio et al., 2024).

PTSD, depression, and anxiety are among the potential long-term problems affecting survivors from 'forced forgiveness.' Violence is transmitted generation after generation to children. Challenged by the argument that the issue was not gender equality but the 'levitation' of women, feminists view controlled violence towards women as a mechanism of control to assert the domination of society. This applies when feminism is combined with social class and geographical and economic factors, allowing one to observe how violence against women is legitimized and normalised. Violent behaviour against women becomes ingrained in society.

Mechanical solidarity can account for the continuance of violence in society according to Durkheim, acting as a coercive means of social control. To demonstrate the entrenchment of social order and of violence in the fabric of society, one can resort to the theory of Symbolic Violence developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Quantitative data does not truly reflect the deep human impact of violence, in particular honour violence on those who are being victimized at the hands of violence. Literature that demonstrates honour violence, social order, and the violence of social control is exemplified in *The Wandering Falcon*. The character Tor Baz represents the feeling of displacement and social control.

Little or no attempt, however, has been made to integrate the research methodology of literary studies with the social sciences to explore the social order and long-term aspects of honour violence. The purpose of this study is to fill that gap in research.

Research Objectives

This study has several primary objectives. These include the following

1. An examination of honor killing as a social institution in *The Wandering Falcon*.
2. The investigation into the psychological and cultural ramifications of honor killing; an exploration of how honor functions as symbolic control.
3. A critical evaluation of the gendered inequalities inherent within Pakistani society along with those associated with the continued presence of patriarchal codes.
4. It inquires gender inequality manifested in the commodification of women, socialisation of women as honour-bearers.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs a multidimensional framework combining five core sociological theories:

- Galtung's Violence Typology: Galtung shows the causal links between cultural practices, structural inequality (gender-based hierarchies), and the manifestation of direct violence in the case of honour killings (Galtung, 1990; Naseem, 2021).
- Mbembe's Necropolitics: Mbembe discusses how the establishment of 'death worlds' is a result of state and tribal authorities claiming the right to kill, and how this shapes the conditions of existential state violence for the most vulnerable members of society (Mbembe, 2003; Zahid & Iqbal, 2025).
- Gramsci's Hegemony: Gramsci illustrates how the acceptance of an ideal order (the naturalisation of patriarchal order), which secures the 'consent' of the dominated, is reflected in the cultural acceptance of honour killings (Gramsci, 1971; Naseem, 2021).
- Althusser's State Apparatuses: Althusser focuses on the Repressive State Apparatus, combined with the Ideological State Apparatus of the family and the jirga, revealing how honour-based violence is socially constructed, legitimised, and maintained (Althusser, 1971; Khalid et al., 2021).
- Bourdieu's Symbolic Violence: Bourdieu shows that individuals internalize the social order as a hierarchical and honour-based system, causing them to participate in their own subordination or enforce violent codes against their will.

2. Research Methodology

This study used thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews to study *The Wandering Falcon (2011).*

Data Collection

The assessment of the novel focused on the four research objectives from the reading guide, and interview guides were created for the bereaved families, legal experts, journalists, and clinical psychologists. These guides were created in both Urdu and English.

Research Site and Sampling

In Rajan Pur, rural Punjab, we conducted interviews with families suffering from honour killings, and held interviews with experts from Lahore, where honour killings and the Jirga System exist. Most expert interviews were conducted in person; one was conducted online. Sample size was determined by data saturation. Participants were assigned a code for anonymity (see Table 1).

Table 1: *Respondents Coding Scheme*

Code	Category	Brief Description
F1	Affected family	Mother, Kotli Gul
F2	Affected family	Father, Fazal Pur
F3	Affected family	Brother, Kotli Khudai, Rajan Pur
F4	Affected family	Surviving child (adult), Kotla Androon
F5	Affected family	Uncle of murdered boy, Fazalpur
L1	Lawyer	Senior lawyer, 17 years' experience
L2	Lawyer	Anti-terrorism court lawyer, 8 years' experience
M1	Media person	Senior journalist, Lahore
P1	Clinical psychologist	Female, 18 years' experience
P2	Clinical psychologist	Male, 15 years' experience

Data Analysis

Four steps were used by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006). The first step was data preparation (three readings of the novel and writing the interviews transcribed verbatim). Step two was data exploration. Data reduction was the third step, and it involved coding and organizing data into categories. Finally, data interpretation was the comparison of literary and empirical themes. The complete thematic framework is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: *Themes and Sub-themes*

Theme	Sub-themes
Honour Killing as Social & Cultural Institution	Collective premeditation – not sudden provocation; Jirga as real authority; State complicity through non-intervention
Aftermath – Social, Psychological & Cultural Consequences	Orphaned children: erased identity & permanent wandering; Blocked grief & silenced mourning; Permanent fear & hypervigilance; Stigma & community boycott; Intergenerational trauma
Honour as Symbolic Institutional Control	Surveillance & internalised gaze; Elders as trapped enforcers; No escape – honour as total institution
Critique of Gender Inequality & Patriarchal Codes	Women socialised as honour-bearers; Women as commodities – bought, sold, killed; Agency only in death; Narrative fragmentation as structural critique

Ethical Considerations

While ensuring one female community member was present, women's interviews, families were not audio recorded, and interruptions of the utmost necessity were employed, protocols of

informed consent, cultural, trauma, and data sensitivity, and "do no harm" practices were strictly maintained.

3. Results and Findings

The section features the results of a thematic and qualitative study that was conducted on the primary text by Jamil Ahmad: The Wandering Falcon (2011). The results are triangulated with semi-structured interviews with five families that are affected (coded F1–F5), two legal experts (L1, L2), one senior journalist (M1), and two clinical psychologists (P1, P2).

Theme 1: Honour Killing as a Social and Cultural Institution

The theme shows how The Wandering Falcon represents honour killing as not simply an isolated crime committed by one person, but rather as a culturally entrenched system of violence practiced collectively by tribal communities.

Collective Premeditation – Not Sudden Provocation

Gul Bibi and her lover are chased over the desert for days by gul's father (sardar), husband and tribe members. When they arrive at the water hole; no trial occurs. The sardar asks *"who is the boy?"* The lover is then methodically stoned to death ("he brings him closer and closer… Until he dies from pain; his bones shattered and head flattened beyond recognition"). The husband then states coldly: *"we will now start with the boy."* The entire process is planned, group based, and absent of impulsive rage. This is contrary to the legal defence of "grave & sudden provocation" often accepted in Pakistani Courts.

Respondents also support this pattern. F1 states: *"I watched my daughter be killed. My daughter had done nothing wrong. But the family had decided days before. I didn't know until after it happened."* L2 says: *"sometimes Courts will accept 'grave and sudden provocation' as a defence. But in reality these killings are plotted. The family considers, the jirga determines. These never occur suddenly."* P2 adds: *"these are not instantaneous crimes. Usually a back story exists."*

It contradicts the defence employed by the courts that in most cases in Pakistan has been employed to mitigate the punishment for honour killings. It is quite clear in the novel that the death is not accidental, but planning is demonstrated by the several days spent chasing the couple. It is also performed by a group and not by a single individual.

The Jirga (*panchayat, kuth*) as the Real Authority

Although Chapter 1 does not display a formal jirga sitting, its authority exists in all scenes. When the subedar refused to take in the couple (he would provide only for their immediate physical needs), he stated: *"I am quite well-versed in your customs and traditions, and neither I nor any other member of my family will stand between you and the custom/law of your clan."* In addition, when the old sardar declares; *"My daughter was a sinner against both the laws of God and those of our tribe,"* no one disputes or challenges the tribe's ability to make judgment and carry out an execution on her. The first killing is portrayed as a form of tribal justice – not personal vengeance.

Respondents are aware of this fact. F4 states: *"It is the panchayat/kuth which truly holds the power of authority – not the police department, not the court. The kuth clearly says: 'She has caused us to feel ashamed. She must be killed.' And everyone follows what they say."* L1 also agrees: *"Jirgas do not hold official/legal status, however, in rural areas people follow jirgas' rulings more so than the court because of fear and/or traditional methods."* F2 added that jirgas usually support

stronger/wealthier families. The jirga operates as a parallel legal system with de facto control over honour issues while the formal state legal system is essentially ineffective in terms of application.

It clearly shows that, although jirga is not there, it still dictates the way people act by adhering to it. The subedar (military officer) does not take side, which is an indication of his recognition of the authority of the tribal system. In the same way, the sardar (tribal chief) speaks as if tribal laws are absolute and those cannot be questioned.

State complicity through Non-Intervention

When the couple arrives at a military check point, the subedar makes it clear he cannot protect them: "There is no refuge I can offer. I am quite knowledgeable about your customs and neither I nor any man of my household will get in the way of a man and the law of his tribe." He offers them food and temporary lodging – but not protection from harm. He later warned them, but did nothing to stop them from being murdered by the tribe. The state knew and withdrew. The jirga is the true agent of authority in the local sphere and can impact decisions with its social acceptability.

The respondents also reported similar experiences. F2 states: *"I took my wife to the local police station. We were told by the police officer at the desk 'this is a family affair, just go home."* Not even a single entry was made into a log book F4 added: *"We didn't even file an FIR; they [the police] knew exactly what would be done, and they did it anyway."* P2 brought up two examples, both of which involved the state ignoring forensic evidence that clearly implicated men for the deaths of others; one man was eventually acquitted and another died after fighting in court for seven years. Thus, rather than being merely a lack of action on behalf of the state, its refusal to intervene is complicit and enables honour killings to occur without consequence.

Through the novel and through the responses of the respondents, we see that honour killing exists as an institution within society and culture, and not simply as a collection of discrete acts of violence. Honour killings are typically planned in advance among groups of people, often involve ritualistic elements, and therefore cannot rely upon legal defenses such as those based upon "sudden provocation". The jirga functions as the de facto authority in this area, while the state has consistently turned a blind eye.

Theme 2: Aftermath – Social, Psychological and Cultural Consequences

This theme concerns the second purpose of the study: How does honour killing affect persons and their respective communities before, during and after the actual act of murder? Both the novel and its participants illustrate that the killing is merely the starting point in a long and arduous journey of hardship.

Orphaned Children – Erased Identity and Permanent Wandering

The boy is abandoned by himself at the water hole; he is neither dead nor claimed by anyone. Throughout chapter 1, he has no name. Eventually, he receives the name Tor Baz (Black Falcon) through acquisition – it was not given to him as inheritance. All that he possesses is a small silver amulet that belonged to his mother. For his entire life, he roams continuously: the fort, Roza Khan, Ghuncha Gul, Mullah Barreri, the Bhittani's, eventually as an informant, then as a guide and finally as a man purchasing a woman. He does not settle anywhere. This perpetual state of being without roots as a result of trauma is captured by the title *"The Wandering Falcon".*

Participants confirm this loss of identity. F3 states: *"I am raising my sister's children now. They do not have birth certificates. No schooling. No future. They ask me every day: 'Who are we?"*. F4 adds*: "I have no identity. No home. Nobody. I spent my childhood wandering the streets."* P1

clarifies: *"These children are referred to as the 'children of those people' – children of somebody murdered for family honour. Their entire lives will be affected negatively."*

What comes out clearly here is that the child does not just lose parents – one's also loses identity. At the beginning of the novel, the boy lacks a name as he is in an uncertain position in society. The naming of Tor Baz as he grows older is not bestowed by his family or community, but by himself. It implies that he does not actually belong anywhere as he manages to survive. So, the big point is that honour killing is not over after one kill. It persists in children's lives. This is revealed in the novel by the vagrant boy, who is raised knowing loss rather than having a firm identity.

Blocked Grief and Silenced Mourning

After the death, no funeral procession, crying or mourning occurs. Instead, the bodies are placed within two stone towers *"in order that their work may last and serve as witness ... of how the Siahpad avenged all affronts."* The towers represent revenge rather than grief. The deceased sardar never attends the burial. He walks alone and pauses at the spot on the ground from which the bodies were taken. There is no crying. As the honor code demands that emotions be controlled and suppressed, the man can't allow himself to grieve.

Respondents also reported experiencing what could be called 'trapped grief.' F1 stated: *"We never get rid of our grief. It's always with us, but we have to keep it locked up so nobody knows that it was for an honor thing."* F3 said: *"My family is identified as 'the family of the woman who was murdered.' We do not ask how you feel when someone dies."* P1 noted that unexpressed grief leads to long-term psychological damage.

The fact that the normal processes that accompany the event of death are intentionally missing in instances of honour-based violence has been proven by the evidence provided by the novel. The absence of funeral rites indicates the absence of treating the death as a loss, but as a justifiable action. The towers composed of stones dissociate the focus from remembering to the enforcement of norms. The death in this sense is to caution others, but not to cry.

Permanent Fear and Hypervigilance

At the fortress, the couple constantly live in fear. They withdraw from all social contact (and usually stay indoors) and never open their shutters. In fact, they were described as being similar to *"small frightened desert lizards,"* running back into their burrows in terror at any sign of a potential threat. Their fear continued after their first child (a boy) was born. Years later he thought: *"Once again, in his nostrils was the old familiar scent of fear."* This is a clinical description of hypervigilence, which is one of the core symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The respondents provided descriptions of their children that were almost indistinguishable from the above description. F4 said: *"I'm afraid most of the time. And I'm afraid even when I'm at home. I believe they will come for me or my grandkids. I lie awake at night thinking about it."* F5 described another girl survivor: *"And she is always looking behind her. She has since left for a larger city. She feels safer, but not really liberated."* P2 stated: *"A child living under continuous fear and hypervigilance lives in survival mode. Always expecting danger, always aware and alert, and never relaxing."*

It illustrates the aspect of mental stress in the long term, in which fear remains with individuals in their day-to-day existence. Even minor changes in the environment prompt the couple to withdraw and engage in defensive behaviour as seen in the behaviour of the couple. They are cautious, avoid people and do not socialise a lot out there, proving that fear altered the perception of their safety.

Stigma and Community Boycott

When Tor Baz replaces the dead son in a Bhittani family he was never really part of. The mother questioned where he came from. Later he vanished. Even though he is buying the house for Shah Zarina (Chapter 9) he still feels he is on the outside. Stigma is for life.

Survivors state that stigma lasts for many years. F1 states, *"Our identities have been changed by once an incident such as this has occurred. People always recall."* F2 states, *"Although we had won the law suit, society views us all in a different light. Society does not forget quickly."* F5 also stated, *"We had won the lawsuit. However, the community then boycotted us. Winning legally and being accepted socially are two different things."*

Vindicated legally, victims do not receive social rehabilitation; Stigma exists due to a "logic of contamination" that makes survivors' lives marked forever.

Intergenerational Trauma and Erasure of Children's Identity

Tor Baz lost both parents at infancy. Thereafter he received no birth certificate, family name, or sense of belonging within a community. Thus begins another cycle of trauma; Sher Beg sold his daughter Sherakei for opium, yet could not remember the names of his other children. Years later Sherakei would lose her child herself. Successive generations suffer because of an honor killing.

F1 states, *"My grandson said 'I am going to kill my mamu when I grow.' He is only ten. The anger is now within him. It will stay there."* F3 states that some of the grandkids have no birth certificates…they don't actually exist. P2 cautions: *"Unless these children are helped they will be raised with attachment disorder issues and angry regulation issues and they will pass the same trauma down to their children. This is a cycle."*

A self-perpetuating cycle of anger, dislocation, and violence exists among generations because of unresolved trauma and legal non-recognition. Honor killings leave damage in addition to the death of the victim. Children who are orphaned because of their parent's murder experience loss of identity and are forced to remain wandering nomads. The grief experienced by children is suppressed and thus can lead to significant long-term psychological damage.

Theme 3: Honour as Symbolic Institutional Control

This theme addresses the third research objective: how honour functions as a form of symbolic violence that operates through surveillance, internalised norms, and the trapping of even powerful actors.

Surveillance and the Internalised Gaze

When the woman's veil falls at the fort, soldiers refuse to look. For those who do notice it is just a child. A young soldier has a momentary smile on his face as he is quickly reminded by the stare of his superiors. Later a strange man comes into town looking for the young couple. The Subedar says *"you know what that means."* Honor is enforced through a surveillance system. Both the young couple begin to internalize this gaze and hide from each other even though they were alone. This is a perfect example of Panopticonism: the fear of being observed creates self-regulation.

Both respondents indicate this form of socialization occurs from birth. F1 stated *"we have been taught since we were children to protect our families honor…what we wear, where we go, whom we speak with – all things are being watched."* F5 noted the difference in degrees between genders in terms of level of observation. *"women are watched much closer than men."* P2 explained the

reason for such actions. *"social pressures—the fear of 'what will people think?' can cause people to make drastic decision."*

The most important thing is that this gaze is internalised. This couple starts to conceal themselves both as they are observed or when no one is present. This suggests that surveillance has shifted from outward to inward. Actors no longer have to be watched in order to receive attention; they need anticipation of being watched. Fear becomes self-regulating.

Elders as Trapped Enforcers, Not Free Agents

Although the sardar takes part in stoning his daughter, he later tells his son-in-law *"there was no sin in her when she was born, there was none when she grew up, and there was none when she got married."* He also states that *"it was only because I didn't get you married to a man"* that she was persuaded to commit a sin. The son-in-law insults him and then kills him. Although the sardar is enforcing the rules of the society he lives in, he does not truly believe them himself. He makes a statement that briefly reveals truth. It ultimately proves fatal to him. In doing so, the system consumes its own regulators.

Respondents shared similar experiences. F1 stated: *"I had to forgive my son, not because I wanted to, but because the elder told me to. That is the only acceptable course of action." F2 was told: "one death is enough, don't ruin your entire family."* P2 added: *"this causes conflict on how to survive inside that system."*

Elders are not completely free will decision-makers; they are in a system that does not limit their options but forces their obedience. The sardar takes part in the killing, and at first, it makes him look like an authority figure who imposes tribal norms. But in the statement that comes out later, his conflict and sense of what is right are apparent. The fact that he admits that his daughter was not innately sinful indicates that he understands that such an action is unfair, but he does not terminate the act. This dilemma exemplifies the notion that his behaviour is influenced more by social norms than by personal belief.

No Escape – Honour as a Total Institution

The author creates honor as an institution – an institution that has no exit. All characters who violate the code meet some form of destruction: Gul Bibi & her lover are both executed; the young man wanders off into nowhere without an identity; the Mullah loses his mind; Mehboob Khan dies, helpless. Tor Baz considers ending his wandering, but the narrative provides him no way out. There is no escape into utopia – only death, exile, or madness. Respondents confirmed this reality. F4 states: *"How do you get back into society when you have never had any place within it?" "I've always been a loner*." P1 states *reintegration is "nearly impossible.*

Theme 4: Critique of Gender Inequality & Patriarchal Codes

Women Socialised as Honour-Bearers

Although Gul Bibi is not a rebel – merely an unrequited lover – it is men who have power over her body. The mirror embroidery on her wedding dress represents the all-seeing male eye; it is therefore the males of her kin who act as her greatest observers. In addition, the book illustrates how women are taught since childhood that a family's honour is completely dependent upon their actions.

Respondents also support this process of socialization. For example, F1 stated: "*Girls are told the family honor rests on them. Boys are told they make decisions."* Similarly, F3 added: *"Girls are*

told to be quiet. To be obedient. Never to cause shame. Boys are told anger is strength and violence is accepted." Thus, control occurs by means of self-policing at an early age by women (prior to any outside enforcement).

Women as Commodities – Bought, Sold, and Killed

Shah Zarina is sold to a bear trainer by her father Fateh Mohammed. Her husband has said *"I can get another wife, but I'll never get another bear."* She is repeatedly whipped, deprived of food and forced to live outside. Eventually, Afzal Khan sells her again to Tor Baz for 3000 rupees. The constant sale of women in the novel is not merely an example of how women are used as objects by men; it demonstrates that the use of women as objects is the structure of society. Respondent's responses support this. F4 states: *"Elders and Men decide on all matters. Women and Children have no say in things. We will be killed if we attempt to make our own decisions."* F5 states: *"Love is seen as a Crime."* Each time that Shah Zarina is sold there is not merely one tragedy occurring but rather each sale makes a statement about the societal structure regarding women. Women are viewed as nothing more than commodities.

Agency Only in Death – The Tragedy of Choice

The last time Gul Bibi sees her lover she tells him: *"We have spoken about this moment so many times. But now I am scared, my love."* When she asks him to save the young man he says: *"They might let him go. I am ready."* At that point she turns around, takes a few steps, and shoots herself. She doesn't beg, run away or accuse anyone. The only honorable decision she can make under the circumstances of the social code is to die. The novel depicts this situation with no sense of romance. It portrays this as a tragic reality.

Narrative Fragmentation as Structural Critique

The subject of the novel has No single protagonist. A new character emerges in each chapter. Tor Baz emerges in Chapter 1 as a young boy; he disappears from view until emerging again as a full-grown man in Chapter 5 as an informant for the government; and then again in Chapter 6 as a travel guide for Shah Zarina. The reader is given absolutely no insight into Tor Baz's internal monologue. That is not a weakness of the author, however — it is actually another point she is making about honor killings — they destroy the ability for people to tell one cohesive story about themselves.

Many respondents have reported experiencing similar experiences of having their lives fragmented. For example, respondent F4 said *" I was passed back-and-forth to many different relatives and then I was abandoned."* Respondent F5 stated *" Our family is now all over the place. My brothers will not even speak to me anymore. It feels as though we are ghosts walking the earth."* The disjointed nature of these forms mirror the brokenness of the individuals' identities.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate that honour killings are a social institution — preplanned, sanctioned by jirga's and facilitated by the inaction of the government. Surviving women suffer from intergenerational trauma such as loss of their identity, blocked grief, perpetual fear, shame and transferring pain to their children. Honour operates as an institutionalized form of symbolic control by surveillance and trapping its agents with no means of escape. Pakistani women are socialized as bearers of honor, commodified and granted agency only after they die. The fragmented nature of the novel demonstrates the fractured life of survivors, therefore *The Wandering Falcon*, provides truthful representation of honor killings in Pakistan.

Recommendations

Legal reform should remove all legal defenses for "Sudden Provocation", require full implementation of the 2016 Act (e.g., criminalization of Jirga killings), provide a birth certificate for orphaned children. To address mental health issues related to grief, the government will need to offer community-based grieving counseling programs, as well as programs teaching children at schools how to emotionally regulate themselves. The media needs to run public awareness campaigns in local language(s) as well as adhere to ethics guidelines in their reporting. Research on these topics should include tracking children that have been left behind; comparing different geographic locations; assessing the overall effect of the 2016 Act; and studying local film productions (such as Dukhtar).

Limitations

The study has also some limitations such as; A limited number of literary sources. The respondents' sample was very low in numbers which cannot be taken as representative. Only rural area of Punjab (Rajanpur) was targeted. Family members were asked for information about what happened to their relatives except F4. There are possibilities that the answers given by them will have errors due to memory. Translating from Saraiki/Urdu to English could result in loss of culturally specific nuances. Local conceptualisations of 'honour' might not be fully captured through western theories. Also, no tape recording of families was done.

Conflict of Interest

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