

(Un)Screening Objectification: Women in Pakistani Films

Neelum Almas
Shaheena Ayub Bhatti

Abstract

*Pakistani films are regaining popularity and a stream of young directors from the world of television is marking the development of a new era for cinema in Pakistan. This new wave of films that are attracting the urban educated, typically-averse-to-Pakistani-ventures-viewers to cinema is being appreciated and lauded for its efforts. Attention must be paid to the type of subjects and stories these film makers are producing for the audience today. This article seeks to explore the very sensitive and important issue of female objectification with Martha Nussbaum's objectification theory as the theoretical perspective. Nussbaum's theory focuses on the issue of objectification from a unique perspective i.e. the objectification of the personhood rather than the body. The essay is delimited to two films from the year 2015: *Jawani Phir Nahi Ani* and *Wrong No* and explores how these films portray the objectification of the female characters. The article concludes that women in the selected contemporary Pakistani films have not yet been able to do away with the objectification of personhood. The women characters in the films may be presented as apparently strong and powerful women who are working with men but a close look at their representation confirms that there is a long way to go in liberating women in Pakistani cinema from the stereotypical passivity and lack of agency that has been traditionally assigned to them.*

Keywords: Feminism, objectification, Martha Nussbaum, film studies, denial of autonomy, instrumentality, inertness, denial of subjectivity, ownership

1. Introduction

Sara Faruqi, writing in Dawn newspaper, describes a scene from a typical Pakistani film states:

"A curled moustache, a devious smile followed by booming evil laughter and the villain of a Pakistani film has captured the heroine. With her pleas for help, often followed by distressed movements to escape, the hero may enter the scene. A fight scene ensues, along with dhsom sounds and long periods in between where the camera zooms up from the villain to the hero's face". (2013)

She goes on to claim that there has been a revival of Pakistani cinema and films have been produced that do not follow this formula. Khalid (2013) feels that *Zinda Bhaag* captures the conflicts of the Pakistani and the South Asian youth and gives them voice on the screen while Naqvi states that Pakistani films released in 2013 take 'the road less travelled by' and talk about issues other than the damsel in distress and prince charming saga.

"With the entrance of young producers, directors and actors, the Pakistani industry has hopes for better things to come" (Shahid, 2015). While Naqvi (2013) is cautious to label the recent activities on the film scene a revival and christens the recent momentum "Return of Cinema to Pakistan", Andrew (2015) asserts: "Gone are the days of the *gujjars* and *gandaasas*, seamlessly replaced by a

mix of artsy biopics, big budget entertainers, kitschy coming of age numbers and rollicking, if raunchy, comedies". He sees "a new age of Pakistani cinema" that has "diversity of subjects" as a major characteristic. This notion is echoed by commentators like Umnia Shahid (2015) as she says, "Crowds are feeling confident about going to cinemas to watch local movies like *Bin Roye* and *Wrong No.*, without regretting ... these movies could be branded as somewhat decent—which is in fact, a massive improvement for our rickety production ethics". She further says that with more "decent looking Pakistani" movies we are heading towards the right direction. On their face value, critics and viewers alike see these new Pakistani movies as positive signs towards the modernization and revival of the Pakistani film industry. In this situation where these films are termed a breath of fresh air for viewers who earlier had no option but to seek entertainment through Indian films, it becomes more necessary than ever to look more critically at the content and representation of the female characters in emerging films to see how they depict contemporary Pakistani society, specially the women characters in contemporary Pakistani cinema.

Pakistani cinema is witnessing exciting times; there have been ventures by a new breed of directors, producers, writers and performers but the biases and prejudices against women, minorities, races and countries remain strong parts of the plots. This essay aims to study Pakistani films from the perspective of objectification of women to determine if contemporary directors and producers etc. have indeed ushered in a new era in the ideology regarding women.

2. Significance and Statement of the Problem

Keeping in view the enthusiasm of the film critics who see contemporary Pakistani films as a new wave of consciousness and see a revival of films in Pakistan, both in the quantity and in the subject matter of the films, this article focuses on the objectification of female characters in contemporary Pakistani cinema. This study is significant in terms of being an expose in the Pakistani context as the films of the "revival era" are praised for the rejuvenation of local cinemas and their rejection of "the gruesome trends" followed previously by local films. The present study is an attempt to explore an important area of concern which is overlooked when the attention of critics is focused more on the exteriority of films rather than their themes and subjects—the roles and depiction of women on screen and herein lies its significance. The essay will demonstrate whether there has been any improvement in the representation of women or if the female characters in films are still objectified with respect to their personhood, in which they are not allowed to act as free, autonomous and rational human beings. It will examine if the authority figures and men in the lives of the female characters objectify them in terms of objectification of the selves.

To study the issue of objectification of women in contemporary Pakistani films, this paper focuses on two top grossing Pakistani films of the year 2015. Since this is a qualitative analysis, it is based on textual interpretations of the female characters from the perspective of objectification of personhood or personality.

3. Theoretical Framework

The aspects of objectification that this research paper deals with are not the physical or sexual objectification of women but the objectification of the personhood of women. "Objectification entails making into a thing, treating as a thing, something that is really not a thing" (Nussbaum, 1999, p. 218). In order to study the objectification of the personhood the study is grounded in the

theory of objectification as presented by Martha Nussbaum. The study focuses on Nussbaum's seven notions of objectification. It will be focused on identification of these notions in the selected films to see how women are denied autonomy and subjectivity and if they are treated as inert, fungible and violable.

Nussbaum's Seven Notions of Objectification

Instrumentality is the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier's purpose

Denial of autonomy is the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination;

Inertness involves the treatment of a person lacking in agency and perhaps also in activity;

Fungibility occurs when a person is interchangeable with other objects

Violability is the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity.

Ownership is the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another which can be bought or sold and

Denial of subjectivity takes place when a person's experiences and feelings are not taken into account (Nussbaum, 1999, p. 218).

Nussbaum's contemporary theory of objectification owes a substantial debt to Immanuel Kant who addressed the problem of objectification and instrumentality in his "Lectures in Ethics". Kant (1930) argues that the most notable characteristic of human beings is their ability to reason and make rational choices. When this agency is denied and human beings are used merely as instruments or means to an end they lose the rational agency and are lowered to the status of animals or objects. Objectification refers to perceiving a person as object. The target of objectification is likely to be perceived as less fully human. Philosophers, psychologists and feminists have discussed whether focus on a person's body influences how her mind is perceived. Immanuel Kant's philosophical observations about human dignity and worth have been adopted by feminist scholars in their debate on objectification. Feminist theorists like MacKinnon, Dworkin and Nussbaum adopted and extended Kant's idea and argued that women as sexual objects are seen as mindless creatures. This theory of the treatment of women as mere beings with bodies is termed as the theory of objectification. The crux of the objectification theory is that perceiving women as mere sexual objects shows disregard for the humanity that is reflected through the mind; focus on the body causes one to disregard the mental and moral status of women (Dworkin, 2000; McKinnon, 2006; Nussbaum, 1999).

Nussbaum, in outlining the seven notions of objectification, draws attention to the objectification of the mind whereas earlier research and feminist scholarship on objectification had focused on the physical or sexual objectification of women. Dworkin, McKinnon and Nussbaum's studies on the representation of women in pornography and films focus on the sexual objectification of women. Many contemporary feminists describe objectification as the "process of lowering or degrading a human being to the level of an object by not acknowledging his or her inherent dignity" (Rector, 2014, p. 15).

Nussbaum outlines the various components of objectification which show how a woman's mental and emotional capacities are reduced by turning her into a thing. Stressing that treatment of a woman as sex object for one's pleasure is only one part of the complex issue of objectification, and Nussbaum argues that these seven notions of objectification are employed to deny a woman her personhood or humanity by disregarding her mental capacities and competencies. She also

sheds light on the connections between these notions. For instance she states that “ownership does entail lack of self-determination and autonomy” (Nussbaum, 1999, p. 220) as it is theoretically linked to absence, since an item that is owned will definitely lack autonomy. Similarly a person’s feelings and experiences may be disregarded without treating them as instruments or violable. Taking Nussbaum’s notions of objectification of the personhood, we are attempting to explore the female characters in selected Pakistani films to determine the various ways of objectifying a person and how they work in the treatment of a woman by other men and women. The study does not focus on the sexual or physical objectification of the body, but the other forms such as instrumentality—when a person is treated as a tool or is replaced once the purpose is fulfilled, showing denial of autonomy—when a person is prevented from acting independently and her freedom or decision making powers are controlled or not granted.

Nussbaum’s extension of the theory of objectification reveals that the concept should be seen in a larger context and should not be limited to sexual aspect only. This theory of Nussbaum invites us to look at the idea of objectification in a new light and discover the different ways of objectifying a person.

4. Literature Review

Research on recent Pakistani films is scant. Ali and Ayesha (2015) in their study “Violence against Women in Pakistani Feature Films” investigated the trend of showing physical violence against women in Pakistani films that belong to the era referred to by Pakistani film critics as the revival of the Pakistani cinema. They conducted research on five Pakistani Urdu films released in the year 2013 and concluded that women are a frequent target of violence and that the men in their lives such as husbands, brothers or boyfriends indulge in physical violence and control the lives of their women through violent acts (Ali and Ayesha, 2015). This study primarily adopted a quantitative approach by identifying the various forms of physical and verbal violence such as beating, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, rape, murder etc. that women faced in selected films and determined the frequency of the scenes of violence against women, measuring their frequency and screen time. Although their study takes into account contemporary Pakistani films and the depiction of violence against women, it does not look at the idea of Objectification or personhood and instead only focuses on one aspect that is violence perpetrated against women. Thus the present study is different from the one conducted by Ali and Ayesha, since it specifically studies the objectification of the personhood of women in Pakistani films through a qualitative analysis of the film text.

In another study conducted on Pakistani films Ali, Hassan and Wajid (2014) have discussed Urdu and Punjabi films exhibited between 1988 and 1990 and explore the image of women that these films present to the viewers. Ali et al state that the majority of these films present a stereotypical image of Pakistani women by confining them to domestic roles that show them as subordinate to men. Their research concludes that the portrayal of women in both Urdu and Punjabi films of the 90’s era fail to portray the realistic roles women play in Pakistani society. Women are presented in two extreme roles; either as docile, self-sacrificing virgins or as lustful, manipulative whores. These films project male whims and desires and show that patriarchal discourse regarding the physical and intellectual superiority of men and inferiority of women has been sanctioned and made acceptable through popular discourse such as films where men dominate and organize the discourse.

Keeping in view the research on contemporary Pakistani films which have been referred to as revival of cinema, it is observed that the issue of objectification of personhood needs attention of the researchers.

5. Discussion

5.1 Denial of Autonomy

Martha Nussbaum states that one of the seven ways to deny a person her humanity and treat her as an object is denying her autonomy. For denial of autonomy “The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination” (Nussbaum, 1999, p. 218). Women are hardly ever presented in Pakistani films as autonomous characters. Their representation as side kick or mere sex object status in media shows that the women in these films lack autonomy.

Jawani Phir Nahi Aani presents Sherry the lawyer from America who wants to take his married friends away from their families to take a break from routine life and enjoy, the same adventures that they used to indulge in in their bachelorhood. It is emphasized from the very outset of the film that his three friends are miserable, henpecked husbands. All three of them sulk and complain about their being miserable and living like cowards with domineering wives. Sherry manipulates his friends’ wives by stating that he is suffering from a heart condition that is difficult to treat. Instead of asking for permission to take his friends along on a trip, he evokes the sympathies of the friends’ wives and offers them lavish presents to allow their husbands to accompany their ailing and lonely friend who has no one to take care of him. It appears that the dominating wives are allowing their husbands to go with their friend, hence they are autonomous and are exercising their power as decision makers in the family but if the situation is observed carefully it becomes evident from the perspective of the objectification theory that it is Sherry, the man who is playing with these women and their emotions. It is not that the wives granting permission to their husbands, rather they are manipulated and tactfully forced to grant permission. This is denial of autonomy as the women are not autonomous in deciding the affairs that concern them. There is a man who apparently does not seem to be but is actually threatening their autonomy by gaining their sympathies and posing as a miserable man and is in fact deceiving them.

Another important aspect in this situation is that Sherry wins the hearts of the controlling wives of his friends by offering expensive gifts to them and their children and by taking them out on shopping trips. He silences them and the women are overwhelmed with his generosity. Hence they do not say a word against him nor do they develop any suspicion about him, although they suspect their husbands of cheating or dodging them. It looks as if the wives are given power and autonomy over their husbands, as the husbands cannot do anything without the permission of their wives but the way it has been done proves that there is a subtle way that is used for the objectification of the personhood of the women: the decision here is not that of the wives but of the man—Sherry. Therefore this example can be seen as the denial of autonomy of women.

The so-called domineering wives on finding out about their husband’s dishonesty and lies, decide to divorce their husbands. They show autonomy by deciding for themselves the course of action and by breaking up with their husbands. However the husbands do not want to divorce them and want the wives to change their decision. Kubra, Saif’s wife, files a case against him in order to take divorce. After the session in the courtroom, when everyone is leaving, Kubra drives past Saif in her car and when he shouts, she immediately stops the car to listen to what he has to say.

Despite her rejection of her husband she is unable to refuse his order and stops to listen to him showing that she still cannot think and act autonomously.

Marina travels from Bangkok to Pakistan in search of Sherry because she wants to marry him. It is her decision to marry Sherry, although Sherry is not serious about establishing a relationship with Marina. Although Marina, in deciding to travel to Pakistan to find Sherry, shows autonomy and agency being ready to face any trouble that comes her way, she is accompanied by her father who does not approve of her marriage to Sherry. He discovers something negative about Sherry and declares that she cannot marry Sherry, disregarding his daughter's protests and ordering his servants to take her away.

Examples like that of Marina and Kubra show that although the female characters in the film look different from the run-of-the-mill submissive and taciturn eastern females they are still trapped in the conventional system of patriarchy. A similar instance of denial of autonomy can be noticed in Zoya's mother. When Mehboob Khan's, (Zoya's father) friend from abroad, comes to meet him he asks his wife to greet the rich and influential guest so that he is not displeased. In this instance also Mehboob Khan makes his wife obey his command, although the wife does not want to. It is evident that the autonomy of women is just a façade that they are domineering and controlling wives whose husbands are less powerful than them but these instances show that they lack autonomy in matters regarding the important decisions about their life. Kubra files a divorce against her husband on account of his lies and dishonesty but cannot ignore him when he calls out to her. Marina dares to come all the way from Bangkok to find the man she loves and is able to convince him to marry her but she cannot convince her father or escape patriarchal dominance. Zoya's mother, too, after spending her life with Mehboob Khan, has to act against her will to please her husband and his guest.

It is interesting to note that when Zoya discovers that Sherry has had an affair with another girl, she declares that she will not marry him. When the family asks Sherry if he loves one of the two girls, Zoya quickly retorts "Why would he decide about us. I am breaking up" (Nawaz, Yasir & Zia, 2015) showing autonomy on the part of Zoya, in that she chooses what she likes and thinks appropriate for herself without consulting her parents. But Zoya's autonomy is presented as a negative trait since Zoya is shown as a girl who is influenced by western culture. She does not represent eastern women but is shown as the spoiled daughter of a billionaire who is fashionable and fickle. Owing to these facts her autonomy is presented as the mark of western influence and culture and as such is not a desirable trait for a Pakistani woman. Her foreignness and lack of Eastern values is emphasized by the fact that she does not pursue her love. On getting to know about the reality of the man whom a while ago she was so eager to marry, she quickly decides to leave him on the day of their wedding. Her actions represent that she is a modern woman, influenced by western thoughts and so not ready to tolerate any laxity in the man she would marry.

Kubra on the other hand is shown as the one who forsakes her autonomy in order to prove loyal to her husband despite his deviance. Although she files a divorce case against her husband and decides to leave her cheating husband, she changes her decision when she hears her husband's emotional speech in court. This change of heart shows the typical non-autonomous and submissive behavior of women who fold over in the face of their man's plea or avowal of love. Despite the

fact that Kubra overhears her husband stating to his friend “I can marry anyone” (Iqbal, S., Saeed, H., Nasib, S., & Seja, J., 2015) she gives in to his emotional persuasion.

In *Wrong No.* the mother’s pleas have no effect on the father Haji baba, who is bent upon punishing his son for failing in the exam and lying to him. The mother intervenes to save her son from his father’s wrath but the father does not listen to her. She is on her knees, literally begging him to spare the son this time. The father with a baton in his hand wants to give his son a beating by tying him to a pole. The mother lies on the floor and begs him for her son’s life, and to have mercy on him. This incident shows that the mother has no autonomy as she cannot do anything but pray to God for her son’s safety. Her role has been reduced to that of a spectator by her husband as he himself decides what to do with their son. The husband decides the role for her and she cannot actually *do* anything since she has no autonomy. In another scene he orders his wife not to give the son any food. These instances show that the wife is not autonomous in deciding about anything that concerns her and her family. The daughter-in-law of Haji baba also gets his advice in everything that she does: whether it is in cooking food or trimming her hair for the wedding she asks Haji baba how to do it, showing that the women of the family are dependent on the male head who decides all matters of their life and they cannot do anything without his approval.

Haya also has no autonomy as her grandfather decides about her marriage. On the surface Haya is shown as a modern girl who works as a secretary in a private company and scolds a peon for his dumb and silly questions. But when her grandfather calls her she submits to meeting the boy he says is coming to see her, without asking him a question. In the same way Laila is given autonomy in the sense that she is pursuing Sallu to convince him to marry her despite Sallu’s rejection. It seems that Laila is autonomous in making the decision regarding her marriage. She vows never to give up on Sallu, no matter how many times he rejects her. Her resolve to marry the man of her choice gives the impression that she is not a typical meek maiden who will be intimidated by the refusal and disapproval or will marry only the person her family chooses for her. On the surface it may be taken as autonomy of women, except for the fact that in the end the girl does not marry the man she had been pursuing; instead she marries another man showing that autonomy and decision making is not granted to her. The show of confidence does not actually lead to making her empowered enough to do as she desires. In another scene when Sallu lashes out at her in anger and blames her for stopping him from pursuing his dreams she stands still: silent and stupefied. Here she is not even given voice. At the beginning of the film she is shown as a brave and confident girl who seems to be doing whatever she desires, likediscovering Sallu on the terrace whenever he is home, even managing to steal into his room undetected by other family members, but before Sallu she is shown as helpless and unable to defend herself or express her feelings.

5.2 Inertness

Martha Nussbaum defines inertness as the treatment of another person as if they lack agency, and also activity (1999, p. 218). Agency has been defined as “the capacity to act, plan and exert self-control” (Gray 1208). It is one of the characteristics of human nature that defines human dignity and freedom and worth. Denial of agency implies that the behavior of others is directed or controlled rather than stemming from personal will.

The female characters in the selected films appear to have agency since they are presented as dominating wives, whose husbands are scared of them and seem submissive. Although the women

in the film are granted agency, it is in limited roles and is not due to the recognition of their status as women or as who they are: independent, autonomous human beings regardless of their roles as wives, sisters, daughters or females. The instances where they are granted agency are the ones where they are looked at or presented as not being autonomous and active agents but the agency is granted to them due to their relation with someone. For instance when Sheikh's wife Gull points a gun towards her husband the viewer is given an impression that the wife is bold, powerful and exercises dominance over her husband whom she scares by pointing a gun towards him, but in fact, the lines that the wife speaks to evoke fear in the heart of her husband reveal that here also the woman is relying on a man's power. She says that her husband must not forget that her brother is a brave and proud *Pakhtoon* and he will reprimand him for his laxity. "It seems you haven't talked to my brother for a long time. Have you forgotten who he is?" (Iqbal et al., 2015). Here the wife is shown as not independent since she appears to threaten her husband at the same time relying on a man—her brother thereby proving that she herself has no agency and is dependent on a man to fix her problem and deal with the issues that she is facing.

Another instance of lack of agency can be observed in a scene where Kubra catches her husband who is cheating on her and is dating another woman. She calls her husband and makes him repeat her words aloud so that the woman that he is with, feels humiliated and leaves her husband. When she succeeds in making her husband repeat what she is telling him over the phone it appears that the wife has succeeded in acting as an active agent and has made her husband obey her but later, the husband is shown as a womanizer who is often caught by his wife in similar situations, proving that despite the wife's control and monitoring he is able to cheat her and she has not yet been successful in stopping him or changing him. Therefore it can be concluded that the agency of the female character appears to have been granted but it is not effective, since it is not acquired.

Another example of superficial agency is observed when the wives meet their husband's friend Sherry; in this particular meeting which takes place in a restaurant they converse with the friend and ask him questions which give the impression that they have the agency to play active roles and are not of secondary status. The questions and topics the wives are interested in show that they are confined to the conventional roles assigned to women. Kubra and Gull ask Sherry questions regarding his marriage and relationships showing that women cannot think of topics and issues of national interest and their talk revolves around trivial and domestic things. These and other examples show that the female characters in the film have been granted the agency of speech but it has not changed their image of being typical women who can only think about trivial ideas.

In the film *Jawani Phir Nahi Aani* the women issue orders to their husbands thereby giving the impression that the women have power and autonomy. A close analysis of the characters, however, reveals that although the women try to dominate their husbands, the husbands are all powerful in making decisions for them, for instance Kubra is able to keep track of her husband's engagements and affairs. When he leaves for Bangkok with Sherry, she keeps a check on him via video chat in order to make sure that he is not with another woman. Here it is significant to note that although Kubra monitors her husband's activities she still cannot make him comply with her commands. His disregard for her orders shows lack or ineffectiveness of her agency which the women appear to have but the men still dominate in various ways.

The female characters in *Jawani Phir Nahi Aani*, have autonomy in limited roles, being presented as dominating wives whose husbands fear them and therefore lie and cheat the wives. The agency of the female characters is therefore ineffective or partial: it is in stereotypical roles and spheres where these women can exercise their autonomy and show agency. In a scene in a restaurant, Pervez's wife refuses to take her son to the washroom, when he disturbs her conversation with her friend. In this scene it is evident that she can exercise autonomy only in limited or conventional roles such as that of a mother and in other spheres she cannot exercise autonomy and agency.

5.3 Instrumentality

Martha Nussbaum defines instrumentality as treating someone as a tool for one's purposes (1999, p. 218). Instrumentality is one of the ways that is used to objectify someone. It is negative because a person's value is determined on the basis of being a tool to help the objectifier or the agent to fulfill his goals. Instrumentality is problematic in the sense that when a person/woman is perceived merely as an instrument to be used to one's advantage, the objectifier is overlooking the personhood and humanity and engaging in objectification.

Kubra's husband fears that he will lose all the money and property if his wife succeeds in getting a divorce. This is one of the reasons that he wants to save his marriage from breaking up. In this instance his wife is an instrument that he needs in order to lead a comfortable life. In other words, it is not Kubra's love that he is scared to lose but the financial security that he enjoys in his marriage. It is evident from the statement of his wife that she is an instrument that he uses for tax evasion. He inquires in exasperation as to why he has to forfeit his assets. The lawyer reminds him that he had willed everything to his wife so in the event of a divorce she would be able to retain everything that he had willed to her. "Whether it is income tax authorities or wives, both take away money", on hearing this Hamza says that he willed everything to his wife because he loves her. To this his wife remarks "Not at all! You did so to evade income tax" (Iqbal et al., 2015) thus exposing her husband's true intentions.

5.4 Denial of Subjectivity

Martha Nussbaum states that denial of subjectivity occurs when "the objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings need not be taken into account" (1999, p. 218). People's subjective experiences, feelings and emotions if ignored by others, lead to holding them outside the scope of moral concern and can lead to other forms of objectifications such as instrumentality, fungibility and ownership. Heather M. Gray and Daniel M. Wagner opine that when we perceive others as humans we want to save them from destruction and try to make them happy (2007, p. 619). Disregard for someone's subjectivity leads to objectification. The women in the films are also denied subjectivity as the husbands do not take their wives' feelings into account. Sheikh's wife is expecting a child, yet he leaves her when she needs him the most and agrees to his friend Sherry's suggestion of the "only boys" trip to Bangkok. Saif also disregards his wife Kubra's feelings and accompanies them to Bangkok. They do not think how hurt their wives would be, if they come to know about their husbands' cheating and dishonesty.

From the beginning of the film *Jawani Phir Nahi Aani*, Pervez and his wife Lubna's relationship is presented as one where Pervez is dissatisfied with his romantic life. He feels that his wife does not take care of his emotional needs and that their relationship lacks passion. He is often shown giving vent to his feelings of disappointment when he is with his friends or at home. He seeks his

friend Saif's guidance to bring back the spark in his relationship, "My marriage has completely been ruined...how to bring back the romance?" (Iqbal et al., 2015). He longs for passion and his disappointment overshadows his relationship as if a woman is of no other value but that of satisfying his carnal desires. Pervez's attitude shows that for him the wife is more an instrument for emotional satisfaction and the man whose marriage lacks this aspect is extremely unfortunate.

In the film, *Wrong No.*, there is a scene where the father is preparing to give a beating to his son for his persistent cheating and lying and the mother interjects with pleas to stop her husband from beating his son. The husband does not take into account the wife's pleas and scolds her for interrupting. He is angry at his son's constant trickery, lying and cheating and wants to teach him a lesson but when his wife intervenes to save the son, he pushes her aside saying that she should stay out of this matter. The husband's disregard for his wife's pleas and tears shows denial of subjectivity where the wife's emotions and feelings are not taken into account and the husband acts as he pleases. The wife's constant pleadings and requests to spare their son fall on deaf ears and nothing has any effect on him. Once when she comes between the son and the father he shouts at his son telling him that he will not spare him this time, "By God, I will not relent even for your mother" (Nawaz et al., 2015) showing clearly how little he cares for his wife's feelings. No matter how hurt she is at seeing her son being punished for not helping his father in his meat shop, he will not be stopped from punishing his son.

6. Ownership

In the context of objectification Martha Nussbaum defines ownership as using someone in a manner as if she is owned by another. "The objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another" (1999, p. 218). Treating a person as an object owned by someone also entails "lack of self-determination and autonomy" (Nussbaum, 1999, p. 220). A person's selfhood and humanity is denied when they are not properly acknowledged as owners of their own will and are treated as objects. Shedding more light on Martha Nussbaum's conception of objectification, Jessica M. LaCroix and Felicia Pratto (2015, p. 195) state that "Ownership is acted out when people control others' freedom, presume that control of others is their right ...". In *Jawani Phir Nahi Aani*, when Marina's father finds out that Sherry is a highly unsuitable match for his daughter he orders his daughter not to marry him. When she refuses to comply with his father's command he orders his security guards to take her away and lock her up so that she cannot disobey him. In this situation the father acts in a very highhanded manner and almost as the owner of the girl, refusing to take into account the girl's feelings. He also does not try to investigate into the truth about Sherry since he can implement his order by making his daughter submit to him, and she being the weaker one is overpowered and subdued very easily.

7. Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine if in the contemporary mainstream Pakistani films women are shown as objectified by limiting their agency and autonomy. It exposes how men—whether as fathers, husbands, colleagues or bosses—dominate the lives of the female characters. The analysis conducted under Martha Nussbaum's framework of objectification reveals that the autonomy and agency of women is only a façade. To an extent autonomy is granted to the women but its extent and scope are defined by the men and are therefore limited to what the men think permissible. The analysis exposes claims that dominant groups and authority figures not only contain and restrict

these women's exercise of freedom and power but also deny them humanity through the various means of objectification.

The study shows that the Pakistani films of the present era, termed by some critics to be the forerunners in the revival of Pakistani Cinema, present women who may not readily be identified as meek or docile but who still are objectified. This points to be entrenchment of gender biases in the society and its artistic circles who are unable to break free of the shackles of Pakistani filmic conventions, social and filmic stereotypes and culturally defined roles. Overt sexism, objectification of the female body have been obvious to ordinary cinema goers and many went to the films for these very reasons. The newer film ventures proclaim to be different and certainly stem from a newer breed of writers, directors, producers and are aimed at an upwardly mobile audience who have a good awareness of gender issues in the society. Yet these new films have not really adopted a more positive representation of women. In fact the study shows that these films have adopted a more nuanced approach towards the objectification of women. Now it is not just the gyrating dance moves that objectify and demean women, and thereby suppress women. Now in addition to the objectification of the self the films objectify the personhood of the women even as they show the women in seemingly a dominating role of a wife controlling the husband, a professional playing a key role in running an organization. Though conjectures of the dominance of filmic conventions, and even the attitude of the society as the reasons for the biased representation of women can be made this was not a central concern of the study. But it is an important outcome of the study that the study shows there is a need to look into the workings of the film world to determine the reasons of the objectification and gender bias. Future studies regarding objectification will help clarify the reasons of the objectification and only then there may be talk to stemming this negative portrayal of women and their personhood.

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