

**Honour Crime in Fadia Faqir's *My Name Is Salma*  
A Feminist Perspective**

جريمة الشرف في رواية فاديا فقير / اسمي سلمى من منظور نسوي

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Master's Degree in English Language and Literature**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**Faculty of Arts and Science**

**Middle East University**

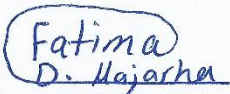
**December / 2016**

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor prof. Tawfiq Yousef who was very patient in reading and editing my research work to get it out in its final form. I have enjoyed working with him; his kindness, support and inspiration which helped me complete this thesis will never be denied or forgotten.

I would like to thank all the instructors of the Department of English Language and Literature at Middle East University for their help and cooperation. Special thanks go to the Committee members for their generous help.

My deep thanks go to my MA colleagues whom I am proud to know; their friendly advice kept me going on when I might have given up. Last but not least, my sincere thanks are to my best friends: Lana Atyat, Sahar Dawabsheh, Esra'a Qazzaz, Mabrooka Hammad and Nisreen Al-Qraa, who really loved and supported me during this journey. I am very grateful to all members of my family and everyone who helped me in preparing my thesis which was really a collaborative effort and a collective journey.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful and lovely family for supporting me along this journey. Their smiles, prayers, love and endless help lit my way till the end to accomplish my goals. I thank them all with all my heart, and I believe they were proud of my success. To my ideal father whose love and voice made me complete this work; his great support and guidance made my way easier. It is dedicated to my lovely mother, who believes in my dream and has always encouraged me to pursue my higher studies. I also dedicate it to my helpful siblings, who were very patient and supportive, my brothers: Fadi, Firas, Abdulrhman and Mohammed and my sisters: Fadwa, Mariam and Salam. Last but not least I dedicate this thesis to my cooperative husband Minwer who encouraged me to write about this subject and who supported me throughout every phase of this work and his encouraging words enabled me to continue. Finally, to my children, Monther and Jad and to the soul of my late grandfather who first introduced me to Bedouin traditions and enrolled me in BA program at the university by force. I truly love him and appreciate his encouragement.

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# **Honour Crime in Fadia Faqir's *My Name Is Salma*: A Feminist Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is a critical study of honour crime as portrayed in the Anglo- Arab writer Fadia Faqir's novel *My Name Is Salma*. It explores the cultural aspects and the social traditions pertaining to this issue. The study explores honour crime from a feminist perspective with special emphasis on the role of patriarchy and its effects on the protagonist's ultimate tragic death. The thesis explains the double oppression that the novel's heroine faces in both her Bedouin society and in the new society where she seeks refuge from the threats of murder made by her brother in the name of honour as a way of cleansing the family's honour and reputation. Although this novel is set in two different cultures, the oppression upon the protagonist continues to be exercised both from her Bedouin society where she is oppressed according to her gender as a woman, and Western society where she is marginalized according to her ethnic origin as an Arab. The study concludes that patriarchal societies set up unfair traditions derived from their inherited cultures to oppress women. Honour crime becomes the responsibility of the woman without taking into consideration the responsibility of the man. This practice ultimately leads to the woman becoming the sole victim of her society's unjust traditions. Honour crime tradition exists not only in Bedouin societies but also in some Arab and Muslim communities.

**Key Words:** Feminism, honour crime, Fadia Faqir, Salma.

## جريمة الشرف في رواية فاديا فقير /سمي سلمى من منظور نسوي

اعداد الطالبة: فاطمة داود المجارحة

بإشراف الاستاذ الدكتور: توفيق يوسف

### الملخص

هذه الرسالة دراسة نقدية لجريمة الشرف في رواية /سمي سلمى للكاتبة الإنجليزية من أصل عربي فاديا فقير توضح المظاهر الثقافية والتقاليد الاجتماعية المتعلقة بهذه الظاهرة. تناقش الدراسة جريمة الشرف من منظور نسوي مع التركيز على النظام الذكوري ودوره في النهاية المأساوية لبطلنة الرواية. توضح الدراسة الإضطهاد المزدوج الذي تتعرض له البطلنة في مجتمعها البدوي وفي المجتمع الجديد الذي لجأت إليه هرباً من تهديدات أخيها بقتلها بحجة تطهير شرف وسمعة العائلة. ورغم أن أحداث هذه الرواية تجري في ثقافتين مختلفتين إلا أن الضغوط على البطلنة تستمر من مجتمعها البدوي الذي يميز في معاملتها على أساس النوع (الجنس) ومن مجتمعها الجديد الذي يعاملها على أساس عرقي كفرد من أصل عربي. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن المجتمعات الذكورية تكرر تقاليد غير عادلة مستوحاة من تراثها الثقافي الموروث لممارسة الضغوط ضد المرأة وبالتالي تصبح جريمة الشرف مسؤولية المرأة دون أخذ دور الرجل بعين الاعتبار، وهذا يؤدي إلى جعل المرأة الضحية الوحيدة للتقاليد الاجتماعية غير العادلة. ولا تقتصر جريمة الشرف على المجتمع البدوي بل تتعداه إلى بعض المجتمعات العربية والإسلامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النسوية، جريمة الشرف، فاديا فقير، سلمى



## Chapter One

### Background of the study

#### 1.1. Introduction

Women prefer to express their ideas or emotions through writing; just on paper their voice can be heard revealing their simple dream. Through literature, they can express their wishes and concerns. Until these days, many Arab men do not believe in their women's rights even if they were a wife, a sister, mother or a daughter. They still believe in the traditional view about the female as a figure or object which they can keep in their house. Societal traditions portray woman as a creature who has to be invisible to others. Outside their homes, Arab women keep voiceless. Patriarchy is responsible for keeping their names secret in order to guard or save their families' honor. In other words, Arab women, in order to be identified, have to be related to men. From this view point, woman in the Arab world needs great efforts in order to liberate herself from these traditional authorities of man which he gained from societal culture over a long period of time.

Feminism is a movement that advocates women's rights on the ground of equality of the sexes. Through its history feminism has called for women's rights in education, politics, social life and religious issues. The early feminists focused on liberating women from their societies' oppression and called for their equality with men. Mary Wollstonecraft in her book's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) wrote about women's rights. She focused on how those rights, especially education, can change the

position of woman in her society. If she is well educated, she will be able to protect herself and her family. "It is time to effect a revolution in female manners—time to restore to them their lost dignity—and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners" (Wollstonecraft,1792,p.45). According to her, women's negative image or status has to be changed, and in order to achieve their own individual selves, they have to stand together to change their reality. Kathy Ferguson in her book *Self, Society and Womankind* (1980), like many other feminists, believes that women are restricted and programmed by cultural traditions and values. For Ferguson, those "social norms delimit women's place and male dominated institutions conspire to keep her in it" (Ferguson,1980,p.7). In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century women began to think in different ways about how to reach equality with men in the same society.

Feminists, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf and Alice Walker, struggled to prove women's rights even though they are simple and legal. They argued that women should gain their rights in education, in voting and in social and political issues and be able to have a voice in all these matters alongside men. All of them blamed patriarchy as having the authority to deprive women from their natural and social rights. Many feminists talked about patriarchal oppression upon women and how women are socially programmed to be oppressed. "I consider myself a recovering patriarchal woman. By patriarchal woman I mean, of course, a woman who has internalized the norms and values of patriarchy" (Tyson,1999,p.83). According to Tyson, women accept their society's oppressions without any attempt to resist. Women behave as if they were under a hypnotism that keeps them behaving unconsciously as a doll with a programmed mind that yields to patriarchal orders.

One of the most important aspects of patriarchal oppression is what is called "Honour Crime" or "Honour Killing". This term appeared in the Arab and Western worlds in order to show how both societies look at and deal with guilty women. Honour crime or honour killing is defined in the dictionary as "The killing of a relative, especially a girl or woman, who is perceived to have brought dishonor on the family"; or "The murder of a woman by a male relative because he believes that she has damaged the family's image". Unni Wikan (2008,p.90) defines honour killing as "a murder carried out in order to restore honor, not just for a single person but a collective. This presupposes the approval of a supportive audience, ready to reward murder with honor". Many Arab feminists focus on honour crime as a basic issue in Arab societies. For example, in her article (1996) Lama Abu- Odeh defines honour crime as "the killing of a woman by her father or brother for engaging in, or being suspected of engaging in, sexual practices before or outside marriage". Fadia Faqir (2001) also points out that honour crime is "the killings of women for deviation from sexual norms imposed by society".

Faqir widens her perspective and portrays this subject as a major theme in her novel *My Name Is Salma*, a story told by a Bedouin girl about sixteen to seventeen years old. She is a shepherdess who suddenly falls in love with a man called Hamdan. They begin to arrange a date to see each other. With the passage of time, their relationship becomes strong and they have a sexual relationship without a legal marriage. Unfortunately, Salma becomes pregnant. She hopefully tells her lover the truth about her pregnancy and her plan for their marriage, but he rejects her proposal and considers her as a criminal, a dirty creature and refuses to marry her. For him, she does not deserve to become his wife because of her acceptance of their forbidden relationship. Salma is

presented as a shameful creature who must be killed to purify the honour of her family. The novel ends dramatically with the murder of Salma exactly as Salma's mother told her "You smeared our name with tar. Your brother will shoot you between the eyes" (Faqr,2007,p. 13).

## **1.2. Faqr's biography**

Fadia Faqr is an Anglo- Arab writer. She was born in Amman in 1956. Her father descends from Al Ajarmah tribe and her mother from a Circassian family. She is married to a Palestinian and she had a son before her divorce. Living with a multicultural family has influenced her writing. She gained her BA in English Literature from the University of Jordan before she travelled abroad to Britain in order to pursue her study. In 1984 she gained her MA in creative writing at Lancaster University, and in 1990 The University of East Anglia awarded her the first Ph.D. in Creative and Critical Writing.

Faqr's works are written in her second language" English". She focuses on the Third World Women's issues, migration, identity and various aspects of Arab and Western cultures. Her novels include *Nisanit* (1988), *Pillars of Salt* (1996), and *My Name Is Salma* (2007) which was translated into thirteen languages and published in sixteen countries. Her fourth novel was *At the Midnight Kitchen* (2009), and her latest novel *Willow Trees don't Weep* was published in 2014. Faqr has also published some short stories and articles on different subjects.

The researcher will explore honour crime from different angles, viewing it as a social phenomenon worthy of investigation and literary discussion. The researcher will consider the role of patriarchy in honour crime and the role of literature in portraying this issue. Below is a brief account of the nature and the objectives of this research.

### **1.3. Statement of the problem**

The current study investigates honour crime as portrayed in the Anglo- Arab writer Fadia Faqir's novel *My Name Is Salma* from a feminist perspective. The main focus of the study will be honour crime as reflected in this novel in light of local traditions and social customs particularly in Jordan and the Arab world. This study also investigates the protagonist's struggle within different cultures, how she suffers from isolation and alienation in her home country and foreign country.

### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of the study are to:

- 1- Shed light on the nature of honour crime and the social circumstances involved in it.
- 2- Clarify the way the Arab and Western Worlds deal with honour crime.
- 3- Show the way in which Faqir's protagonist suffers in her society as a result of this crime, and in Britain as a result of her alienation.

### **1.5. Questions of the study**

This research intends to answer the following questions:

- 1- What is the nature of honour crime and in what way is honour crime a major theme in the novel *My Name Is Salma*?
- 2- To what extent does the Western World look at honour crime from the same angle of the Arab World?
- 3- How is the novel's protagonist, Salma, portrayed by the author in her Jordanian society and in the British society?

All the above questions will be dealt with through the discussion in the fourth chapter of the thesis through a detailed examination of the novel and with special reference to the theoretical and previous empirical studies on the novel and on the subject of honour crime.

### **1.6. Significance of the study**

Despite the popularity of literary works that focus on woman and how she is treated by her society and its institutions, few studies have dealt with honour crime as portrayed in the Arab World and in Jordan in particular. The importance of the current study lies in its intention to explore honour crime from a feminist perspective. The research will focus on the female's struggle in her society which restricts her freedom and imposes unfair traditions in dealing with this issue from the novel's point of view. Hopefully, this study will fill a gap in the critical discussions of the literary works that deal with this particular social issue.

### 1.7. Delimitations of the study

This study is theoretically limited to one of Fadia Faqir's novels *My Name is Salma* (2007). However, other relevant works may as well be considered. The period of investigation will be restricted mainly to 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 1.8. Limitations of the study

As the study focuses on honour crime as portrayed in Anglo- Arab writer Fadia Faqir's novel *My Name Is Salma*, other aspects are bound to be uncovered because of the limitations of the time and space allowed in this thesis. Moreover, the findings of this study cannot be generalized for all the novels that discuss similar issues.

### 1.9. Definition of terms

**Feminism:** it is more than a theoretical movement; it is a way of viewing our way of life. It is an attempt to correct our thinking about the question of gender roles in our society and a revolt against the discrimination between women and men on the basis of their sex or gender. Feminism seeks to achieve equality for males and females whether within the family or society at large. "Feminism is a simple concept. It is about taking women seriously and respectfully. It sets out to reverse a pattern and history of not taking women seriously, a pattern so deeply ingrained that it can seem natural, like mere truth" (Parker, 2008, p. 136- 137).

**Patriarchy:** It is a feminist concept related to the role of the man as father, husband, brother or even a member of the family. According to this social law, women's interests or issues are determined by the patriarch's ideology. Sylvia Walby in her book *In Theorizing Patriarchy* describes patriarchy as "A system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.... And every individual man is in a dominant position and every woman in a restricted, subordinate one" (Walby,1990,p.20).

**Honour Crime:** it is a cultural discourse that gives the male the right to kill the female if she commits sexual or shameful behaviour against her social traditions. Sally Engle (2009,p.130) defines honour crime as "a form of gender violence rooted in the conceptions of family honor and shame".



## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of related literature**

This chapter includes two sections: theoretical and empirical studies. In the theoretical studies the researcher presents theories and views concerned with feminism and their perspective about honour crime. The second section addresses the empirical studies which tackle Fadia Faqir's *My Name Is Salma*.

#### **2.1. Theoretical Studies**

##### **1. Feminism:**

###### **Introductory:**

Feminism is a universal movement that is concerned with the political, economic and social equality of the two sexes. According to its dictionary meaning, it is "Organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interest". Many Feminists seek for an umbrella to save women from their oppressions. As Showalter puts it, "All feminists are struggling to find a term that can rescue the feminine from its stereotypical associations within inferiority" (Showalter,1981,p. 313). According to Mitchell, feminism is used to indicate "anyone who strongly supports the rights of women –to emancipation, liberation or equality" (Smith,1983,p. 24).

Hooks in her book *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000) believes that feminism is a universal aspect; it is never concerned with women to be in the other side with men, but it is an attempt to defend women's rights all over the world. According to her, feminism is "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks,2000,p.1).

Fadia Faqir, in an interview with Lindy Moore (2011), states that "feminism is part of the struggle for human rights". For her, Arab women are oppressed and treated roughly in order to deny their will. Faqir expresses how Arab feminists deal with this movement. According to her, "feminism is being taken to the Arab world and changed, mutated. Arab women are running away with it: its basic values of equality and equal opportunity are being translated in many different ways all over the Arab world".

Rogers (2013,p.122) shares the same view with other feminists in their definitions. She defines feminism as "the advocacy of social, economic, and political equality between men and women".

### **Waves of Feminism**

Feminism has passed into many phases which are often called waves through its history. The first wave of feminism appeared in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. This wave called for women's rights and freedom. Wollstonecraft book's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) is considered as the first step in the history of women's movement.

The second wave of feminism was from the early 1960s to the late of 1980s. This wave called for liberating women from the legal and social issues. Millett book's *Sexual Politics* (1970) is considered as a landmark for this period. Other works include Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949).

The third wave of feminism began in the early 1990s. This wave witnessed the feminists' reformation of various aspects of life in human societies. It also includes an expansion of feminism from feminism to womanism, a new approach established by Alice Walker in order to show the universality of women's movement by focusing on women in all countries, races, religions and philosophies. All waves of feminism have concentrated on women's oppression, inequality and the need to resist and defy patriarchal dominance. This attitude can be found among all the different types of feminism. As Tyson (2006, p.81) states "some feminists call their field feminisms in order to underscore the multiplicity of points of view".

### **Feminism's Major Themes**

Feminists such as Wollstonecraft, de Beauvoir, Friedman, Millett and Walker and others, have struggled to gain women's equal rights and opportunities. This struggle began in 1792 with Mary Wollstonecraft when she urged all females to present themselves as a woman to draw together their image in society, an image that is completely different from the previous one that was drawn by men. The history of her book marks the date of women's revolution against patriarchal assumptions that made them inferior to men.

De- Beauvoir in her landmark book *The Second Sex* (1949,p.67) declares that women are treated as "other" or "second sex". Society portrayed woman as negative while man is positive and the one who dominates and rules. "A woman is nonexistent without a master. Without a master, she is a scattered bouquet". De-Beauvoir described French and western society as patriarchal societies that have never encouraged woman to have any intellectual opinion and her judgments are not taken seriously. A patriarch "has no hesitation in keeping his wife uncultured, weak, and stupid solely to safeguard his honor" (de Beauvoir,1949,p.46).

Rich in her book *Of Woman Born* (1976) describes how women are restricted to a patriarchal system, following its societal values. For her, women are determined by patriarchal interests. As she states "Men –by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, custom, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male" (Rich,1976,p.9).

Walker in her book *Everyday Use* (1994) clarifies how society portrayed a different perspective among women and men even though they have the same conditions or activities. For her, woman has never got a chance to prove her quality in a patriarchal society. Walker wants to explore "the relationship between men and women, and why women are always condemned for doing what men do as an expression of their masculinity. Why are women so easily "tramps" and "traitors" when men are heroes for engaging in the same activity" (Walker,1994,p.197).

Tyson (2015) described herself as a "patriarchal woman" in order to show how women are defined by societal culture. Woman portrayed herself in light of patriarchal norms that are unconsciously internalized in her mind by culture. Tyson declares: "Women are not born feminine but rather conditioned to be feminine by patriarchy" (Tyson,2015,p.92).

### **Feminist Literary Criticism**

Feminist criticism as a practical theory began at the end of the 1960s. Goodman in her book *Literature and Gender* (1996,p.xi) defines it as "an academic approach to the study of literature which applies feminist thought to the analysis of literary texts and the contexts of their production and reception". According to Tyson (2006,p.81) feminist criticism "examines the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social and psychological oppression of women".

Through literature, feminists hope to change the way women are portrayed in literature, to underscore the stereotypical image of women that was portrayed in patriarchal society. As Jane Austen declares in her novel *Persuasion* (1993,p.110), "I hate to hear you talking so, like a fine gentleman, and as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures. We none of us expects to be in smooth water all our days".

## 2. Honour Crime:

### Honour and culture

Honour as a word is rooted in many cultures all over the world; its meaning is related to different languages, societies, religions or beliefs. Each society forms its own culture according to its social traditions. Some authors claim that honour is determined by societal culture, so they never put a clear definition for this term. Peristiany in her book *Shame and Honor* (1965) declares that for all societies there is a code of conduct that people have to abide by. According to her, every society has its ways to follow the norms of conduct that people internalize them as a system. Some followers are rewarded and others who disobey are punished. She adds that "honour is at the apex of the pyramid of temporal social values and it conditions their hierarchical order" (Peristiany,1965,p.10). For her, societies evaluate the conduct of honour or shame in light of social standards. Peristiany states that honour and shame "are the reflection of the social personality in the mirror of social ideals" (Peristiany,1965,p. 9).

Pitt- Rivers (1968) describes honour as "A sentiment, a manifestation of this sentiment in conduct, and the evaluation of this conduct by others".

Charles Flynn (1977, p.49) declares honour as "A Culturally instilled conception of self as scared social object".

Abu- Lughod (1986,p.86) defines honour from a Bedouin society's norms. She writes: "The ideas or moral virtues of Bedouin society together constitute what I refer to as the Bedouin code of honor". For her, Arab society especially Bedouin people have their own conception of honour.

Stewart in his book *Honor* (1994,p.9) thinks that "scholars have been justified in translating the Arabic word "Ird" as "Honor"". In Stewart's opinion there is a relationship between Western and Arab Worlds regarding honour culture, but each world deals with honour according to its own culture. The common norms in different societies can be the same with women under patriarchy and social oppressions.

### **Honour and women's behaviours**

Many authors make a close relationship between patriarchal societies and honour, and they link them to women. In the eyes of society men are responsible for this honour. Some societies look at honour through woman's conduct or behaviour, especially their sexuality which they view as crucially affecting the honour of their family. According to patriarchal society, woman should help her men to save this honour reputation and to be responsible about her sexual conduct. Pitt Rivers, in his article (1965) argues that man's honour is based on his duty to purify his family's honour from any misbehaviour by any of all the female members. El-Saadawi (1980,p.74) shares the same idea; she says that "the man's honour is safe as long as the female members of his family keep their hymens intact". She puts a restricted image of man's honour according to societal traditions that link honour with female sexuality.

According to Walby (1990, p.5-7), the major factors that are related to patriarchy are sexuality and violence. In her opinion, women's sexuality is often under the control of patriarchal oppression. Faqir (2001) considers honour code as a multicultural issue. She writes that "A man's honour is closely related to the behaviour of his female relatives, not only in Muslim or Arab societies, but in Western societies".

Abu- Lughod (2002) states that women are restricted to their men's authority; men have the right to guard them even if they are brothers or cousins in order to save family's honour. She writes that in patriarchal societies, "Women's bodies are considered... repositories of family honour". Similarly, Mernissi (2003) explains that women's sexual behavior can affect or damage their men's honour. For her, women are responsible for their own sexuality in order to protect family honour or reputation. Because of that, "honour is generally seen as residing in the bodies of women"(Welchman& Hossain,2005,p.xi).

Wilson (2006,P.6) argues about the major role of women in their honour culture and says that they have to keep their virginity before marriage and their chastity within marriage in order to be good women whose behaviour saves the family's honour. For her, "women were and are often still seen essentially as the property of the family and the community".

### **The punishment of women's dishonourable behaviour**

The concept of honour in ancient and modern societies is related to woman's sexual conduct. If married or unmarried woman commits a mistake in this context she does not only bring shame over herself but over the whole family. As a result of this dishonourable action, women are punished. This punishment against women goes across many cultures. Woman who is guilty of this kind of sin may risk losing her life as a result of her sexuality. In many cases, only through death punishment can the family's honour be purified. Walby argues that "honour killings" are one of the many harmful ways in which "men use violence as a form of power over women."(Walby,1989). According to some societal traditions, a girl in a patriarchal society can be killed or be



looked up in a room for life if she dishonours her family through her sexual behaviour. (Al-Khayyat,1990,p.23).

Lama Abu-Odeh (1996) clarifies the societal traditions in ancient and modern Arab societies that expect a woman to be a good model in her sexual behaviour whether she is wife, daughter or a sister. The ideal woman stays virgin in order to save her life. In her article, Abu- Odeh shows that in the Arab patriarchal societies it is not shameful for a man to lose his honour, but if any of his close relatives is guilty of "honour crime", it is the male's duty to purify the family's honour by killing the culprit. She writes "If a man doesn't intervene by killing his sister/wife once she has shamed him, he suffers a loss of his gender: he is no longer a man".

Ruggi (1998) states that honour crime is a very complex social issue that has its deep roots in the history and culture of the society that help men to seek control upon women as a kind of "reproductive power". Hassan (1999) describes a woman in patriarchal societies as part of the male's property or possessions. In her article, Araj (2000) shows how a patriarchal society set up its norms and traditions to determine women's behaviours and link these behaviours with women's reputations.

Faqir (2001) in her article describes honour crime as "the most extreme type of violence against women in Jordan". She argues that this punishment is related to culture, patriarchy, as a universal issue that is not related to any limited country or religion.

Kurkiala (2003) argues that if a woman refused to obey her society's rules to behave morally, her "immoral behaviour" may undermine her whole family. In this case there is no choice for her male relatives but to kill her in order to protect their honour. For Kurkiala, honour crime is a cultural decision made in order to protect a "specific moral order". He argues that this kind of punishment is related to a "universal patriarchal structure that oppresses women worldwide and is culturally motivated and sanctioned".

Pope (2004) Shares the same point of view that honour crime is a kind of patriarchal oppression.

Honour crime is a result of patriarchy and social discourse which according to which "blood needs blood to wash away the shame" (King,2008). King argues that if the family does not kill the sinner woman, they would acquire a bad reputation in their community.

## **2.2. Previous Empirical Studies**

Fadia Faqir, the author of *My Name is Salma*, shows in her interviews with Moore and Bower how her personal experiences influenced her to portray her characters and the themes within this novel. Faqir argues that this novel reflects her a long period of her life in British society. She explains that the major theme of this novel is to describe the life of one of the victims of honour crimes.

Ancellin (2009) in her article *Hybrid Identities of Characters in Muslim women Fiction post 9-11* discusses the literary works that are written by female Muslim writers who focus on the identity, uniformity and conformity in order to portray Muslim characters in their works in the post 11/9 era. She argues that the word "Muslim Literature" is used as a term after that time. Ancellin examines how characters are unconfident to live in a foreign society, how they are portrayed with their hybrid identity. She concludes that Salma's transition from Salma as Muslim to the other Sally as British, is not successful, she still lives with her past story. Ancellin states "She cannot wipe out the Muslim attributes of her identity. Even though she is successful as

Sally, within her inner self the transition is a failure and, rather than breaking away from this, she feels the guilt is hers" (Ancellin,2009).

Felemban (2011) in her study *Linguistic Strategies and the Construction of Identity* explores one of post-colonial literary text's features in the use of language. She states that "the novel [*My Name is Salma*] represents another significant characteristic of post-colonial creative texts, which is the appropriation of language" (Felemban,2011). She investigates how Faqir in her novel appropriated some linguistic strategies through the protagonist Salma in order to prove her identity. Felemban focuses on two types of linguistic strategies interlanguage and code switching. She concludes that these linguistic strategies affect the English language and thought: "The linguistic analysis of *My Name is Salma* illustrates that language and identity are inseparable: they influence and construct each other". (Felemban,2011).

Hasan (2012) in his doctoral dissertation *Islam and Muslim Identities* examines how the contemporary English literature portrays Islam and Muslim identity from postcolonial perspectives. He argues that in her novel Faqir presents a mixture of colonial and postcolonial elements by contrasting Islam in Muslim society and in British society. He discusses how "Salma's Muslim identity in England appears much stronger than her Muslim identity in Hima. The main difference between the two Muslim identities of Salma is that her first identity from Hima is imposed by society while the second is "chosen" freely by Salma herself". (Hasan,2012,P.180). Hasan explains that Faqir's presentation of Islam in her novel is based on her own point of view. He concludes that Faqir portrays Islam as a victim of traditions, and needs to be protected. He adds that Faqir's perspectives toward Islam and Muslims are judged

according to the positions they take on the issues related to women. He further states that "Faqr acknowledges that throughout the novel she [Salma] observes Islam being practiced from the outside, but she never practices it herself because after the loss of her daughter she comes to the conclusion that religion does not offer any consolation" (Hasan,2012, p.189).

Sarnou (2014) in her study *Hybrid and Hyphenated Arab Women's English Narratives as a New Coming of Age Literature* explores the categories of this literary framework that is produced by Arab immigrants who are called "Anglophone" or "Hybrid". She focuses upon hybridity, hyphenation and the literary products of Arab women. Sarnou examines how Faqr identifies the perception of home in her novel *My Name is Salma*. She quotes Faqr's words, "Salma resisted, but Sally must adapt". (Faqr,2007,p.9). The researcher concludes that Anglo Arab women writers try to combine between two different cultures, their home's culture and the new culture. She writes "in Faqr's *My Name is Salma*, the story is set between the Middle East and Britain. It investigates immigration to a Western country –Britain –not only as a new theme in terms of the central character Salma who is an unskilled Bedouin woman, but also in terms of raising questions about the future of Arabs who live in Britain" (Sarnou,2014).

Gayatri (2015) in her study *The Body and Beyond: Representation of Body Politics* describes the body politics as a major topic in feminist and gender studies. She writes: "Body politics is conceptualized as the negotiation of power via the body through processes that may operate either directly or symbolically". (Gayatri,2015). The researcher examines the politicization of the female's body in Faqr's *My Name is Salma*

and its role in her exile. She argues that patriarchal society imposed this form of body politics upon women and explain how this leads the novel's protagonist to resist. Gayatri concludes that patriarchy and other factors destroyed the protagonist's attempt to resist through her body; Salma internalized her exile and marginalization. She writes: "The politicization of her body is exacerbated with the alienation that she experiences for being a displaced, veiled and coloured immigrant, leaving her with no space to seek refuge. It is thus necessary to critique the simplistic reproach of the 'Arab and/or Islamic' culture and patriarchy for such subjugations without taking into account the interwoven factors of colonialism and capitalism. In *My Name Is Salma*, all these factors put an end to Salma's agency as an individual and perpetuate her traumas as an exile, leading to a sense of internal displacement and exiling her further from her body".(Gayatri,2015)

This study will be different; the researcher will discuss honour crime as the main issue in the novel. Thus, the novel would be seen not as a work concerned with limited perspective but a reflection of universal issue. Salma's suffering is not confined to Arab women but to all women in the world. Therefore there are a few sources on this novel as it is a recent literary work that requires greater attention on the discussion.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology and Procedures**

#### **3.1. Methods of the study**

The researcher will use the descriptive-analytic methodology in order to investigate Fadia Faqir novel's *My Name Is Salma* from a feminist perspective. She will operate this method to analyze the novel focusing on the female character Salma and the theme of honour crime as portrayed in this novel. The main concentration will be on honour crime as a major theme in this selected work. The whole novel will be analyzed from a predominantly feminist perspective but comparative and textual approaches may also be applied wherever necessary. The techniques of such relevant critical methods will be utilized to shed light on the behaviour of the characters and the structure and organization of the novel as a whole.

#### **3.2. Procedures of the study**

The researcher will follow these steps:

1. Reading the novel and the biography of Fadia Faqir.
2. Tracing the historical background of feminism.
3. Investigating the idea of honour crime in Arab world through studies dealing with this issue, including books, articles and formal/governmental reports.
4. Reading the previous studies related to the main topics.

5. Analyzing the characters, themes and the technical aspects of the novel *My Name Is Salma*. This would include both major and minor characters related to the subject of the thesis. Moreover, the novel's narrative methods will be deployed to highlight this theme and shed light on its treatment
6. Discussing the findings and making some recommendations for research in the future to further investigate the same issues and other issues related to it not only in this novel but also in other works dealing with the same or similar issues.
7. Conclusion based on the discussion and analysis conducted throughout the thesis particularly in Chapter Four of the study.
8. Write the references according to the APA style.

## Chapter four

### Discussion and Analysis

This chapter will be dealing with the theme of honour crime as portrayed in the Fadia Faqir's *My Name Is Salma* and how this issue is tackled on the basis of feminist theory. Consequently, the discussion will concentrate on the protagonist's struggle within her Bedouin society as a woman living as an alien in the Western society.

#### 4.1 Faqir's *My Name Is Salma*

*My Name Is Salma* (2007) is one of the most important works of Fadia Faqir. In this novel Faqir represents social, cultural and postcolonial issues that are closely related to women's rights seen from a feminist viewpoint. The writer addresses a highly sensitive issue related to honour crimes it occurs in a traditional Arab society largely controlled by traditional values of a conservative Bedouin society ruled primarily by a strict patriarchal system that leaves no room for any margin of individual freedom. Through her protagonist Salma, a simple, young, impulsive and undereducated Bedouin girl, Faqir explores how her heroine's society practices strict codes of behaviour upon women while redeeming women from any kind of societal, moral or religious responsibility.



Even though she has been living in Britain since the early 1980s, Faqir has been concentrating her works on social, cultural and political issues related directly to her original country (Jordan) in particular and to her Arab-Muslim culture in general. In her interview with Lindsey Moore, Faqir shows how her personal experiences influenced her portrayal of her characters and the themes in this novel and in her other novels. She describes Salma, her novel's principal character, as being close to her: "She is part of me, yet not me" (Faqir,2011). Faqir mentions how she had lost her son after her divorce, a situation that parallels Salma's loss of her daughter Laila, after birth when the new-born baby was taken away from her mother without Salma ever seeing, touching or suckling her daughter. After she gives birth to her infant, she is forced to stand away from her new-born baby-girl. The only tangible memory she has of her lost daughter is a lock of Laila's hair which she carries with her wherever she goes, making her keep thinking, dreaming and imagining her daughter's face. Thus, there are parallels between Salma's loss of her baby and the writer's loss of her son after she got divorced. Explaining this parallelism while showing the difference between the two situations, Faqir comments:

Actually, I approached my son after I finished the novel. Over the years I had tried again and again to reconcile with him. I decided once again to go back for him, to reclaim him as my flesh and blood, and this time it worked. ... Fiction teaches you lessons. Salma couldn't go back; she didn't have that option (Faqir,2011).

Faqir elaborates further on the background of her writing her novel indicating how she suffered from depression while she was writing this novel as a result of the effect of

its events on her memories. As she states: "I started writing *My Name Is Salma* in 1990, but a winter of despair had set in. I finally emerged from under the yew tree and picked it up again in January 2005" (Faqr,2011).

Faqr's novel is set in two different places with two different cultures. The story is about a woman who has lived in two different cultures, her traditional Bedouin society in Jordan and Western society in Britain. Consequently, the novel "offers a dual vision of the Arab and European Worlds" (Gayatri,2015). In more than one sense, the novel is autobiographical. As Faqr states, in writing her novel, she had to go back to the old past to recollect basic background to her novel:

When I was young, I lived next to an English club—a remnant of the British Mandate—that Jordanians were not allowed to enter. East Amman was the place to be then (the late 1950s). I remember that colonial exclusive space very clearly. It reconfigures itself in my writing again and again. Salma, for example, [in *My Name Is Salma*] is always looking into other people's gardens in England; she's always on the outside. (Faqr,2011)

In this connection, Awad (2012) explains how Faqr in this novel attempts to "highlight the heterogeneity of experiences", that kind of experience which is portrayed by Salma as an Arab woman in Britain. He states: "In *My Name Is Salma*, Faqr creates a fertile ethnic arena through which Salma, the once helpless refugee, breathes, survives and thrives".

Accordingly, *My name Is Salma* seems to be a universal of concern. As Aboulelah observes: "Fadia Faqir's captivating new novel deals with the timeless themes of unforgiveness, friendship and travel. Exquisitely woven, laced with humour and social awareness, it hums with the futility of erasing the past" (Abulelah,2007). From Faqir's point of view, the major theme of this novel is to "celebrate the life of one of the faceless victims of honour crimes and is a humble attempt to give her a name, a voice and a life" (Faqir, 2012). She adds, "It is also important to note that *My Name Is Salma* is partly about honour crimes but mainly about the immigrant experience in Britain today" (Faqir,2011). As an Anglo-Arab feminist writer, Faqir tries to highlight the differences among cultures in terms of lifestyle and women's status and the similarities among them in term of women's oppression. She explains the way some societies oppress women, declaring: "My fiction and writing aims to humanize not only the Arabs but the English, the Americans, the Indians, etc." (Faqir,2011).

Many female Arab writers use their works to fight their traditional norms that make them weak and voiceless. In their writings, they try to show many women are oppressed and subjugated in their societies just because they are women who should be controlled by the traditional norms of her predominantly patriarchal societies. In this novel, Faqir chooses Bedouin society because it is proud of its old norms and traditions. Bedouin people still have their own way of life in the Arab World and are still "congregated in groups, families, clans, tribes" (Faqir,2007,p.249), and have their individual culture and laws which are deeply rooted in their behaviour. Bedouin societies are renowned for their caring about certain cultural and moral norms such as honour, courage, hospitality and fortitude.

Faqir chooses a Bedouin girl and portrays her life with a great deal of realism and real-life representation. She depicts the heroine's suffering in her own Bedouin community. Salma's suffering is brought about not merely because she has done something wrong but primarily because she is a woman. In this particular context we can see how Faqir as a feminist writer has drawn attention to this difference between males and females on the basis of their gender. As Tyson (2006,p.84) points out, women are often discriminated against because of their gender or cultural orientation rather their sex. In other words, when committing the same wrong deeds that men commit, women are punished and men are left free mainly because of their gender which traditionally makes them guilty whenever some a crime such as honour crime occurs.

In her Bedouin community, Salma is looked down upon because she is a female. Any wrong deed she may do throughout her life may bring shame and embarrassment to her family in addition to herself. The guilt would become most serious when it becomes an honour crime. The case is different with the male wrongdoer who is often welcome and well treated in a different way than that of the female. Even when they are born, males receive preferential treatment compared with the females and a new-born son gives credit to his mother. As Abo-lughod explains, a Bedouin mother "is initially happy to give birth to sons because this secures her position in her marital community" (Abo- lughod,1986,p.122). In this type of community, the male has the leading role and the female is relegated to a secondary status. Even more, the boy is given the right to punish the female if she does something which he believes would be considered wrong by his community or tribe.

In this novel, Salma's brother "thinks he is the sheikh of the tribe" (p.211). He holds her responsible and inflicts heavy punishment on her depending on his own discretion and judgment. As Salma states: "He would wave his cudgel in the air threateningly whenever I moved" (p.21). A typical Bedouin boy enjoys special treatment by his family. He is grown up to believe in his physical power and feels proud of his body whereas a female is brought up and educated to hide her body. As Karin Martin states, women have to "cover up or in some way conceal their new bodies" (Martin,1996,p.20). Accordingly, a female has to dress in the way that is accepted by the tribe and approved by the local community. She should cover all her body and as we are told, a girl "used to cover even her toes with the end of her long black robe when sitting down" (Faqr,2007,p.206). In contrast with their brothers, girls are taught from their early childhood to follow certain codes of behaviour and dressing which should conform to the traditions and social conventions and customs of the tribe whether inside the home or outside. All this shows how females are instructed to follow the rules and regulations which their community imposes on them. Strict measures are also applied when any violation of these social traditions or moral codes is violated or not strictly adhered to.

In her novel, Faqr gives a true picture of the traditional life of a Bedouin woman. She shows how Salma is always cautious about her way of dressing and keen on hiding all her body from any person even including her father, mother and brother. In her behaviour with her lover, she also practices extreme caution not to let him see any part of her body: "I started hunching my back to hide my breasts, which were the first thing Hamdan had noticed about me" (p.12). Actually, Salma had already been reminded by her father to hide her breast: "Your breasts are like melons, cover them up" (P.12). The same idea continues to haunt her when she goes to a doctor in Britain trying to make her breasts smaller as if she was obsessed with this notion about her body and physical appearance.

Another issue facing a Bedouin girl is the powerful influence of her patriarchal society on her own life. A Bedouin girl is generally brought up to be voiceless, submissive, and obedient. Consequently, she becomes unable to think for herself and take her decisions independently. Others should think and decide for her and she has to follow their orders. This is exactly what we notice in *My Name Is Salma*. Under the impact of patriarchy, Salma is "occupied, defined, given context and value by the core concepts of patriarchal ideology" (Fineman,1995,p.125). She loses her self-esteem and individuality and remains under her father's, and later her brother's, protection and orders. After she gets married, her supervision and control are transferred to her husband and even to her son later. In almost all cases, she is deprived of her property and inheritance rights which are often taken by her male family members. The same happens in this novel where Salma is told that she has nothing of her own except her daughter. Salma's mother also "had nothing of her own, her brother took her share of the farm". Similarly, after the death of Salma's grandfather, her grandmother "was thrown out of her house" (p.184). Like any Bedouin woman who is supposed to be obedient and submissive to the male's orders and the tribe's traditions and customs, Salma cannot be independent and take a decision on her own because this might put her life in danger. As Abu-Rabi-Queder (2007) observes, "any shameful behavior weakens the power of the group", a woman cannot do anything by herself; she still needs the males and the approval.

In the novel, the heroine is identified as Salma Ibrahim El-Musa, a Bedouin Arab girl living in the area of the Jordan Valley. In Arabic, her name refers to peace, safety, and good health. Addressing his daughter, Salma's father says: "I called you Salma because you are healthy, pure and clean. Your name means the woman with the soft hands and feet, so may you live in luxury for the rest of your life" (p.12). Although Salma is treated well by her parents, she is badly treated by her brother Mahmoud who likes to insult her. When she was a little girl, her brother used to be nice to her bringing her presents and sweets. When she grew up, his treatment of his sister

changed. As Salma tells us: "A few years later he started yanking my hair with his thin brown fingers" (p.85). In this Bedouin and patriarchal society, boys have authority upon their sisters and they are never punished or deterred when they mistreat or insult their sisters. Salma complains that "whenever I was beaten by Mahmoud, my brother, mother used to stroke my head to calm me down" (p.95) under their mother eyes who watched his action against her sister in distress. Rich observes that Salma's mother is "the mother through whom patriarchy teaches the small female her proper expectations" (Rich,1976,p.59). Mothers, like Salma's mother teach their daughters to accept the traditions and moral norms of their society even though this may include beating and harming them physically or morally. In the novel, Salma is a teenager who fell in love instantly with Hamdan, a handsome Bedouin man, when she saw his image in water while she was watering the vegetable beds. In her quick response, Salma seems to have been following her heart's call for her grandmother had advised her to follow her heart's voice while she was telling Salma about her love story. Salma's relationship with Hamdan started as a love story full of daydreams about "our wedding camel caravan crossing the village, carrying us to our own dwelling" (p.177). Hamdan enjoyed his love affair with Salma until she became pregnant. On knowing about her pregnancy, Hamdan began to change his attitude to his beloved completely. He started to treat her as a slave even though he used to worship and admire her. He called her a "whore" while she called him a 'master'. Though he used to follow her everywhere, now he "would make a shrill sound as if he were calling his dog back to the barn" (p.46).

This radical change in Hamdan-Salma relationship reflects a general attitude that has come under severe criticism by feminists. As one critic points out, women are treated as "mere objects for men and are used by them to satisfy their primitive needs" (Madrazo,2002,p.231). As a result of the discovery of the love affair between Salma and Hamdan and Salma's pregnancy thereof, Salma is subjected to a long punishment and humiliation culminating in threats to her own life.

Actually, Salma's suffering began immediately after the discovery of her pregnancy. The first such response came from her partner Hamdan. His reaction was very strong and decisive. He broke all relations with his previous beloved calling her a slut and a whore who is unworthy of respect. He denied he was her lover and close friend. He also absolved himself of any moral or social responsibility telling Salma, "You are responsible. You have seduced me with the yearning of your pipe and swaying hips" (p.177). He also physically attacked her and threatened her safety.

In the difficult times following the discovery of her pregnancy and in the aftermath of her being forsaken by her ruthless and irresponsible lover, Salma's life has become full of suffering and misery. Salma's plight is aggravated by the fact that she lives within a Bedouin society whose moral norms and cultural values make the woman rather than the man wholly responsible for such action; but worse than that is that the woman's life will be in danger for ever. Someone from her close relatives will be trying to use any opportunity to kill her as a way of cleaning or purifying the family name because in a Bedouin society such an illicit act is punishable by death and killing the culprit is considered a legal and desirable act justified by the tribe's time-old traditions which should be highly respected and strictly adhered to if the tribe and the family want to keep their heads high among other tribes and other families. This severe punishment is perhaps meant to teach a lesson to others to avoid committing such illegal and illicit acts condemned by the whole society. However, in such Bedouin-patriarchal society the male culprit is not treated or considered in the same way as the female culprit. No one would chase him in secret to murder him for his criminal act for he is not held responsible for what has been done. The female partner is the one to blame and she is the sinner who ought to be killed as she has violated the laws and traditions of this patriarchal society. However, it should be mentioned here that though this is generally the case, in some situations the man and even his family or tribe are also taken to task and subjected to some tribal rules and laws whose discussion falls beyond the scope of this thesis which is meant



primarily as a literary and cultural discussion and not a methodological study of some social customs and tribal traditions per se.

When Salma's mother knows about the affair and the consequent pregnancy, she tries to save her daughter's life. The peasant mother asks the midwife in the village to make an abortion in order to erase all the evidence of her daughter's shame. This turns out to be impossible because the midwife realizes there is nothing she can do about the indelible signs of Salma's pregnancy: "It is still clinging to your womb like a real bastard" (p.42) she tells Salma. Accordingly, the only option left for the teen girl is to face death as her appropriate penalty as judged by the standards of her society even though she is still young and inexperienced and only partially responsible for the honour crime concerned. Hooks (2000,p.85) maintains that "female sexual self-assertion could lead always to the "punishment" of unwanted pregnancy and the dangers of illegal abortion".

It is surprising that there is no talk of a possible third option requiring the male co-culprit to accept an arranged marriage to the girl whom he loved and adored in the not distant past and whose life has become seriously endangered. Judged by the norms of a more open and more liberal society, Salma's life could have been spared if only because of her own circumstances, her lack of experience, her trust of the man who loved her and perhaps made her believe he will marry her. The author's standpoint on this issue is that Salma is definitely wrong, but she is unfortunate as she happened to be born within a conservative and strict social community whose traditions and moral values demand death penalty for such action. "Salma has done something she's not supposed to do although it is in harmony with her nature. She just happened to be born in a village where the rules are strict, so she has to be punished" (Faqir,2011). In fact, this issue is not an easy one and needs more than one side to be discussed and re-examined with an attempt to finding some kind of a more positive solution.

All this shows that a Bedouin society is another kind of patriarchal societies where the rights of women are neglected and those of men are highly respected. It also shows how old traditions often play a decisive role in dealing with social problems with a clear prejudice towards the male at the expense of the female. It is also noticeable that women have more duties than rights for they have to share the man in the work in the field besides being responsible for the chores of the home. In the final analysis, a woman cannot do what a man can and in case a man and a woman are partners in the committing of a wrong deed, it is the woman who is to blame and the man is let almost scot-free and is not held accountable for his wrong deeds.

As a natural human's reaction, Salma flees toward her school teacher in order to save her life. Miss Naila advised her to leave the village and hand herself over to the police who will save her life in 'protective custody forever' instead of being killed in the name of honour. As a prisoner in Islah Center, she will spend her life in isolation without any contact with her family. Even her mother is prevented from visiting her. In Islah prison, Salma still suffers from mistreatment. The guard, who was a woman, calls the women "whores" and "sluts" and orders them to clean the prison's floor under the threat of the guard's stick. They have a shower once every two weeks and depend on lentils and crusts of dry bread for their meals. The place is filthy and smells bad. Salma did not have a chance to look at her newborn baby, for the baby was taken away immediately after Salma gave birth. Salma did not see anything of the baby except a lock of the baby's black hair that her friend Nora had cut for her. After childbirth, Salma stopped eating, sleeping and talking for a while. She was feeling desperate and pessimistic about life for she felt there was nothing worth living for after her separation from her child and her family. As Faqir explains: "When Salma is in prison, she stops talking for a long time and they call her —the mute. If you can't express yourself, then you implode and you start punishing yourself, and the only option is to go silent. But also it's a type of depression. Salma could not express herself, so she stopped talking"

(Faqir,2011). In the novel, we are told that Salma hits herself on head, stomach and legs: "we were exposed to the elements like an open wound. They put us in prison, took away our children, killed us" (p.120).

During her tragic period in prison, Salma receives a rescue letter from her mother through Miss Naila. In her letter, the mother urges her daughter to take care of herself and to eat and drink. Salma looks forward to receiving her mother after the passage of several years without seeing her. The unexpected visitor was Khairiyya, a nun who came from Lebanon to save the lives of those innocent women and to help them by smuggling them out of prison to a safer and more secure place where they could start a new life. Khairiyya explained to Salma the meaning of "protective custody": "You are here not because you have done something, but for your own protection" (p.58). She also explains that the rescue attempt is lawful as the government does not oppose the release of such prisoners who are in prison for the sake of their safety and to keep them away from dangerous threats against their lives especially when such threats come from parents and/or brothers or their loved ones. Salma, "the pipe-mute" as her inmates called her, felt afraid at first and thought that her brother was awaiting her to go out from this prison to shoot her in the front of its doors.

Salma will soon be set free after spending difficult time in prison without seeing any of her relatives or ever seeing her daughter was taken away from her before her eyes could fall on her and recognize who she was and what she looked like. With the help of the prison governor Officer, Khairiyya fixed a date for Salma's release. Salma was very pleased with this unexpected good news and happy release. Accordingly, Salma will leave her country, family, friends and her peasant little girl. But she goes toward her dream of seeing the sky, the sun rise, the distant stars which she "had not seen for eight years" (p.63) where she used to count her days while waiting her death in Islah center. This will be her first time outside the prison: "My mind was kissing

everything: the spacious blue sky, the green plains, the large trees, even the donkeys and other cars. I was free" (p.70).

In Lebanon, Salma stays with nuns at Ailiyya convent where she has learnt about table manners, English language and the rules of speaking to others. Salma begins working on sewing French piece of clothes. She starts to adapt to her new life, but even in Lebanon she is still not far away from danger. Her family knows about her escaping and her brother is looking for her: "My brother would be there at any moment, his dagger tied to his belt and his rifle loaded" (p.89). So nuns must arrange to do something in order to save Salma's life. Sister Asher who is an English sister wants to take Salma to Britain with her. She asked Salma to tell any stranger that she is her daughter: "I changed your name to Sally Asher and got you a temporary document" (p.87) and they sailed with a Lebanese fisherman to Cyprus where they went on board a ship to Britain. Salma was twenty-five years when she started her journey to Britain, her journey to a new life as Sally Asher.

When Salma arrived in Britain, she felt that "[she] had landed on another planet" (p.127). She was afraid and held Miss Asher's hand, and her feeling came true. There is a problem appearing in the harbor. While the immigration officer was checking Salma's papers and asking her about her 'Christian name', she replied that she is a Muslim and she is Salma El-Musa. Minutes later, the policeman arrived and "pushed me to one side, searched me quickly and handcuffed me" (p.130). Salma again is a prisoner in the small and clean room with a bed in the "port detention center" where the immigration officer asked her about the reason of coming to Britain. She misunderstands his question but she recalls Miss Asher's word which she was told to use on such occasion: "Adopted". Salma spends two months in the port prison. Her life is going against her

wishes. She has escaped from the fire of her rigid patriarchal society into the fire of stringent immigration rules.

As a Bedouin Arab arriving in a foreign country, Salma is full of great expectations. "I expected to find milk and honey streaming down the street, happiness lurking in every corner, surprise, surprise, a happy marriage and three children to delight my heart" (p.150). Like many other Immigrants, Salma hopes to live freely and peacefully in a foreign country. Salma has fled from being "other" in Hima village because of her gender to be "other" in Britain because of her race. Minister Mahoney, an Irish pastor on the ship, who was admiring Salma's playing the pipe, and Miss Asher never treat her as foreigner; they "took the British government to court on my behalf" (p.141). Minister Mahoney helped her stay in Britain: "You must give her shelter because if you send her back she will be shot on sight", he told British immigration officials (p.142). Eventually, Salma was released from prison and her sponsor and supporters celebrated her release from the port prison. Before she went into the British society, she spent a year with Minister Mahoney to teach her how to adapt to the new life including his injunction not burden her host (p.182). Because of his kindness with her, Salma wishes that Minister Mahoney was her father. When she felt that she was ready on her own, she decided to leave his house and begin her new life in this country. He bought her return ticket to Exeter to "come back if you are ever in trouble" (p.144), and he gave her the address of a cheap hostel there and a dictionary with his wish: "To Salma, may this country bring you happiness" (p.150).

In Exeter, Salma starts her new life which is not as easy as she first thought. In fact, she finds herself part of a strange group of strangers, outsiders, homeless, alcoholics and immigrants. She feels now she is part of this community because she has no family or solid social background to rely on to define her new identity. "in the early evening the city belonged to us, the homeless, drug addicts, alcoholics and immigrants, to those who were either without a family or were trying to blot out their history" (p.25). Nevertheless, Salma became ambitious and wished to be part of the Exeter community with families living in harmony. For the time being she felt she was alone with no family or daughter. She starts thinking of contacting the people she knew back home such as Nora. As a foreigner and an immigrant who does not belong to a group or speak the language of the local people and who does not know the customs and traditions, Salma finds it hard to adapt to her new society. She feels alienated from the local community: "It must show in the way I pronounced my 'o's, the way I handled the money, the way I was dressed. My thin ankles betrayed me" (p.112). Later, she also views herself as an alien because she sees herself without relatives, and even without an identity: "Soon I will be thirty-one, hunch-backed, grey-haired and alien"(p.214).

As Al-Saidi (2014) observes, whether "foreigner or other, both terms refer to the one who does not belong to a group, does not speak a given language, and does not have the same customs". Salma is now sharing a room with a Pakistani girl named 'Parvin' who is an Asian-British girl on the run from an arranged marriage. She refused to "share the room with an Arab" (p.14) .When Salma meets an English man in a café she enjoys hearing a human voice. When the man asked her about her place of origin, she lied and told him that she was Spanish, because she knew his reaction: "if I told him that I was a Muslim Bedouin Arab woman from the desert on the run he would spit out his tea" (p.27), or he "probably would have run faster" (p.217).

Salma's life in her new society continues to be surrounded by pain and hardships resulting from her previous problems in her country. Salma now lives in a new environment and in a new culture but the same problems persist adding another burden to those she encounters in her new society. She felt that "all eyes were on me, X-ray eyes that could see everything including my shameful past" (p.216), She is always careful about her behaviour when treating other people trying to be cautious and nice. It seems she has learnt from her hard experience back home. She now realizes that her situation in a foreign country must be vulnerable, "not Sal or Sally, an outlander, who must not confront the natives" (p.187). Later, we are also told that she felt "awkward and her immigrant survival kit told her to avoid confrontation at any price" (p.203). She has to tackle British harsh social environment. Even though she has become a British subject with new citizenship, the British will not protect her. She is aware of the fact that she has a different color and culture. As her friend Parvin tells her: "Look at the color of your skin. You are a second-class citizen. They will not protect you" (p.271). She cannot express openly what she has in her mind for a defense; she has no voice in order to be heard. In that sense, Awad clarifies how the novel "is deeply concerned with issues of marginalization, integration and displacement. Faqir adds a new dimension to marginalization because the subject of the novel is a displaced female subaltern" (Awad,2012). Salma cannot be completely free, but undoubtedly she is enjoying a greater margin of freedom and gaining a greater degree of respectability, self-expression, and self-esteem in the new environment. Accordingly, we can notice that Salma is "a mute-pipe" wherever she goes.

Salma's story continues in Britain, but it takes a different shape. The discrimination she experiences against her is done not because of her gender as a woman living in a patriarchal and conservative society but on the basis of her national identity. She is now a stranger, a foreigner, an outcast in a new liberal and open society. It remains to see how she will be received in this new

society. Edward Said argues how immigrants are human beings and they must have a human treatment. He uses the term 'humanism' in order to show how this concept could be "the final resistance we have against in-human practices and injustices that disfigure human history" (Said,1978,p.xxix). He explains that immigrants never choose their status to be aliens within another community because exile is not "a matter of choice: you are born into it, or it happens to you" (Said,2001,p.184). Based on Said's point of view, Mukherjee and Zulfiqar (2015,p.i) define exile as "a life one has not been prepared for, it is a removal from the familiar, it is 'the saddest of fates' as Edward Said described it. It is an ancient form of punishment". Accordingly, Salma's story of hardships and suffering will not stop at this point. A new but challenging turn of events in the life of the heroine is expected to take place.

To achieve her new identity as Sally Asher, she has to adapt to her new society, to change her practice and behaviours in order to suit the demands of the new culture and its lifestyle. Sally must get a job to earn money; she has to be responsible about her own new life. She finds it difficult to get a job in Exeter, especially because she dresses differently wearing her traditional scarf and looking like an alien. She is in need of someone to help her. Abu-lugud (2002) argues that the West needs to modify its way of dealing with people coming from different cultures and that it "should be aware of difference, respectful of other paths toward social change that might give women better lives". Encouraged by her friend Parvin, Sally begins to change her eating habits, her style of dressing. She chooses tight and short skirts, high-heeled shoes and begins to line her lips and put a deodorant, etc. She also tries to forget her past. Speaking about her new condition, Salma says, "I would slip slowly out of my body like a snake shedding her old skin" (p.52). In this way she tries to follow "the steps of a Western woman, to hold a mirror up to contemporary British society" (Faqr,2011).



Salma's Pakistani friend Parvin tries to show her how to get over this problem. She tells her she should first stop considering herself "an ignorant Bedouin" (p.23). Parvin also informs Salma that she now lives in a new place where everything is different, and so she has to adapt her manners, her personality and her way of thinking: "Lighten up! Groom yourself! Sell yourself!" (p.46). While Sally was still searching for a job, Parvin helped her find a job as a seamstress-tailor. Before she finally got a job, Sally's request was turned down several times. Max, a shop's manager refused to give Sally a job in his shop at the beginning. Later, he gave her a job which would prevent others from annoying her. Salma begins to realize that in Britain, women have their own jobs, their own money and their own life style. She also notices that "in my new country, walking to work with a rucksack on my shoulders full of bits of paper, books, a coffee flask" (p.249). On the other hand, she realizes that women in her old country are considered "an appendage to their wifely role with the husband as economic leader" (O'Reilly,2004,p.82). Sally tries to improve her social status and to get a suitable income by working in the sewing business so that she can be able to pay her rent to her landlady without depending on any outside help. However, Sally worked for four years without getting a pay rise while rent, transport, university fees and the prices of all commodities and consumer goods were rising up quickly. When she asked her employer Max for pay rise, he told her that "there are many young English kids out there without a job. They would jump at the chance" (p.122). Later, as a result of her hard work, Sally's boss rewards her by raising her salary.

Sally had to struggle hard to face these financial and work problems. So she must look for a night shift job. She finds a job as a cleaner at Royal Hotel to collect and wash glasses in the bar. In her work, she faced many problems because of the customers' harassment and ill- treatment of her. Finally, the manager was able to find a way of saving her such problems by keeping her beyond their reach: "I was grateful to him for giving me the job and for keeping me behind the bar

beyond the reach of the drunken eyes and hands" (p.160). Her new life that has improved her personality and allowed her to practice her ability to make decision, a new achievement which brings a feeling of happiness to her. Now, Salma perceives herself as Sally Asher; she discovers herself, her ability to stay alone in this country. Sally is able to go outdoors alone, sit in public places and enjoy her time, "drinking mineral water and reading *Marie Claire* in a seaside café" (p.21).

In England, Sally recollects her difficult life back in Hima. The quoted passage below shows the sharp contrast between the two lifestyles and reflects a good picture of Salma's life in the two different environments:

Every God-given morning I stuck the end of my embroidered peasant dress in my wide orange pantaloons and ran to the fields. I held the golden stems of wheat in one hand and the sickle with the other and hit as hard as I could. All that holding of dry maize and wheat chipped my hands and grime lined my fingernails. Rough, dirty hands, I had. That was before I ran to freedom. Now I stood shaking my head and rubbing the big fake yellow stone of my ring with my smooth hands, which were always covered with cocoa butter, and sighed".

( p.9-10)

Sally is quickly adapting to her new society and gaining her identity. She "has become a woman" (p.156), she proves her ability as a woman who can succeed on her own without any kind of male domination or support. She establishes good relations with friendly men in Britain such as Minister Mahoney who teaches her to read books (p.182). Later she recognizes that "the westerns read so much, not like us. They are also nice and humble, not like us" (p.49). She also

becomes friendly with Max, her boss who was very kind with her, gave her a job, presents, cards and "helped me make skirts and trousers for myself" (p.122). Likewise, she began to appreciate the help rendered to her by Allan, the bar manager whom she imagined how "it would be nice to have him as a brother. He was honest, discreet and protective" (p.210). She compares her two different life experiences in the two different societies:

"Gone were the days when I was a farmer, a shepherdess, a peasant girl. I am now a seamstress, an assistant tailor in a shop in Exeter..... Salma the dark black iris of Hima must try to turn into a Sally, an English rose, white, confident, with an elegant English accent, and a pony" (P.10).

Sally has to liberate herself from the effect of her earlier social context which limited her way of thinking and acting (O'Neil,1997,p.xv). By education she could improve her potential in this new society. Consequently, Sally joins a British university to pursue her education in part time English Literature course in order to know how British ladies behave and to learn their language. She benefits from the library where she applied for membership, and learns how to use the computer in order to pass and succeed in her academic and educational work. Sally thinks that if she learns to speak and write the English language, her situation and her social status will improve and she be assimilated in her society. During her study, Sally finds everything different from what she knew or expected. There are many problems and obstacles coming from her ignorance of the new culture. In Britain, students have friendly relations with their teachers. They call their tutors by their first names in contrast with her old country where "teachers were never addressed informally" (p.201). She also faces some problems related to her identity. Is she

an Arab or a British citizen? When she applies to study English Literature she wonders about which name to use: Sally Asher or Salma Ibrahim El-Musa. When the registrar asked her to be accurate and write her name which is used in her British passport, she replied that she wants to use her Arab name, but she cannot because she will be deported (p.161). The same problem of national identity recurs when she goes to a public library where she is told: "You are an alien, we have no national insurance number for you; you cannot get in" (p.86).

At this stage in her life, Salma begins to think of her daughter whom she calls Layla and whom she had never seen. For Salma, her daughter's image is not clear to her. As she narrates, "Layla was faceless, but three years ago I decided to give her a face. I dressed her up, combed her hair, gave her a bath and kissed her a thousand times goodnight" (p.109). Salma is now torn between two conflicting attitudes: to seek her daughter and reveal her identity and her address and in this way put her life in danger or to ignore Layla and forget about her altogether. As she says: "How could I reveal my true identity and address? I would risk being traced and killed. How could I ignore Layla's cries, her calls, her constant pleading?" (p.201). Faqir actually concentrates on her heroine's inner feeling revealing her inner thoughts and main concerns at this crucial period of her life. In her imagination, Salma follows the possible various stages of her daughter's development. A possible scenario is that her daughter "has passed her A-level and will go to university soon" (p.194). She also reflects on her daughter's future: "My Layla is sixteen. In two years' time she will start university. She decided to do medicine and I said why not?" (p.135). Salma also begins to speculate on making a journey back to Hima where her father, mother and daughter were waiting for her. She imagines being with them hugging and kissing and that she will be able to recognize her daughter "even if [she] were among hundreds of children"(p.81).

Salma is deeply suffering from the consequences of the culturally, religiously and socially unacceptable love affair between her and her previous lover Hamdan who betrayed her and turned against her at a time when he was expected to stand by her and bear his share of the responsibility for getting a child born out of wedlock. The consequences of the affair still persist and haunt Salma. Speaking to Parvin, she tells her about her brother Mahmoud whom she can imagine "lurking in the dark wherever I went" (p.100) trying to kill her. She also reveals what comes to her mind about her confrontation with her brother: She explains to her friend how she saw her brother trying to kill her and how she was defying him: " [I] opened up my chest, ready to be killed" (p.180) and how she looked at his "dark figure behind the curtain and said '*yala tukhni wakhalisni*' [shoot me and let me get it done]. It will be my deliverance" (p.97). Salma's suffering is clearly felt throughout the novel and as her thoughts go backward and forward in time, she is tortured by her memories of the past and her reflections on her difficult circumstances being separated from her loved ones and forced to live a state of exile in a different and often unwelcoming environment. Salma recounts to her friend Parvin how she was once rebuked by the doctor when she went to see him because she was feeling serious pains and how the doctor dismissed her saying, "there is nothing wrong with you. Please do not waste my time and government money" (p.101). Summarizing what happened to her, Salma tells Parvin: "The cleaner at the hostel said that immigrants were living off this country and the doctor said I foreign and waste NHS money" (p.146). Salma feels she is a stranger whether in her home village or in Britain; indeed, her life is in constant risk wherever she goes. The only consolation Salma finds comes from her friend who shouted at the doctor telling him, "You call yourself a doctor! This woman is ill and you send her off without any medicine, afraid to spend some of your precious budget....We are both British and soon we will be sitting in your very seat" (p.146).

Sally's suffering in Britain has much to do with her identity. She feels torn between her being Sally or Sal or Salma, between her Arab and British identity, between her Arab origin and her being a stranger living in diaspora. Indeed, she has been living the diaspora experience every day in her life since the day she arrived in Britain. As she recounts: "I became neither Salma, nor Sal nor Sally, neither Arab nor English" (p.167). She feels that the new country is resisting her in the same way that she resists the same country that has saved her life and gave her an opportunity to prove herself and start a new life. Nevertheless, Salma feels a strong yearning for her country of origin especially because her daughter still dwells in her memory and cannot lose track of the past. Faqir reveals that there are similarities between herself and her heroine in that both still feel attached to their Arab identity: "I have done so much of that and perhaps earned the right to be British, but my Arab identity also remains very close to my heart" (Faqir,2011).

Sally's situation is deepening and getting worse. She loses weight, suffers from insomnia, loses hope and wishes to die. At this juncture in her miserable life, John appears as an outside force to give her encouragement and raise her morale. John is a university tutor who likes Salma and eventually falls in love with her. She has a love story with her English tutor. Both are searching for something in their society: Sally to save her life, John to find a job in the south. John asked Sally to tell his mother about herself. He wants to marry her and establish a family. Later, John and Sally get married and have their son 'Imran'.

From this point onward, Faqir portrays two different images of love; the first image derives from a Bedouin society. It is a temporary love between Salma and Hamdan (p.13) when Hamdan considered her guilty and refused to marry her even though he knew she was pregnant. He ignored her and went away, putting all the blame on her and considering himself innocent and the victim of her allurements. This picture contrasts sharply with the love story of Sally and John whose "northern heart might be warm enough, spacious enough, to take on a Bedouin woman

with "baggage" (p.253). That love, which "came wrapped in chocolate boxes" (p.13), offers her a chance to go on within this society with a great support and encouraged by her beloved husband. He has positively enhanced Sally's sense of self and created a real change in her character. She needs a good man who accepts her as she is, appreciates what she has done, someone whom she can trust. John can be considered the one who is Sally's real love that "is a way of delineating the self, not of losing the self" (Josselson,1996,p.32).

Despite the great success that Sally has achieved in her new experience in Britain, the past is still haunting her and making her feel sad and pensive whenever she remembers her taunting memories about the difficult experience she had while in her native village. On many occasions, she is pictured pondering the past and the present: "Now I live in Great Britain. I have a job, a car, a husband and a large house"; but there was "something was holding my heart back" (p.81; p.269). She is still haunted by her past; it is controlling her way of thinking and exercising a great effect on her feelings. Consequently, she is pensive and sad like the Arabs in general.

Sally is adapting to her new society but she still resists and tries to hold to her past. Inside the same character and within one being, there is an inner conflict between "the English Sally, standing erect, head high, back straight" and "the Arab Salma sitting on the ground, swaying her upper half and sprinkling ashes over her head" (p.239). When Sally changes her style and takes off her veil, Salma's belongings which she brings with her to Britain (her mother's black shawl, mother's letter and the lock of her daughter's hair) are still part of Sally's character: "She ends up in a new country with a new identity, but with the same old, torn heart" (Faqr,2010). Accordingly, the Arab Salma is torn between two different and conflicting identities: her old Bedouin identity and her newly acquired identity.

Nevertheless, Salma's yearning for her daughter continues. She is still hunted by the trauma she suffered back home and has hallucinations of a man who has come to kill her. This shows that whether in Britain or in Hima, Salma's suffering and misery continue without abate even though she has some short and passing moments of happiness with her husband. At the end, Salma embarks on a journey back to her village. Nash explains, "Salma's return, above all in its worst scenario outcome, only confirms the apparent magnitude of the chasm separating traditional Bedouin and 'advanced' British culture" (Nash,2007,p.134).

In her article Bibizadeh explains how "Faqr creates a discourse for women marginalized in both home and host societies, and she constructs a diasporic modernity which is flawed but authentic. Salma achieves liberation from patriarchy and male-enforced passivity when she returns to Hima irrespective of her death, because this decision marks a refusal to allow another power to dictate her life, whether in British or Bedouin society. Salma is willing to risk her life in an effort to obtain freedom on her terms for herself and for her daughter. In this way, her return to Hima is symbolic of self-sacrifice because "she continually refuses to conform or be oppressed". (Bibizadeh,2015).

Salma's life ends dramatically when she finally decides to go back to Hima, the village where she was born and the place she left several years ago. In the last days of her life in Britain, Salma feels a deep compulsion driving her to her place of origin prompted by a mysterious calling from her daughter: "I have to go. Look for her. She is calling me. She needs my help" (p.270). Salma thinks that over the past several years, "things must have changed in the old country, people change, I changed" (p.273). Salma has decided to leave her husband and son and go back to her old country searching for her daughter, for herself. Arriving in her village, Salma is shocked to learn that her daughter had died and that her brother Mahmoud had "thrown her [daughter] in the long well" (p.283). While looking for her daughter's grave and calling her daughter at the top of



her voice, Salma hears a mysterious voice uttering these words: "Dishonor can only be wiped off with blood" (p.285). When Salma turned her head, her brother shot her between the eyes. Faqir explains the tragic ending of her story of honour crime: "As for Salma, I initially had a happy ending but then it hit me that I was writing a book about honour crimes, partly....Because honour crimes persist, it would not be politically accurate for Salma to walk free into the sunset" (Faqir,2011).

## **4.2 Honour Crime in *My Name Is Salma through a Feminist Perspective***

One of the most controversial topics in the world in general and in the Arab world in particular is honour crime. This issue that Faqir presents in her novel will be discussed through a feminist perspective in order to investigate how women are oppressed by their cultural and patriarchal society in the name of honour. Faqir chooses this theme to show that "the way issues are tackled is important. I am not an Orientalist or an Islam basher. I write about the Arab world because I love it and because I have a deep desire to change it for the better" (Faqir,2010). She is one of Anglo-Arab writers whose "distance does not always rescue them from their critics back home, who take them to task in unsparingly vociferous attacks, relentlessly construing both their choice of foreign tongue and their subject-matter as a reflection of disaffection or lack of national feeling" (Al Maleh,2009,p. 14).

As we have explained in detail in chapter two, there is close connection between honour and culture. Each culture has its own conception of honour corresponding to its social traditions because culture refers to "a system of shared beliefs or a whole way of life" (Jackson,1989,p.2). Mathew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) clarifies how culture has a vital role affecting human relationships and their affairs. He explains that this connection can create a social

instrument in order to investigate the good and the bad for any society. In this light, societies across the world believed that women's honour is one of the basic concepts of their traditions and beliefs. This view has been frequently challenged by various feminist theorists. Feminists find a connection between women's oppression and patriarchal societies coming from their particular cultures. Friedman (1998,p.32) argues that the concept of masculine and feminine or male and female principles or values "have a powerful ideological force in the various cultural formations of sexism and patriarchy".

Broadly speaking, this idea of gender spreads across culture as a "type of discourse". Parker explains how Foucault described this term as "a common pattern of culturally internalized expectation" and how the gender's discourse is "internalized patterns of cultural expectation about femininity and masculinity" (parker,2008,p.227). He adds that gender discourse depends on people's behaviours and beliefs and that it affects their way of life and social behaviour. Minces (1982) argues that honour is something is shared because it belongs to the collective and it is not achieved individually. She also argues how honour affects not only the reputation of grandfathers and the present generation of the family but also the unborn members. Society gives men the authority and responsibility about this honour. Culturally, men believed that women "uphold the honor of their families and the state by the purity of their behaviour and the modesty of their appearance" (Lorber,2002). As a result, men do their best to prevent their women to commit any mistakes because they are women. Men have the right to be judges of women's behaviours, and to be the defenders of societal traditions. Accordingly, they are delegated by the norms of their societies to punish women if they commit any mistake particularly "honour crime" which results from any violation of acceptable norms of sexual relations.

Faqir's *My Name Is Salma* shows women who violate their societies' social norms of sexual behaviour in Arab society and particularly in Bedouin society. Bedouin tribes are bound by a strict code of man's honour that is defined as "the moral worth he possesses in the eyes of the society of which he is a member" (Westermarck,1912,p.17). This honour code is a multicultural issue that is closely related to women's sexuality in different kinds of societies (Faqir,2001). Bedouin society holds authority over women's behaviour and acts in general and their bodies in particular: "The honour of the patrilineal group is bound up with the sex organs of its daughters" (Kressel,1981,p.142). As a result of Salma's sexual affair out of wedlock with her lover, she was chased, her blood had been spilt by her tribe and "all the young men were sniffing the earth" (p.48) because her father "will never hold my head high as long as she is still breathing" (p.98). In order to save her life, she was put in a prison where she might stay forever for fear of being shot any time in her life. In that sense, while Salma was giving birth, she heard "a shot in the distance: another girl who had been released by the prison authorities, was shot dead by her young brother" (p.132).

Salma's life stopped following the discovery of her illicit love affair, and as a result she spent the rest of her life awaiting her death. Given her Bedouin society's social norms, She felt she "was the one who deserved to die" (p.265). Many years later, Salma returns back to her fatal death. She hides her identity by changing her looks and appearance in order not to be distinguished by men in Hima who "would never think I belonged to their tribe, they would see only a shameless foreign woman, whose body, treasures, were on offer for nothing" (p.273). But her "dark deeds" and "shameful past" are stronger. Mahmoud, her only brother, has to adhere to the traditions of his society and its codes of honour that he inherited from his ancestors. He must kill his sister to purify the family's honour so that his father's soul should rest in peace by killing the sinful girl. While Salma was crying on her daughter's indistinct grave, she hears her brother's

voice declaring the purity of their family's honour. When Salma turned her head, she "felt a cold pain pierce through my forehead, there between my eyes, and then like blood in water it spread out" (p.285) Salma was killed and received her due punishment according to her society's patriarchal values.

Faqir wonders how this type of killing happened; for her: "It is harder, perhaps, to shoot someone you know very well" (Faqir,2011). Abu-Odeh (1996) explains the real reason behind male reaction toward honour crime. She writes: "To be a man is to engage in daily practices, an important part of which is to assure the virginity of the women in your family. In Arab culture, a man is that person whose sister's virginity is a social question for him". In his own patriarchal society, Salma's brother is not a criminal but a hero who wins his societal acceptance as his act was a justified response to her dishonourable behaviour which affected the whole tribe. Mahmoud who claimed to be Salma's defender becomes her killer. In her article Bibizadeh explain how "Faqir's decision for Salma to be murdered is symbolic of the death of traditional notions of unobtainable gender roles; her body symbolically undermines patriarchal authority as it represents unrelenting injustice" (Bibizadeh,2015).

Faqir argues that Bedouin tribes made their traditions and taboo into rules for everyone, and these rules should scarcely have been applied upon women in the name of honour: "Only her bleeding in death can erase the shame brought about by her failure to bleed in sex on her wedding night" (abu-Odeh,1996). Faqir presents one of the most tragic cases, when a rumor is enough to cause an honour crime. She argues that "women who are suspected of immoral behaviour usually end up dead, even though most of those who get examined by forensic scientists are found to have been sexually inactive" (Faqir,2010). Similarly, Rana Hussein in *Murder in the Name of Honour* (2009) maintains that "the majority of so-called honour killings I reported on were based on mere suspicion" (Hussein,2009,p.xiii). Faqir in *My Name Is Salma*

mentions Sabha, Salma's classmate, who has lost her life because of dubious whispers that are turned into rumour. For girls this "gossip may damage their reputation" (Al-Khayyat,1990,p.23). Sabha's mother shared the celebrating of her daughter being shot; sucked in her pipe: "Good riddance! We've cleansed our shame with her blood" (Faqr,p.94). Later in the novel, it is claimed that Sabha is still virgin and all of that whispers were a rumour no more. After her killing, Sabha was honourable but this news caused the death of Sabha's mother. In that sense, Hasan (2012) explains the tragic result of honour crime and its effect on society as presented in this novel. According to him: "The death of Sabha's mother and the killing of Salma's daughter at the end of the novel show that honour killing causes other indirect killings of other women. If the women of Hima deserve killing because of a rumour, they are voiceless and without protection" (Hasan,2012,p.171)

Faqir's *My Name Is Salma* takes the readers a few years back in time to Hima in Levant as a major setting in order to show how ancient traditions and customs still control our present days. As Faqir articulates: "The use of violence to maintain privilege is.....historically entrenched, and has turned gradually into the systemic and global destruction of women, with the institutionalization of patriarchy over the centuries" (Faqir,2001). *My Name Is Salma* aims to reveal the real reason behind women's oppression in the name of honour. As Morris (1993,p.1) observes "Gender difference is the foundation of a structural inequality between women and men, by which women suffer systematic social injustice". Broadly speaking, women are a reflection of their society; they have to be within the frame that is socially drawn around their performance by patriarchy. Many feminists explain how this traditional image of woman has limited her to be good or bad "in terms of how they relate to the patriarchal order". Accordingly, woman can be a 'good girl' if she obeys the rules of her society's patriarchy but if she disobeys, then she can be a 'bad girl' (Tyson,p.88). As a result of this patriarchal ideology, "women were

and are often still seen essentially as the property of the family and the community" (Wilson,2006,p. 6). They have to adhere to their traditions. In the name of honour, woman has "to be watchful of all her actions - how she walks, how she responds to others" (Wilson,2006,p.12). In *My Name Is Salma*, the heroine as we have seen in the above discussion suffers greatly because of the restrictive system of her patriarchal Bedouin society. Abu-Lughod (1986,p.152) portrays the image of 'good girl' in Bedouin tribe. She argues that "the more women are able to deny their sexuality, the more honourable they are".

Faqir shares the feminist view which explains how woman is present in society. Her novel portrays women as a 'sexual object' in their patriarchal society which keeps a watchful eye on them. Salma believes in Hamdan's promises of marriage; she loves him, while he considers her as a sexual object. De-Beauvoir in her book (1949,p.15) shows how a female "appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex –absolute sex, no less". In Faqir's novel, Hamdan is interested in Salma only in as far as satisfies his sexual desires without caring much about her as an individual worthy of respect and appropriate human treatment. In this way, after the discovery of Salma's pregnancy, she became the 'bad girl'; that is why Hamdan immediately leaves her. This leads to making Salma the victim of honour crime.

Generally speaking, feminist critics put forward the notion that within the family there are some traditions and rules which devalue women. This happens when the family is controlled by a man who is usually the father, the strongest figurehead who experiences his power and authority upon all family members particularly female members. In a Bedouin family, the figurehead maintains a system which "is shamefully misused when the matter concerns daughters. The Arab family being highly patriarchal, both socially and legally, the authority of the father over his daughters is absolute" (El-Saadawi,1982,p.71). As Walby (1989) points out, men use honour crime to their advantage in order to have "power over women". As a result of honour crime,

women are oppressed in their society. They are "undoubtedly the primary victims of 'crimes of honour' at the hands of largely male perpetrators" (Welchman and Hossain,2005,p.6).

Faqir's novel can best be seen from a feminist perspective. By concentrating on honour crime and its consequences on women, Faqir is obviously writing her novel from the viewpoint of a feminist who is concerned with this issue. Many western and non-western feminists focus their studies on honour crime in order to explore the injustices in this cultural phenomenon. For example, they point out that when an honour crime occurs, it is the woman who suffers, not the man. Consequently, the woman becomes the victim who is responsible for her crime as well as her partner's role in the crime. As a result of this inequality "women are responsible not only for their own 'honour', but for that of their male family members, and women who transgress 'honour' codes are treated far more harshly than their male counterparts" (Baker et al,1999, p.168).

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Conclusion

*My Name Is Salma* tackles central issues related to different cultures. Faqir as an Anglo-Arab writer focuses mainly on women's status in order to show how women's image is shaped according to the culture and social values of their communities. Faqir's novel reveals the cultural and social status of women in the Arab World in contrast with the Western World. In her novel, Faqir portrays her protagonist with different names and places to live in; Salma in Hima became Sally in Britain. She also shows how women are marginalized and ignored within the two different cultures. She partially presents this issue through Salma's essay on Shakespeare's sister. Salma explains that Shakespeare "must have had friends and women to help him. Nobody talks about the women. I remembered the story of Abu-Zaid El-Hilali, the hero whose adventures were memorized by both the young and the old. Nobody ever mentions his wife, daughter or mother"; she finds herself similar with "all the women who were ignored in these tales" (p.193). Faqir describes the misery of her protagonist's life and how she suffers from isolation and alienation as a result of her Bedouin society's patriarchal ideology which imposes on her a strict system of traditional gender roles. In Britain she still faces a problem of identity as the new society tries to deny her identity and is not prepared to accept her on her own terms. She finds herself torn between her past and present identity. And so, she is facing an identity crisis that compels her to view herself



sometimes as Salma, the Bedouin girl and sometimes as Sally, the British woman who is struggling to establish herself as a new person with a different identity.

Through this novel, Faqir reveals what still happens for women particularly within Bedouin community where patriarchy is a social and cultural system which deprives Bedouin women from their own most basic rights to live and to be free. Through her protagonist, Faqir critiques the stereotyped status of women within Patriarchal society in Hima and how women in Bedouin society obey blindly its patriarchal rules. She wonders why Bedouin women are still marginalized in their own society and are compelled to submit to their men who threaten them with "taking on a second wife to keep us in our place". This situation is further aggravated by the fact that women are not allowed to think and consequently they accept without any question or objection their role as restricted to child bearing, house cleaning and cooking and any other domestic chore. (Faqir,2007,p.158). In addition, in Bedouin communities, "good girls" have to preserve their family's honour and adhere to their traditions.

Faqir takes the reader on a journey with Salma from her Bedouin society into a modern society in Exeter where she begins a new life with Sally Asher, the helpful English lady who sponsored her trip to Britain after releasing her from her confinement in Lebanon. Salma suddenly becomes Sally. In Britain Salma starts her new life without any previous experience to prepare her for her new and different society. In her new social environment, almost everything is new to her: the language, the culture, the people, the place... everything. In Exeter women's status is completely different; Western women have already gained their basic rights in contrast with Bedouin women who have no such rights in their extremely restrictive society. Salma finds out that in a highly developed society, like the British society, women enjoy a great deal of freedom

as well as many rights that make them equal to men in terms of gender needs, human, social and cultural rights. As well constrained by the restrictive traditions of her Bedouin social background, Salma faces what looks like insurmountable problems in her new society. As a result, she cannot get rid of the devastating effects of her failed and disastrous love affair and the harrowing and her terrible experience in prison. And so Salma, even though she now lives in what is generally considered a free and democratic society, finds herself unable to forget her past horrible experience and keeps thinking of what happened to her back home always having the feeling that her life is at risk any time. Her feelings of guilt and regret never leave her and so she is actually waiting for her murder in the name of traditional honour. She finds great difficulty in reconciling the legacy of her past with the interests of her future.

As a feminist, Faqir sheds lights on women's right to call for equal opportunities of education, job, marriage, voice, inheritance, etc. In this novel, Faqir calls for one of the most sacred rights, to save one's life. Basically, in Bedouin society women are oppressed and subjugated to patriarchal rules particularly those which are related to honour. In fact, in such a highly restrictive society, women have internalized these honour codes even though they live in modern times. The fact that Faqir focuses in her novel on honour crime is a good example of a serious attempt to reveal the real suffering of Bedouin women in the name of honour within a patriarchal society. She chooses the ending of her novel carefully to show a common case of female victimization. She explains the effect of honour crime on Salma as a Bedouin woman who starts her new, successful and happy life in Britain. She internally believes she will be killed in the end because in the light of the crime she has committed in her society this ending is inevitable. Elaine Showalter (1985,p.4) shows how death "is a label

applying to gender norms and violations, a penalty for being female as well as daring not to be". Salma has to pay with her life to clean her shame which she brought upon her family's name. Her patriarch has to declare and celebrate his revenge to restore his honour; Mahmoud has no other choice but to kill his sister in front of the whole community. Nevertheless, Honour crime is largely a misconceived notion based on a system of patriarchy and traditional culture which has been oppressing women throughout history. Honour crime is an act of violence "for those marginalized by the dominant culture, a sense of identity as constructed through impersonal and social relations of power" (Waugh,1989,p.3).

Through this novel, Faqir sheds light on various human issues connected with honor crime. She describes the pain and the suffering that women convicted of honour crimes are subjected to whether through imprisonment or whether they are chased far away into exile from the scene and the place of their supposed crime. In the name of 'protective custody', those women are mistreated and isolated from their society and family, living under the threat of impending death, imagining that they will be killed the moment they get out of the prison's walls by one of their relatives even if there is no clear evidence to indict them. Faqir also depicts another issue connected to the main one. Salma's daughter is also subjected to the same fate of her mother. She is condemned to death by her tribal society because she will be considered a source of shame for the whole family as her mother. In the novel Salma's daughter is considered an illegitimate child and so she is considered an outcast who is outside the custody and the protection of her society. In point of fact, Salma's daughter was killed by Mahmoud because she is a serious threat to the family's honour no less than her mother and will bring shame for the whole family.

From a feminist perspective, Faqir explores the inequality and injustice involved in honour crimes and how women are the only victims in their society when such a crime is committed. She gives her characters a voice to tell the inhumane treatment that victims of honour crime are subjected to and how only the female is victimized while the male partner remains free and gets away with it even though he has been an equal complicit in the same crime.

On the other hand, Faqir as a post- colonial feminist argues how Salma is a victim in both her original country and in the colonizing country. Consequently, Salma is punished twice. First, she is penalized by her Bedouin society which commits her to face her inevitable doom and second, she is forced to live as an isolated individual who finds it difficult to cope with life in a society that considers her an alien who cannot be treated on equal footing with the other members of the same society. In this way, the novel clarifies how both race/ethnicity and gender work together to produce a kind of double bind that subjugates to her to a state of continuous suffering and maltreatment in both communities. As Habib observes "class divisions and gender oppression operate both in the west and in colonized nations" (Habib,2005,p.272).

Thus, we can notice how women's oppression becomes a kind of a cultural and social tradition transmitted across generations. From their early childhood, boys and girls are forced to internalize their role as males and females as dictated by some inherited old traditions and social and cultural legacies. In that sense, the patriarchal system controls women's behaviour and thought and dictates the acceptable social norms to which all individuals should submit but with clear discrimination between men and women depending on their gender and the way they are judged by the norms of their society.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Having discussed Faqir's novel *My Name Is Salma*, it is appropriate to give a few recommendations for further research. One important point that should be taken into consideration in future research is that there is need for greater concentration on a comparative approach when discussing this novel. This requires a comparative study of honour crime as presented in this novel with the way the same issue is treated in other novels that address this problem.

Another area in this novel that needs further elaboration is the socio- cultural dimension where the role of such characters as Parvin, Liz and Gwen can be highlighted. This subject can be discussed with reference to the cultural approach which takes into its purview such cultural aspects as gender, social background and cultural orientation. Such a study would shed greater light on Salma's personality and the question of her identity in light of multiculturalism and its effect on women in modern societies.

And finally an area that needs further exploration is the psychological dimension in the novel. By applying a psychoanalytical approach, the character of the heroine as well as the other characters can be better understood. The importance of applying this kind of critical approach lies in the fact that the question of identity in this novel is of great importance. In this way, Salma's movement from a Bedouin society to an urban, metropolitan society can be better explained and understood.

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