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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF FEMICIDE ON WOMEN AND FAMILIES: A FEMINIST AND PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF AWAIS KHAN'S *NO HONOUR*

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Abstract
Femicide, the gender-based killing of women, remains one of the most severe forms of violence in patriarchal societies. This research investigated femicide in Awais Khan's No Honour (2021), focusing on its destructive effects on women's autonomy and family relationships. Using feminist and psychoanalytic lenses, the study employed close textual analysis to examine how patriarchal structures and honour codes normalize violence and how unconscious fears shape family members' conflicted actions. Findings showed femicide operates on two levels: Shabnam's murder illustrated lethal honour-based violence and community complicity, while Abida's story revealed ongoing threats through forced marriage, pregnancy outside wedlock, and exploitation. Jamil's internal conflict highlighted the psychological trauma families endure under honour codes. These findings reflect real-world cases in Pakistan, confirming that the novel mirrors social realities. The study concluded that femicide functions both as a physical act and as a cultural practice that silences women and fractures families. Integrating feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives, it contributes to discussions on gender-based violence and underscores the need for literary, cultural, and legal engagement with femicide in South Asia.

Keywords: Femicide, Honour, Patriarchy, Violence, Autonomy, Family, Women, Gender

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

Femicide, defined as the intentional killing of women because of their gender, is one of the most severe forms of gender-based violence. It is not simply a private act of crime but a social phenomenon rooted in patriarchy, inequality, and cultural traditions that restrict women's autonomy. Across the world, and particularly in South Asia, women are murdered under the pretext of "honor," for marrying by choice, seeking education, or asserting independence. These acts are not isolated but sustained by cultural norms, community silences, and weak legal systems that allow perpetrators to escape accountability. As a result, femicide continues to shape women's lives and families, leaving behind fear, trauma, and fractured relationships.

In this context, literature becomes a powerful tool to expose and challenge such injustices. Awais Khan, a contemporary Pakistani novelist, engages with this issue in No Honour (2021). Known for tackling silenced themes in Pakistani society, Khan portrays the story of Abida, a young woman whose desire for a love marriage clashes with rigid patriarchal expectations. Her struggle reveals the brutal consequences of denying women autonomy, while her father Jamil's inner conflict shows how families also bear the burden of such violence. By examining this narrative through feminist and psychoanalytic theories, this study aims to uncover both the structural inequalities and the hidden psychological anxieties that make femicide a recurring reality, thus offering insight into its impact on women and families in patriarchal societies.

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Problem Statement

This research aims to investigate the impact of femicide in Awais Khan's No Honour (2021), focusing on its destructive effects on women and families. By analyzing Abida's struggle for autonomy and Jamil's conflict between love and societal expectations, the study highlights how patriarchal structures and hidden psychological fears perpetuate violence. Using feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives, the research seeks to deepen understanding of how femicide shapes both individual lives and family dynamics within patriarchal societies.

Research Objectives

- To examine how femicide is represented in Awais Khan's No Honour and how it impacts women's autonomy and personal struggles.
- To analyze the effects of femicide on families, particularly through the conflicted emotions of Abida's father, Jamil.
- To explore how feminist and psychoanalytic theories reveal the role of patriarchal norms, honour-based traditions, and underlying psychological anxieties in sustaining femicide.

Research Questions

1. How is femicide represented in Awais Khan's No Honour, and how does it affect women's autonomy and struggles?
2. In what ways does femicide impact families in the novel, especially through Jamil's conflicted emotions as a father?
3. How do feminist and psychoanalytic theories explain the role of patriarchy, honour, and psychological anxieties in sustaining femicide?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it investigates femicide as portrayed in Awais Khan's No Honour (2021), a novel that reflects the harsh realities faced by women in patriarchal societies. By examining Abida's struggle for autonomy and the conflict of her father Jamil, the research highlights how femicide affects both women and families, showing that the consequences extend beyond individual victims to entire households and communities. In this way, the study deepens understanding of how literature mirrors real-world issues such as honor killings and gender-based violence.

The study also carries importance through its use of feminist and psychoanalytic theories. Feminist theory provides insights into how patriarchal systems and honor traditions sustain violence against women, while psychoanalytic theory reveals the hidden fears, desires, and anxieties that shape the characters' actions and responses. This dual approach allows the research to uncover not only the cultural and social structures behind femicide but also the psychological dimensions that make it a persistent issue.

On a wider level, the research is valuable for scholars, activists, and policymakers concerned with gender-based violence. It demonstrates how literature can serve as a tool to raise awareness, challenge oppressive traditions, and inspire change. By focusing on the destructive impact of femicide on women and families, the study emphasizes the urgent need for stronger legal protections, cultural transformation, and the promotion of gender justice. Ultimately, the research contributes to ongoing debates about women's rights and provides a framework for understanding femicide as both a human rights violation and a social failure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Global Prevalence of Femicide

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Femicide has been increasingly recognized in academic and policy debates as one of the most severe manifestations of gender-based violence. Diana Russell first popularized the term in the 1990s, defining it as the killing of women because they are women, often justified through cultural or social norms that uphold male control (Russell & Radford, 1992). Current global data confirm the scale of this issue. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022), approximately 137 women are killed every day by family members or intimate partners, making the home one of the most dangerous places for women worldwide. The World Health Organization (2021) further reported that nearly 38% of all female murders were committed by intimate partners, highlighting the widespread normalization of violence against women. (https://www.who.int).

Research across regions demonstrates that femicide is deeply influenced by social and cultural contexts. Latin American countries such as El Salvador and Mexico report some of the highest rates of femicide globally, where the crime is often linked to systemic impunity and weak justice systems (Menjívar, 2011). In Africa and the Middle East, researchers have also found significant numbers of gender-motivated killings, often connected with traditional practices and limited state protection (Variava & Dekel, 2024).

Femicide in the South Asian and Pakistani Context

In South Asia, honor killings and dowry-related deaths remain prevalent, with women frequently killed by relatives for marrying by choice or seeking autonomy (Khan, 2022). In Pakistan, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2023) recorded multiple incidents of honor-related killings, stressing that legal loopholes, such as family pardons, allow perpetrators to escape justice. Recent cases, such as the murder of Bano Satakzai in Balochistan and another young woman in Daska in 2024, illustrate how patriarchal notions of honor continue to silence women and devastate families (Dawn, 2024; The Express Tribune, 2024). These cases highlight how cultural norms, family pressures, and weak legal protections allow femicide to persist. (https://hrcp-web.org).

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Feminist Perspectives on Femicide

Feminist scholarship has long emphasized that femicide cannot be understood in isolation from patriarchy. According to Dawson and Carrigan (2021), accurate recognition of sex and gender-related motives is crucial in addressing femicide, as patriarchal power structures normalize violence and treat women's lives as expendable (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0011392120985735).

Similarly, Variava and Dekel (2024) argue that in Africa, femicide persists because of the intersection of cultural inequality, economic dependence, and state inaction, underscoring the global dimensions of the problem (https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/14/2/e078160).

Feminist theory highlights how traditions framed as honor or morality sustain the control of women's bodies and choices, making femicide both a crime and a cultural practice.

Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Femicide

Alongside feminist perspectives, psychoanalytic approaches provide insights into the unconscious fears and anxieties that underpin femicide. Scholars note that the act of killing women for honor often functions symbolically, as a way of restoring male pride and family status in the face of

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perceived shame or humiliation (Kakar, 1996). From this perspective, violence against women is not only a cultural issue but also a psychological response to threatened authority and fragile masculinity. This interpretation is particularly useful in understanding the conflicted role of families, where love and affection coexist with fear of dishonor.

Literary Representations of Femicide

Literature has been an important space for representing and critiquing femicide. Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero (1983) portrays the silencing and exploitation of women under patriarchal systems, showing how female autonomy is violently suppressed. Similarly, Qaisra Shahraz's The Holy Woman (2001) illustrates how women are sacrificed to preserve family honor, often forced into oppressive roles against their will. These narratives parallel the lived realities of women in South Asia, where cultural expectations often determine life and death.

Awais Khan's No Honour (2021) contributes to this discourse by focusing on Abida, a young woman who wishes to marry for love but is forced to confront the lethal consequences of defying patriarchal norms. The novel also highlights the emotional conflict of her father, Jamil, revealing how families are torn apart by the social pressures surrounding honor. While previous studies have examined honor killings in Pakistan, there is limited scholarly engagement with No Honour, particularly through the combined lens of feminist and psychoanalytic theories.

Research Gap

Most studies on femicide in Pakistan focus on legal loopholes, honor killings, and how patriarchy uses violence to control women. But very few studies look at how femicide affects families emotionally and psychologically, especially the struggles of fathers, brothers, or relatives who feel trapped between love and social pressure. Researchers mostly discuss women as victims of femicide, but they rarely explore how families also carry trauma and guilt when such violence occurs. This gap is especially clear in literary works like Awais Khan's No Honour, where Abida's suffering and her father Jamil's conflict show that femicide destroys not only women's autonomy but also family bonds.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design because the aim was to explore meanings, ideas, and interpretations rather than numbers or statistics. The focus of the research is to investigate how femicide and its impact on women and families are represented in Awais Khan's novel No Honour (2021). A qualitative approach was most suitable as it allowed a close reading of the novel's characters, dialogues, and events to understand how the story reflects the destructive effects of patriarchy and honor-based violence. The study was interpretive in nature and employed feminist and psychoanalytic theories to critically analyze the novel's themes and character dynamics.

Sampling and Data Collection Methods

The sample for this research was limited to one primary literary text: No Honour by Awais Khan. This novel was chosen because it directly addresses the issue of femicide in Pakistan and portrays its impact on women's autonomy and family relationships. Primary data was drawn from the text itself, focusing on characters, key events, and narrative development. Secondary data included scholarly articles, books, critical essays, and reports on femicide, patriarchy, and gender-based violence from organizations such as UN Women, Amnesty International, and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. These sources provided context and supported the textual analysis of the novel.

Tools and Techniques

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The main tool used in this research was textual analysis. The novel was treated as a cultural and literary text that reflects both individual experiences and broader social issues. Close reading was carried out to examine dialogues, narrative descriptions, and character development. Special attention was given to the portrayal of Abida, who struggles for autonomy, and Jamil, her father, whose conflicted emotions represent the family's psychological burden. Notes were taken to identify repeated patterns, symbols, and metaphors that highlight themes of honor, control, resistance, and trauma. These textual findings were then connected to feminist and psychoanalytic theories to uncover both structural and psychological dimensions of femicide.

Data Analysis Framework

The purpose of the data analysis framework is to organize and connect the theories, ideas, and concepts that guide this research. Since the study focuses on femicide in Awais Khan's No Honour (2021), the analysis was directed by feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives. Feminist theory provides the critical foundation for understanding how patriarchal traditions and honor-based ideologies create structures that allow violence against women. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) emphasized that women are socially constructed as "the Other," confined within roles that deny them autonomy, while Judith Butler (1990) argued that gender norms are culturally enforced and can sustain oppressive systems. This lens allows the study to highlight how Abida's struggle for autonomy and her father Jamil's conflict reflect the systemic inequalities that underpin femicide.

Psychoanalytic theory complements this perspective by uncovering the unconscious fears, desires, and anxieties that shape the characters' actions. Sigmund Freud (1917/1957) identified repression, projection, and aggression as key dynamics in human behavior, which can help explain why honor-based violence often appears excessive. In No Honour, Jamil's torn emotions between his love for his daughter and the pressure of community honor illustrate how unconscious anxieties influence destructive decisions. The excessive violence faced by Abida can also be interpreted as a symbolic attempt to restore threatened patriarchal authority, echoing psychoanalytic ideas of shame, guilt, and fragile masculine identity (Chodorow, 1999).

The combination of feminist and psychoanalytic frameworks ensures a multi-layered interpretation. Feminist theory draws attention to the cultural and structural systems that normalize femicide, while psychoanalysis reveals the hidden psychological dynamics that sustain it. This dual approach allows the analysis to move beyond surface-level descriptions of violence and instead show how femicide impacts both women's autonomy and family relationships in patriarchal societies.

Ethical Considerations

This research relied exclusively on published literary and scholarly sources, with No Honour serving as the primary text. Since no interviews or surveys were conducted, there was no risk of harm to human participants. Ethical responsibility was maintained by ensuring accurate representation of the novel and avoiding any distortion of the author's intended themes. Sensitive topics such as femicide, patriarchy, and honor-based violence were handled with care, recognizing their traumatic and painful nature. All secondary sources were properly cited to maintain academic integrity and originality. The study also avoided sensationalizing acts of violence, instead focusing on critical analysis that contributes to a deeper understanding of gender-based violence in literature and society.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussion

Data Analysis

Awais Khan's No Honour (2021) explores femicide not only as a literal act of killing but as a pervasive system of control that governs women's lives and fractures families. The narrative of

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Abida, her father Jamil, and the murdered village girl Shabnam reveals how patriarchy creates a culture where women are shamed, punished, and sometimes killed for exercising autonomy. Through feminist and psychoanalytic lenses, the novel illustrates how violence against women is both structural and psychological, driven by honour codes, internalized shame, and unconscious fears.

The story begins with Shabnam, whose pregnancy outside of marriage makes her a target of public rage. Even before she is dragged to the riverbank, the novel reveals how the entire social fabric including women

enforces the sentence against her. The midwife who assists at her birth coldly abandons her, declaring:

"Girls like you get thrown into the river if they're lucky. Burned alive if they're not. Pray that your brother is merciful. A lot of brothers aren't" (Khan, 2021, p. 1). This moment demonstrates how femicide is not an aberration but an expectation ordinary people participate in its enforcement as a matter of social duty. Shabnam's brother Aslam further reveals the premeditated nature of honour-based violence when he explains why a midwife was called at all:

"**To make sure she doesn't avoid her real punishment. Dying in childbirth is too good for the likes of her"** (Khan, 2021, p. 2).

This calculated cruelty exposes what feminist scholars identify as the logic of expendability which is the idea that women's suffering is not only permitted but required to sustain patriarchal order (Dawson & Carrigan, 2021). She is dragged through the streets as

"Older women spat at her… Children threw dirt in her eyes… 'Burn her alive. Shoot her. Drown her'" (Khan, 2021, p. 6). Her brother justifies her death, saying, "**She needs to understand what she's done, and I need to restore my family's honour"** (Khan, 2021, p. 6). Her murder was not concealed but performed as a public spectacle sanctioned by the community. The pir, as the ultimate moral authority, ratifies the killing with the words: "**We must never let such filth tarnish our village. The baby was born out of wedlock, an abomination on this earth. Good work, my son"** (Khan, 2021, p. 7). From a feminist perspective, this demonstrates how women's lives are rendered expendable within patriarchal systems. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, the killing functioned as a symbolic restoration of masculine pride through the erasure of perceived "shame." Thus, Shabnam's death prepared the ground for Abida's narrative, establishing femicide as both normalized practice and ritualized violence.

Abida, unlike Shabnam, dares to resist. When her mother insists on marrying her off, she protests: **"I will not marry him, not in a million years"** (Khan, 2021, p. 28). Her defiance is a feminist act of autonomy, but she is punished immediately with a slap. Patriarchy here functions through both men and women — mothers reinforcing honour codes out of fear of social shame. The slap represents what feminist critics call "internalized oppression," where women police other women to ensure survival within patriarchal structures. Abida's awareness of this danger is expressed in her own internal reflection after witnessing Shabnam's fate:

"**There was no place in this village for unmarried girls with child, and if Kalim didn't marry her soon, her humiliation would be sealed. Probably her death too"** (Khan, 2021, p. 20).

This passage shows how femicide operates as a constant psychological reality, not only as a physical act. it disciplines women's choices and restricts their freedom even when no direct violence is taking place. Butler (1990) argues that gender norms are enforced through social repetition; the threat of death is one of the most powerful mechanisms through which such enforcement occurs. Abida's body becomes a site of community surveillance: she carefully

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manages how she stands, how she moves, what she reveals, knowing that her physical appearance could trigger fatal consequences. The novel also shows her desire for education **"I would have liked to read. When I see Yousaf and Abbas reading their school books, I wish I could do the same"** (Khan, 2021, p. 27) which is immediately silenced by her mother who invokes the pir's authority to justify denying girls literacy. This detail illustrates how patriarchal control operates at every level of women's lives: intellectual, social, physical, and finally lethal.

Abida's relationship with her father, Jamil, is central to the novel's emotional power. She appeals to his affection **"I can sit with you if you don't want to eat alone, Abbu" ,but he rejects her: "And have the entire village call me shameless for having my daughter on display? I think not"** (Khan, 2021, p. 53). Jamil's rejection reflects how patriarchal fear silences even paternal love. What makes this moment more psychologically complex is what the narrator reveals of Jamil's inner world: **"The water turned a deep rosy pink, the colour of his shame for having Abida as a daughter"** (Khan, 2021, p. 53). The image is striking his shame is not at his own violence, but at his daughter's existence. This projection, in Freudian terms, is the displacement of internal guilt onto an external object (Freud, 1917/1957). Even more disturbing, the novel briefly reveals that Jamil had, for a fleeting moment, imagined **"holding his daughter's neck between his hands"** (Khan, 2021, p. 52) before his knife came down on a chicken. This fantasy, immediately repressed, illustrates what Chodorow (1999) describes as the psychic cost of patriarchal masculinity that men are culturally conditioned to see violence against women as an available response to shame, even when they love their daughters. His anguish deepens when Abida reveals her pregnancy: "**To his horror, Abida spread her hands across her belly… 'Abida, you have ruined us. You have ruined yourself'"** (Khan, 2021, p. 61). Feminist analysis shows how Abida's body is treated as a site of family honour, while psychoanalytic theory reveals Jamil's tears as expressions of repressed love colliding with unconscious fear of dishonour. His self-disgust is further exposed when the narrator notes he was **"disgusted to find himself sobbing like a girl"** (Khan, 2021, p. 61) — a phrase that reveals how deeply misogyny is embedded even in his self-understanding, policing his own emotional expression according to patriarchal norms.

The most intense moment comes when Abida is dragged before the jirga at the riverbank. Her humiliation is vividly described:

"**Her shirt had been torn all the way to her chest… her belly stood out… Abida's hair flew in the wind like the black sails of a sinking ship"** (Khan, 2021, p. 70). The tearing of her shirt is not incidental instead it is the deliberate sexualized humiliation of a woman whose pregnant body has been declared evidence of communal dishonour. Her body, placed on public display, is treated as property of the community rather than as her own. When she cries "**Abbu**!", Jamil feels it "**like a whip across his back"** (Khan, 2021, p. 70). He is forced to choose between love and honour — the pir distils the entire logic of the scene into a repeated chant: **"Love or honour?"** (Khan, 2021, p. 71), reducing Abida's life to a binary in which she has no place. The pir manipulates him: **"She ceased being your daughter when she fornicated with her lover. She deserves to die"** (Khan, 2021, p. 72). Psychoanalytically, the pir acts as the superego of the community — translating collective guilt and anxiety into an individual command, stripping Abida of her humanity so that Jamil's act of violence can be reclassified as duty rather than murder (Kakar, 1996). Under pressure, Jamil briefly pushes her into the river: **"He applied more pressure on her neck until her head vanished into the murky brown water"** (Khan, 2021, p. 72). But at the last second, he resists the collective demand, kicking the pir aside and saving her: "**She gasped like a newborn baby… Jamil pulled Abida close to his chest. He would never let anybody hurt her again"** (Khan, 2021, p. 73). The image of Abida gasping **"like a newborn baby"** is a

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symbolic rebirth — not only physical survival but the emergence of a relationship in which paternal love, for one moment, defeats communal honour. This moment symbolizes both his rebellion and the psychological toll of patriarchal codes that force fathers into roles of executioner. It also demonstrates the novel's central claim: that femicide is not inevitable, but is produced and can be interrupted by human choice, even within the most coercive patriarchal structures.

Yet survival does not equal freedom. Abida's later life in Lahore reveals new forms of violence. Her husband Kalim betrays her: "**Sold**. That was the first answer that was given to her constant questions. **'You've been sold by your husband for a few cheap shots of heroin'"** (Khan, 2021, p. 114). The repetition of the word "Sold" throughout the passage culminating in the stark comparison **"Sold. Like livestock"** (Khan, 2021, p. 116) enacts the psychological impact of commodification. Her life is not merely betrayed; it is exchanged like an object, confirming what feminist theory identifies as the continuum of patriarchal violence: the same ideology that permits a father to nearly drown his daughter permits a husband to sell his wife. Here, her life is commodified, echoing feminist arguments that patriarchy treats women as property. In the brothel, the madam coldly explains:

"**This is now your home… a place of merriment for men with refined tastes and deep pockets"** (Khan, 2021, p. 116). Apa Ji's use of domestic language — "home," "mother," "merriment" — is a grotesque inversion of safety; it weaponizes the vocabulary of care to enforce compliance, illustrating how patriarchal institutions disguise exploitation as protection. Another woman in the brothel, Muniba, shows Abida her stomach, **"riddled with silvery scars"** from being given to a violent client as punishment for attempting escape (Khan, 2021, p. 117). This moment confirms that the brothel, like the village jirga, enforces its authority through the threat of violence against women's bodies — the forms differ, but the mechanism is the same. Abida escapes the threat of femicide only to fall into exploitation, showing how patriarchal violence shifts form but continues to govern women's lives.

Even Kalim's justification reflects misogynistic thinking: **"She left me, the little kanjari… You just can't trust women, especially not in a place like Lahore"** (Khan, 2021, p. 146). His words expose a culture where women are blamed for men's failures, reflecting both fragile masculinity and unconscious fears of abandonment. This reflects what Freud (1917/1957) identifies as projection — a defence mechanism through which an individual displaces their own guilt and failure onto another person rather than confronting it directly. Kalim cannot confront his own role in the destruction of their relationship , his drug addiction, his sale of his wife and so reconstructs Abida as the agent of betrayal. The cultural availability of misogynistic language ("kanjari") provides him a ready-made script for this displacement, one that the community around him would recognise and accept as legitimate.

Thus, the novel portrays femicide in multiple dimensions: public spectacle (Shabnam), constant threat and near-death (Abida), betrayal and commodification (Kalim's actions), and the psychological torment of families (Jamil's struggle). Femicide in No Honour is not a single event but a system — one that threatens women's autonomy at every stage of their lives, from the forced marriage Abida resists, to the jirga that nearly kills her, to the brothel that imprisons her. The impact on families is shown most powerfully through Jamil: his love, his complicity, his repressed violence, and his eventual rebellion each reveal how patriarchal codes do not protect families but fracture them, forcing fathers, mothers, and siblings into roles of enforcer and victim simultaneously. Feminist and psychoanalytic frameworks together explain why this system persists: feminist theory identifies the structural inequalities and honour ideologies that normalize

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violence, while psychoanalysis reveals the unconscious fears, shame, and fragile masculinity that compel individuals to participate in it even when they love the women they harm.

Discussion

The events in No Honour resonate strongly with real cases of femicide in Pakistan, where women are killed or punished for love, autonomy, or simply defying patriarchal expectations. The murder of Bano Satakzai in Balochistan (Dawn, 2024) and a young woman in Daska (The Express Tribune, 2024) show that women who marry by choice are often murdered by their families. Like Shabnam, these women are denied dignity in death; like Abida, many others survive only through external intervention. Reports by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2023) confirm that legal loopholes, such as family pardons, allow perpetrators of honour killings to escape justice, sustaining a culture of impunity. Khan (2022) further documents that in South Asia, women are frequently killed by relatives specifically for marrying by choice or asserting independence — precisely the acts of autonomy that Abida embodies and that the village punishes. Menjívar (2011) similarly shows, in her study of Guatemala, that femicide is sustained not by individual deviance but by systemic impunity and the normalization of gender-based violence within communities — a pattern that mirrors the jirga's function in the novel, where the pir's moral authority converts murder into social obligation. These real-world parallels confirm that Khan's novel is not a sensationalized fictional account but an accurate literary reflection of ongoing social realities in South Asia.

From a feminist perspective, the novel reflects Simone de Beauvoir's (1949) claim that women are constructed as **"the Other,"** denied individuality and treated as bearers of family honour.. Judith Butler's (1990) work on enforced gender norms also helps explain why Abida's rejection of a forced marriage provokes violence: by refusing to perform her culturally assigned role, she destabilizes the system. Even women like Abida's mother reinforce these roles, slapping her to ensure conformity. Feminist scholars such as Dawson and Carrigan (2021) describe this as the expendability of women under patriarchy, where culture disguises femicide as moral duty. Variava and Dekel (2024), in their systematic review of femicide across Africa, similarly argue that gender-based killing persists wherever cultural inequality, economic dependence, and state inaction intersect — conditions that map directly onto the world of Khan Wala village, where the pir controls moral authority, women have no economic independence, and the police arrive only after Jamil has already chosen love over honour.. Russell and Radford (1992), who first systematized the term femicide, emphasized that such killings are never purely individual acts but expressions of patriarchal power operating at the societal level — a claim the novel dramatizes through the collective participation of the crowd at Shabnam's murder and the jirga's authority over Abida's fate.

Psychoanalytic theory provides insight into the inner conflicts of men like Jamil. His tears when he sees Abida's pregnancy "You have ruined us" reveal the unconscious fear of dishonour that overwhelms paternal love. Freud's (1920/1961) concept of the death drive is reflected in his near act of drowning her, where love and destruction are fused.. Chodorow (1999) explains this through fragile masculinity, where male identity depends on controlling women's sexuality. The pir embodies the superego of the community, manipulating Jamil's guilt by insisting Abida is no longer his daughter. Kakar (1996) specifically argues that honour-based violence often functions symbolically as a mechanism for restoring male pride in the face of perceived shame, precisely the logic the pir uses when he reframes Jamil's near-murder of his daughter as a restoration of family dignity rather than as a crime. Freud's (1917/1957) earlier concept of repression is equally

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visible in Jamil's behaviour: his love for Abida does not disappear but is suppressed beneath layers of communal expectation, only breaking through at the riverbank when his unconscious — his memory of her first steps, her chubby face smeared with candy reasserts itself against the patriarchal command.

Kalim's betrayal in Lahore "She left me, the little kanjari… You just can't trust women" illustrates projection, where his own failures are displaced onto Abida. This psychoanalytic lens helps explain why men often justify violence as a response to women's supposed betrayal. Abida's exploitation in the brothel, meanwhile, shows how patriarchy continues to control women even when honour killings fail. The move from village to city does not liberate Abida; it simply exchanges one patriarchal institution (the jirga) for another (the brothel). This continuity of control reflects what feminist scholars describe as the structural nature of gender-based violence . it is not produced by individual bad actors but by systemic conditions that make women's bodies continuously available for male exploitation regardless of setting or geography (Russell & Radford, 1992).

Globally, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022) reported that 137 women were killed daily by family members, while the World Health Organization (2021) confirmed that 38% of female murders were committed by intimate partners. No Honour dramatizes this reality: women were not endangered by strangers but by those closest to them like brothers, fathers, husbands, community leaders. The novel also highlights an often-overlooked dimension familial trauma. Jamil embodies the silent victims of patriarchy, men forced to choose between their daughters and their reputations. His eventual defiance at the riverbank challenges the jirga, showing that resistance is possible, though at great cost. Importantly, the novel's treatment of familial trauma addresses a significant gap in existing scholarship: most studies focus on women as direct victims, but rarely examine the psychological destruction experienced by family members who are coerced into participating in or witnessing femicide. Jamil's conflicted interiority such as his repressed love, his brief fantasy of violence, his collapse into tears, his final rebellion — maps the psychic cost of patriarchal honour codes on the men they are supposed to empower.

Literature like No Honour is significant because it breaks cultural silences around femicide. Just as Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero (1983) and Qaisra Shahraz's The Holy Woman (2001) critiqued women's oppression, Khan's novel situates femicide within both cultural and psychological frameworks. By combining feminist and psychoanalytic analysis, the novel demonstrates that femicide is not only a crime but also a cultural practice, normalized through honour codes and unconscious fears. Literature in this tradition does not merely represent violence; it performs what Dawson and Carrigan (2021) call the "accurate recognition" of gender-related motives — making visible the ideological structures that official and legal discourse frequently obscures or misnames. In Pakistan, where family pardons routinely neutralize the legal consequences of honour killings (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2023), the cultural recognition that literature enables may be one of the few available mechanisms for challenging impunity.

Through close reading of No Honour, this chapter has shown how femicide devastates women and families alike. Shabnam's death illustrates the normalization of honour killings; Abida's struggles reveal how women live under constant threat; Kalim's betrayal exposes the commodification of women; and Jamil's conflict highlights the psychological toll on families. Feminist theory explains the structural inequalities sustaining this violence, while psychoanalysis uncovers the hidden fears and fragile masculinity that perpetuate it. When connected to real cases in Pakistan and global data, the novel reflects femicide as both a social system and a psychological burden. Ultimately,

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No Honour is not just a story of one girl but a reflection of how patriarchal societies force women and families into cycles of fear, loss, and resistance.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research investigated the impact of femicide as represented in Awais Khan's No Honour (2021), with particular attention to its destructive effects on women's autonomy and family relationships. By applying feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives, the study demonstrated that femicide is not limited to the act of killing women but also operates as a cultural system of fear, humiliation, and control that confines women's lives within patriarchal structures. The analysis showed that femicide was represented in two ways within the novel. Shabnam's murder in the opening chapter illustrated the lethal consequence of honour-based violence, where the community normalized her death as a necessary act to restore family dignity. Abida's story, by contrast, revealed the persistent threat of femicide, as her struggle for autonomy and survival was shaped by constant fear of death, public humiliation, and betrayal, even though she ultimately survived. In this way, the novel represented femicide as both a physical act and a psychological weapon that silences women and restricts their independence.

The findings also confirmed that femicide had a devastating impact on families, especially fathers who were torn between love and societal pressure. Jamil's inner conflict, expressed in his inability to choose between "love or honour," demonstrated how patriarchal traditions forced men to sacrifice their emotions to maintain their social status. His suffering revealed that families, too, are victims of this violent system, a perspective often overlooked in existing scholarship. While most studies focus on women as direct victims, No Honour expanded the scope by showing how the psychological burden of femicide fractures fathers, mothers, and siblings, leaving behind trauma and guilt.

Feminist theory proved vital in analyzing how patriarchal traditions and honour-based ideologies normalized the expendability of women. Female characters such as Abida's mother revealed how even women internalized these cultural codes, pressuring families to choose honour over love. Psychoanalytic theory further uncovered the unconscious fears and anxieties that shaped characters' actions. Jamil's repression of his paternal love, his projection of guilt onto Abida, and his fear of communal shame illustrated how fragile masculinity and fear of exclusion sustained the cycle of violence. This dual application of feminist and psychoanalytic frameworks allowed a deeper understanding of femicide as both a structural and psychological phenomenon, fulfilling the study's research objectives.

The study also highlighted how the novel connects with real-world contexts. Cases such as the killing of Bano Satakzai in Balochistan and the murder of a young woman in Daska in 2024 show that the themes dramatized in No Honour are not fictional exaggerations but reflect ongoing realities in Pakistan. Like Abida, these women suffered under cultural codes that equated family reputation with control of female bodies, and like Jamil, many families were trapped in impossible choices between affection and survival in a patriarchal society. By dramatizing such struggles, literature serves as an important medium for raising awareness and challenging oppressive traditions.

Therefore, this study found that No Honour portrays femicide as a destructive force that devastates women's autonomy and family bonds, while also exposing the psychological costs of patriarchal expectations. The novel not only confirmed global and regional findings about the normalization of violence against women but also filled a research gap by showing the inner conflict of fathers and families caught in this system. Future research should expand on this contribution by

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examining how other South Asian literary works represent femicide, by exploring the psychological effects on families who become "silent victims" of honour codes, and by connecting literary portrayals more closely to policy debates and legal reforms. Such work can strengthen the link between cultural representation and social change, making literature a tool not only for critique but also for awareness and resistance.

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