HONOUR, IDENTITY, AND ALIENATION IN FADIA FAQIR'S MY NAME IS SALMA (2007)*

FADIA FAQIR'İN MY NAME IS SALMA (2007) ROMANINDA NAMUS, KIMLIK VE YABANCILAŞMA*

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the relationship between communal identity and honour killings in Fadia Faqir's *My Name is Salma* through Edward Said's humanist critique. The novel's protagonist, Salma, experiences a deep conflict between individual freedoms and a sense of social belonging. Salma's migration to the United Kingdom symbolises her escape from social norms that foresee her death and her rejection of those norms. However, her exclusion in the new individualistic society and the lack of a sense of belonging lead to her inability to adapt to life in the UK. Salma's sense of identity is deeply tied to her past and the society in which she grew up, and therefore the individualistic freedoms offered by society cannot resolve her issues. This study revisits *My Name is Salma* in the context of immigration, interpreting honour killings through the lens of individual and communal identity conflict. For Salma, the individualistic society is not something to be desired, as it leads to a fragmented sense of identity. What she truly desires is to regain her communal identity and feel whole again. The article presents a new perspective on the destructive effects of honour culture and the complex intersection of individual and communal identities. Moreover, it demonstrates that the need to belong to a community can lead individuals to maintain their ties to that community despite violent social norms, such as killing or being killed for honour.

Keywords: Communal Identity, Honour Killings, Immigrant Experience, Individual Identity, Social Belonging

ÖZET

Bu makale, Fadia Faqir'in *My Name is Salma* (Benim Adım Salma) adlı eserindeki toplumsal kimlik ve namus cinayetleri arasındaki ilişkiyi, Edward Said'in hümanist eleştirisi üzerinden analiz etmektedir. Romanın başkahramanı Salma, bireysel özgürlüklerle toplumsal aidiyet duygusu arasında derin bir çatışma yaşamaktadır. Salma'nın Birleşik Krallık'a göçü, onun öldürülmesini öngören toplumsal normlardan kaçışını ve bu normları reddedişini simgeler. Ancak yeni bireyci toplumda dışlanması ve aidiyet duygusundan yoksun kalması, İngiltere'deki yaşamına uyum sağlayamamasına neden olur. Salma'nın kimlik algısı, geçmişi ve büyüdüğü toplumla derinden bağlantılıdır; bu nedenle, bireyci toplumun sunduğu özgürlük anlayışı onun sorunlarını çözemez. Bu çalışma, *My Name is Salma* romanını göçmenlik bağlamında yeniden ele alarak namus cinayetlerini bireysel ve toplumsal kimlik çatışması üzerinden yorumlamaktadır. Salma için bireyci toplum, parçalanmış bir kimlik algısına yol açtığı için arzulanan bir şey değildir. Onun asıl isteği, toplumsal kimliğini yeniden kazanarak kendini bütün hissetmektir. Makale, namus kültürünün yıkıcı etkilerini ve bireysel ile toplumsal kimliklerin karmaşık kesişimini yeni bir bakış açısıyla sunmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu makale bir topluma ait olma ihtiyacının, bireylerin namus uğruna öldürmek ya da ölmek gibi şiddet içeren toplumsal kurallara rağmen o toplumla bağlarını koparamamalarına neden olabileceğini de göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplumsal Kimlik, Namus Cinayetleri, Göçmen Deneyimi, Bireysel Kimlik, Sosyal Aidiyet.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to analyse the relationship between the notion of collective identity and honour killings, as represented in Fadia Faqir's third novel, *My Name is Salma.* This analysis employs Edward Said's humanist method, which deepens the understanding of the novel by examining its worldly contexts. As a requirement of Said's humanist criticism, all texts should be analysed within their material (worldly) contexts, such as their relations to historical, political, social, and cultural human experiences. To this end, first, the "superficial appearance of" *My Name is Salma,* including the ideas expressed by Faqir will be examined and then, all analysis will be integrated to work "from the surface to the 'inward life-center' of the work of art", which requires "repeated readings" to fight the "way to unity [with the] author" (Said, 2003, pp. 64–65).

In addition to Said's humanist reading, this article, by referencing postcolonial and trauma theories, offers a broader understanding of *My Name is Salma*. Homi K. Bhabha's hybridity theory helps us understand how Salma is stuck between her native and new British identities. Freud's theory of melancholia also offers a valuable lens through which to understand Salma's inability to fully mourn the loss of her community, family, and daughter. Salma's guilt over abandoning her daughter and her persistent attachment to her past illustrate this conflict, as her unresolved mourning inhibits her ability to reconcile with her present reality.

As its title suggests, the issue of identity is one of the book's primary issues. The eponymous character's journey from familial exclusion in her hometown, somewhere in the Levant, to national exclusion in Britain constitutes the main storyline. Salma's attachment to her familial name, Salma Ibrahim El-Musa, and her partial rejection of her new official British name, Sally, is a metonym of Salma's continued need to belong to her history, family and community.

Salma's loyalty to her family name is not just an important element of the storyline; in extra-textual reality, this commitment creates an environment conducive to the practice of honour killings as internationally, most "honour killings are executed for instances of rape, infidelity, flirting or any other instance perceived as disgracing the family's honour, and the woman is then killed by a male relative to restore the family's name in the community" (Tripathi & Yadav, 2004, p. 64). In these cases, individual acts become a matter of communal identity as "in many cultures, an individual's identity is closely tied to their family unit" (Plant, 2005, p. 111). Particularly, though not exclusively, in "Islamic and Middle Eastern societies a distinct honor-shame culture exists wherein individuals derive their identity from their social group, especially their family and kinship network" (Neshwiwat, 2004, p. 254). The phenomenon of honour killing is more common in collectivist societies such as tribes. Focusing on the tension between individual and collective identity will enable us to have a more comprehensive understanding of honour killings (Jafri, 2008).

My Name is Salma tells the story of a Bedouin shepherd girl who becomes pregnant out of wedlock by her lover, Hamdan. The setting is an unnamed Levantine country, which is probably Jordan as it can be inferred from the direction of Salma's travel to Lebanon, as well as, Faqir's background. After Salma's mother's attempt to abort Salma's baby fails, her mother warns Salma that her brother will kill her for besmirching their family's honour. Upon asking help from her teacher, Miss Nailah, Salma is placed in a prison under protective custody. On the advice of Salma's prison fellow, Naura, Salma's baby girl is taken from her just after labour, on the grounds that, if the baby is not taken immediately, it would be harder for Salma to let her baby go. This, however, does not prevent Salma from falling into depression because of the separation from

her daughter. After around six years of custody in prison, a civil nun from Lebanon smuggles Salma into Lebanon where she is later adopted by an English nun, Miss Asher, whereupon they migrate to Britain. Despite her new name as Sally Asher, Salma never fully accepts her forced migration or new identity in Britain (Faqir 2007).

In an interview with Lindsey Moore (2011, p. 2), Faqir explains that she started writing *My Name is Salma* as an escape from the guilt she felt after losing custody of her thirteen-month-old son, because she was, in her words, "verging on the edge of madness. And it was perhaps a way to talk to my son. Perhaps it's a long letter to him, all of it." This is one of the major events in Faqir's life which is, indirectly, echoed in the novel; the other is her experience as an immigrant in Britain. In a separate interview with Rachel Bower (2012, p. 8), Faqir reflects on her sense of identity: "When I first arrived in Britain I examined and re-examined my sense of belonging, […] Now I don't subject myself to such inquisitions. I am a cross-cultural, transnational writer par excellence […]"

Here the author seems to echo Said (2001, p. 186): "seeing 'the entire world as a foreign land' makes possible originality of vision." As exiles recognise at least two cultures, settings, and homes, contrary to most people, they have an insider/ outsider perspective and a plural vision which brings about the consciousness of concurrent dimensions which Said (1991) calls – borrowing a terminology from music – "*contrapuntal*". Both new and old environments are "vivid, actual" and "occurring together contrapuntally" as "for an exile, habits of life, expressions, or activity in the new environment" exist together with the recollection of the same things in a different environment. The perception is uniquely illuminating, particularly if the exile is aware of more contrapuntal appositions which abate conservative attitudes and "elevate appreciative sympathy." Also, there is a sense of accomplishment in the act of feeling at home no matter where one is (Said, 2001, p. 186). However, Said is aware of his relatively privileged experience and the difficulties of exiles, such as the pain of estrangement. He reminds that "while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement" (Said, 2001, p. 173).

Said's contrapuntal perspective aligns with Bhabha's theory of hybridity, as both emphasize the dual vision inherent in cultural interplay and highlight the transformative potential and positive attributes of such interactions. Bhabha (2004, p.37) uses hybridity as a transformative concept, describing it as "the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, [which] properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must". To Bhabha, the interaction of two different cultures results in hybridity, which disrupts traditional power structures and binary oppositions and creates a "third space" where identities become fluid. "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that accommodates difference without imposing or assuming a hierarchical structure" (Bhabha, p.5).

Salma, however, does not achieve a contented immigrant life; she is mentally disoriented and torn, as is clear from the style of the narration. Salma exemplifies failed hybridity, as she remains isolated and marginalized in both cultures. Although Salma/Sally is the continuous focaliser of the story, it feels as though the text has two narrators, swapping between her Bedouin identity as Salma and her forced immigrant experience as Sally. This fragmented narrative mirrors her inability to reconcile these identities, which complicates the theories of hybridity and dual

vision. Her experience challenges the transformative potential envisioned in Bhabha's "Third Space" and the contrapuntal perspective of Said, highlighting the limitation of these theories as Salma's experience demonstrates difficult, unromanticized realities of immigrant life.

The story spans from the 1970s to 1990 but is plotted non-chronologically. The narrative which is juxtaposed between past and present makes up the story incisively, showing how Salma's traumatic past haunts her and the narration. The continuum of the narration is interrupted with analepses so randomly and frequently that it may cause the reader to lose track of time, just as Salma does. The fractured complex narrative presents a tough chore for the reader to follow. Faqir, however, values non-linear narrative. According to her, truth cannot be represented by a linear narrative. "My narrative is always fractured. The glass is held in the hand and then dropped on the floor. A fractured narrative could perhaps become more tragic and more beautiful than the whole" (Chambers, 2011, p. 66). More specifically here, Faqir enters the mind of Salma, which is haunted by her past and the trauma of the loss of her daughter, family, history, and her original coherent identity. The juxtaposition of random scenes from past and present is meant to reflect Salma's psyche, since "the human mind works randomly; it free-associates. If you want to represent thought process, your form can never be entirely linear" (Moore, 2011, p. 4). Faqir aims to "reinforce the idea that [for Salma] the past is alive in the present" (Chambers, 2011, p. 67). As Salma never makes peace with her past—especially due to the guilt she feels about the loss of her daughter— Salma's present is marked by trauma and pain.

Cathy Caruth understands that trauma is a devastating experience which refuses "integration and expression" (Craps, 2013, p. 1). Although Faqir's narration is criticized by some readers as unreadable, the narration actually represents resistance to integration and expression with an emphasis on the inaccessibility of trauma. As Stef Craps puts it, according to Caruth:

> conjoining a psychoanalytic view of trauma with a deconstructive vigilance regarding the indeterminacies of representation in the analysis of texts that bear witness to traumatic histories can grant us a paradoxical mode of access to extreme events and experiences that defy understanding and representation. In this account, textual "undecidability" or "unreadability" comes to reflect the inaccessibility of trauma. (Craps, 2013, p. 2)

Caruth (1995) also points out that speaking of our traumas and listening to the trauma of others can provide a link between cultures. This interaction can create a "third space" where cultures meet, and new identities emerge through hybridity. Hence, trauma literature can provide the fruitful interaction of cultures which also echoes Said's humanist criticism. Said (2003, pp. 4–5) believes that literature can bring about a change by arousing sympathy; yet, he reminds us that "there are other traditions and therefore other humanities." As we cannot speak of a universal humanism, Stef Craps warns that trauma theory should not be regarded as universal. Craps (2013, pp. 2–4) criticises Western trauma theorists, including Caruth, for marginalizing or ignoring "traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures;" taking for granted "the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the history of Western modernity" and frequently favouring or sometimes prescribing "a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma;" commonly "disregarding the connections between metropolitan and non-Western or minority traumas." To overcome trauma theory's Eurocentric biases, Craps underlines the importance of focusing on "collective, ongoing, everyday forms of traumatizing violence" instead of "traditional individual and event-based model." Craps' work on trauma theory is useful to think through the

issue of honour killing as honour killing is a form of collective violence and punishment and as part of everyday ongoing collective masculine control. However, Salma's trauma still requires evaluation at an individual level, as her experience exemplifies the immigrant's struggle with trauma. Immigrants, particularly those who migrate involuntarily, often carry the trauma of loss, which gets worse in their new, alien society. An individual analysis enables us to comprehend how systematic exclusion exacerbates the trauma rather than providing chances for recovery.

Faqir believes in generating change through literature by accepting it as a humanising form (Bower, 2012). Faqir makes it clear that all of her novels are "socio-political" and she affirms that "novels are windows to the world; they humanize, bring injustice to the reader's attention, and act as cultural bridges" (Bower, 2012, p. 7). As a humanist writer "no longer beholden to the dictates of the 'home' community," she exploits her position as insider-outsider and establishes a "dialogue with past and present, the distant and the near" (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 15).

One of the reasons why Faqir has written *My Name is Salma* was to initiate change by "open[ing] up the debate of [honour killings] and widen[ing] it." This is because Faqir asserts that she writes about the Arab world "to be self-critical," as she believes "there will be no reform without that" (Bower, 2012, p. 9). Faqir also suggests that "*My Name is Salma* is partly about honour crimes but mainly about the immigrant experience in Britain today" (Bower, 2012, p. 9). Salma's daily, persistent and cumulative trauma is narrated in the immigrant context. As an immigrant Bedouin woman in Britain, Salma is distressed because, for her, identity is not purely personal and cannot be resolved through education or personal development offered in her new environment. While observing some college students walking on a road, Salma wonders: "What was it like to be a student in England? What did they teach them here in England? Was it possible to walk out of my skin, my past, my name? Was it possible to open a new page" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 38)? Salma, after trying to be a university student, fails to turn a new page in the sense of foreclosing upon her earlier identity. Salma feels she is irrevocably bound by her communal identity, even though it threatens her life. She still wishes to be a part of her cultural community as she does not see herself existing outside her own community. This might be the reason behind her need to return back home and to her culture even if the patriarchal and archaic elements in her culture require her to die in the name of honour.

Hence, in this article, the relationship between honour killings and familial and national identities will be foregrounded through an analysis of the tension between individual identity and communal identity, after the theoretical sections on honour killings and identity are discussed. The novel has been composed in such a way as to dramatize this tension by juxtaposing in *My Name is Salma* two parallel stories simultaneously. One of them pertains to the narrative present set in an individualist British society and the other one to the narrative past set in a communal Bedouin society. Since Salma cleaves to her past identity by resisting the adoption of her new name, the identity issue in the novel will be discussed by means of her names and the acceptance or rejection that she feels towards one vis-à-vis the other. This article provides a new reading of the novel which contextualises honour killing in an immigrant context focusing on the conflict between individual and collective identity.

2. HONOUR KILLINGS AND IDENTITIY

Crimes of honour are world phenomena, even if they are stereotypically connected with particular (generally non-Western, especially Muslim) societies and minority groups. The complexity of the notion of honour, which varies from culture to culture, leads to confusion in defining this phenomenon. Human Rights Watch (2001) defines honour crimes as "acts of

violence, usually murder, committed by male family members against female family members who are perceived to have brought dishonor upon the family". Although this definition may apply to the most common type of honour killings, limiting the victims to women and perpetrators to men is misleading, as sometimes the whole family can be complicit in the crime, and men, especially if they are in a homosexual relationship, can be victims as well. Upholding proper family values is so important that sisters and mothers can be active in the purification of shame brought to the family as they do not want to be labelled as being as dishonourable as the victim. Joanne Payton (2011, p. 75) explains female complicity in such crimes:

> Older women may be included in family councils and take a role in conspiracies, provided they have internalised the gender roles of the 'honour' system and play a masculine role in enforcing them on the younger generation.

The stage of a woman in her lifecycle determines the position that that woman has in a patriarchal system, with older women being given relatively more privileges—something which Payton describes as the 'masculine role' imposed by patriarchal structures, which in turn strengthens the systematic patriarchal control mechanism. It can be understood that Payton gives an active role to women who can internalise their gender roles. However, Judith Butler (1988, p. 528) finesses our understanding of social construction, particularly in the field of gender identity, and further complicates the views like Erving Goffman's, which suggest that the self is a social actor that performs different roles based on societal expectations and "which assumes and exchanges 'roles' within the complex social expectations of the 'game' of modern life". Butler further suggests that "this self is not only irretrievably 'outside,' constituted in social discourse, but that the ascription of interiority is itself a publicly regulated and sanctioned form of essence fabrication." In other words, there is no self or internalised act separate from social discourse, and both masculine and feminine positions are constructed through actions and words. Hence, gender is not a fact but a performative act designated socially. According to Butler (1988, p. 520) "what is called gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo" and is not universal because:

> [...] gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. (Butler, 1990)

What Butler adds to Payton's approach to gender identity is the effects of social construction, which is the source of the self and internalised acts.

Even if we cannot ascribe universality to gender attributes, there are some patriarchal specifications which pave the way for honour killings. The patriarchal systems of Muslim-majority countries where honour killings are common are mostly tribal patriarchies. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women (2012) accepts tribal patriarchy as a specific cause of violence against women in Muslim-majority countries and defines a tribe as being an "internal social structure, with shared beliefs, strong feelings of identity and loyalty [...] With men central to the structure, women and children are seen as belonging to the tribe and family." Tribal patriarchy's most powerful control mechanism works on the status of its members by using reputation and shame factors. The knowledge of honour is constructed in favour of men; hence, as Payton (2011, p.69) suggests, the ideology of honour is dichotomous in much of the Middle East in terms of female and male honour. Rupa Reddy (2014, p. 28), reviewing the existing literature on the discussions of honour, contextualises interlinked and correlated themes which

tend to underpin analysis of gendered notions of honour and its function as "part of a patriarchal system of control and subjugation of women." The interlinked themes "surrounding the conceptualization of honour' are 'the twin concepts of male 'honour' and female 'shame'; perceptions of women as the property of their male relatives; and consequent attempts to control female behaviour, particularly female sexual autonomy." Hence, honour is gendered and has different implications for men and women.

Honour generally translates as at least two different words, thereby revealing its dichotomous gendered structure (Payton, 2011, p. 69). In Algerian Kabyle (spoken by the Berbers of northern Algeria), the terms nif and hurma are one example of a dichotomous construction of honour. Bourdieu (2003, p.221) defines nif as "manly point of honour" which protects hurma, which is female honour. The Arabic words "namus" and "sharaf" both mean honour; however, namus is more closely related to sexuality. Sharaf is honour "in the sense of 'respect', 'status' and 'prestige'. Sharaf depends on namus: as 'namus is part of şeref, once namusis sullied, şeref is automatically affected to a greater or lesser extent. The less şeref that remains, the higher the risk of an honour killing […]"; if shame becomes public, then sharaf will be more affected (Van Eck, 2003, p. 221). Hence, to restore sharaf, namus should be purified and honour killing is used as a way of purification. The dualism in the discourse of honour ascribes women negative qualities while men are attributed positive ones; and, as women's honour is static, if it is lost entirely and cannot be restored, killing women is considered by the family a means of preventing other family members being ostracised by their community.

Honour depends not only on individual behaviour but the behaviour of others in the family, the group and the society, which explains the reason behind the perceived need to control women. In collective societies, community involvement and feelings of shame can urge families to control their female members. Deniz Kandiyoti (1987, p. 326) considers this obsession with controlling women as being due to women being "vested with immense negative power because any misbehavior on their part can bring shame and dishonor to the male members of a whole community, lineage, or family". This negative power is considered so ominous that controlling the sexuality of women is accepted as a responsibility of the whole family or community and seen as the most important value to be protected. As stated by Jafri (2008, p. 23), honour "belongs to the collectivity and transcends time. Not only are the 'honourable' names of fathers and grandfathers on line [sic] with the conduct of the present generation but the lives of unborn members also depend on it."

Therefore, the sense of collective honour binds individual identity to the family and collective identity, and the perceived honour or dishonour is mirrored by the members of the collectivity. This fits well with Charles Horton Cooley's (2017) idea of the "looking-glass self." According to Cooley, people's perceptions of themselves are shaped by how they believe other people perceive them. As honour becomes a shared asset in honour-based societies, it impacts the reputation of the entire group within the larger society. Community members are afraid to acknowledge their members' deviant behaviour because it may lead to their exclusion from the larger society. People in such societies use imagined perception of the larger society to form their self-concept. For instance, family members are influenced to stick to patriarchal honour rules out of a fear of social disgrace, which turns honour into a symbol of group identity rather than merely a personal trait.

George Herbert Mead's (1913) social self provides more insight into how socialization results in the internalization of honour codes. According to Mead, an individual's notion of self is formed

through social interaction. Hence, individuals acquire cultural norms—including those related to honour—through their families, communities, and cultural systems. Goffman also examines how personal acts are influenced by social interactions. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman, through his concept of dramaturgy parallels social interactions to performances. People and groups present themselves in ways that follow social conventions and expectations to "manage impressions". Goffman (1959, p. 245) puts it that "there are occasions when individuals, whether they wish to or not, will feel obliged to destroy an interaction in order to save their honour and their face."

Goffman and Butler both highlight the performative nature of identity. Goffman's stigma framework is also useful to understand how honour and shame function in the society to regulate behaviours. Goffman (1963, pp. 13, 10, 17, 18) describes stigma as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" and as "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance" because they fail to meet the expectations required to belong to the category of "normal." He adds that the stigma also can be internalised as "the stigmatized individual tends to hold the same beliefs about identity" that the others do and "shame becomes a central possibility, arising from the individual's perception of one of his own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess." While Goffman focuses on how social acceptance and rejection shape individual identity, Butler's theory further complicates this by arguing that identity is not the performance of an inner self but rather a performative act regulated by social discourse. Together, these theories demonstrate how personal identity in honour-based systems is deeply rooted in collective identity, and cycles of stigma and control transcend individual identity and sustained within the broader society.

3. TURNING INTO SALLY

A name is "a word or phrase constituting the individual designation by which a particular person or thing is known, referred to, or addressed" ("Name," 2013). By giving names to their children, families reflect upon their cultures and frames of mind. According to Mary V. Seeman (1980, p. 136), "identity though complex, can be encoded in a name. The name reflects the traditions of the namers and their hopes for the child." Likewise, there seems to be a mutual relationship and interaction between the subject and the name as "the infant's characteristics influence the choice to some degree, and to a degree, a name affects the person who bears it." Hence, a change of name has a more complex context than just being a change of word a person is addressed or known by. If the name is altered forcibly, anyone can regard this change as being a threat to their identity as in the case of the requirements of assimilation in immigrant and minority contexts.

In an immigration context, assimilation requirements are made implicitly as well as explicitly by means of economic or social pressures. For instance, studies show that, in Sweden, people of Asian, African and Slavic background change their names to raise their chances of employability and to increase their earnings; indeed, surname changes are institutionally promoted by the Swedish government (Arai & Thoursie, 2009; Bursell, 2012). In these cases, the change of name can be regarded as an assimilation policy and external constraint. As a name is a significant personal trait, changing it can be perceived as a "personal loss" (Arai & Thoursie, 2009, p. 129).

Another incentive for changing one's name is as an indication of religious conversion. Although religious conversion does not necessarily require name-change, ever since antiquity it has been widely practiced—especially during the first two generations of Christianity (Horsley, 1987). These kinds of changes mostly take place via the will of the person who is renamed.

For Salma, who is brought up Muslim and identifies as Muslim, the change of both her name and surname entails erasing all the familial and religious signification of her name and identity. Upon arriving in Britain, Salma feels a threat to her identity when she is urged to adopt the new name, Sally. The name-change here firstly indicates a change in ethnic and linguistic identity seeing as the name is not in Salma's native language and she is adopted and named by a British nun and citizen. Secondly, for Salma, this change might imply a forced new religious identity as in Islamic societies name changes generally occur for this aim. Salma likely misinterprets the conversation with the immigration officer, driven by concerns about her religious identity:

> The immigrant officer at Southampton port detention centre kept asking, 'What is your Christian name?'
>
> I looked at him puzzled. 'Me Muslim,' I said. He ran his fingers around his stiff collar as if trying to loosen it. Other passengers whizzed through the immigration control counters with a smile on their faces.
>
> 'Name?' he said
>
> 'Yes. Salma Ibrahim.' I nodded my head to show him that I understood his question.
>
> Miss Asher interrupted quickly and said that my name was Sally Asher. (Faqir, 2007a, p. 128)

Sally is "in origin a pet form of Sarah" and a Biblical name. In the book of Genesis, Abraham's wife's and Isaac's mother, Sarai's name, "possibly meaning 'contentious' in Hebrew," was changed by God to Sarah (meaning princess) as a sign of greater blessing (Hanks & Hardcastle, 2013, pp. 300–303). Miss Asher might have expected that Salma would convert to her religion by giving her a Biblical name because she plans to "show her the way of the Lord" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 87).

Though Miss Asher would not be aware of this, giving Salma a name meaning princess resonates with Salma's father's, Haj Ibrahim's, intentions when giving Salma her name: "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. Salma, my little chick, my heart, may God keep you safe and sound wherever you go, darling" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 12)! Given her rural and humble origin, it is implied that Haj Ibrahim tries to bring up Selma in a way to be suitable for a rich husband. Salma – who was supposed to be a woman with soft hands and feet and who should have lived in luxury like a princess but who fails to uphold the requisite qualifications of being "healthy, pure and clean" for having the name Salma – is now offered the name Sally again, almost with the subliminal expectation of Miss Asher that Salma is to live a life like a princess. The requisite qualification for being Sally, the princess, is implied as purifying Salma's past (i.e. her past religious identity and sins) and offering her a "rebirth", as it were. Just like a new-born baby, Salma is given a new name. When Miss Asher, Salma's adoptive guardian, explains the process of adoption to Salma, she says "I changed your name to Sally Asher and got your temporary document" with a facial expression "similar to that of the Jesus crucified," which implies purification and self-sacrifice for others (Faqir, 2007a, p. 87). During their journey—and despite Salma's objections—, Miss Asher tries to assure Salma that she will be forgiven by the Christian God. Salma, not believing the story of the Gospel, sticks, instead, to the Muslim version of the story:

'Christ was put on the cross for the sins of mankind. He died on our behalf. All our sins will be forgiven.'

'Christ not put on the cross. It appeared so. Christians think so. Not true.' […]

'Christ was crucified. He loves you' she said. 'No crucification, no love me,' I said.

Miss Asher stood up and slapped me on the face. (Faqir, 2007a, p. 165)

Salma's resistance ends up with her being slapped in the face by Miss Asher, even though the latter is calm and kind most of the time.

Miss Asher requires Salma to make radical changes apart from settling in a new country, such as taking off her headscarf and eating food considered *haram* (prohibited) according to Islam. It seems that Miss Asher believes that Salma needs to start a totally different and a new life, leaving her earlier life behind, almost as if she were being reborn. The concept of rebirth is an essential part of Christianity and Biblical-based Christian therapy. The statement of Jesus, "You must be born again to enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), is indispensable for gaining wholeness and being patient (Wilson, 2009, p. 290). Salma, however, rejects this. Salma interprets every change as her integrity being taken from her and becoming more fragmented: "I cannot take off veil, Sister. My country, my language, my daughter. No piece of cloth, feel naked, me" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 165). This nakedness is not just physical nakedness, as is clear from Salma's utterance when she is told that she will go to England: 'They stripped me of everything: my dignity, my heart, my flesh and blood" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 165), referring respectively to her being deprived of honour, beloved ones, daughter and lineage.

Exeter is the predominant setting of the text's narrative present, and the details of Salma's past are revealed by way of sub-plots as an interference of the past in the present. Although she improves her language skills, Salma feels considerable alienation while living in Exeter as an immigrant and her psychological imprisonment continues as she is haunted by her past. Every daily activity reminds Salma of the life she left behind. In the narration, similar events in the text's narration's present and past are adjoined; for example, the sage smell in her bathroom in Exeter reminds her of sage tea in Salma's home country or, upon seeing students on the street, Salma's school years are then narrated. Salma expresses the burden of her past as being "too hard" after she is diagnosed with "too much past" by a doctor (Faqir, 2007a, p. 41). Salma's inability to forget her past makes her psychologically imprisoned by that past. Even though she escapes physically by fleeing to Britain, she cannot escape the psychological scars of her past. Indeed, she even believes that she should be imprisoned literally. For example, when she walks past an HM prison, she feels like she is "on the wrong side of the black iron gate" because of her "dark deeds and […] shameful past" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 8). According to Caruth (1995, p. 5), "The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess." This situation resonates with Salma's experience, where her past is an inevitable part of who she is, carrying the trauma wherever she goes. She cannot move forward in her life without being disturbed and interrupted by her past.

According to Ana-Beatriz Perez (2011, p. 56), Salma represents a diasporic subject who cannot attain a hybrid identity because of her past trauma. The novel is a "reflection of [the] diasporic subject's experience in exile and a metaphor of [the] subject's necessity to resolve their relationship with their past in order to successfully move forward in the host society." Faqir, however, also wants to show that racism is a major issue. The failure is not only Salma's as the

host society does not give her a chance to integrate. The novel not only criticises Salma's old society but also the new one which isolates her. As Faqir explains:

> If the society [Salma] left behind has a conservative strict code of honour, then the society here has its own constraints as well. I wanted to be even-handed: 'Don't think you are superior; you have got problems specific to Britain.' The fact that the family has disintegrated; casual sex; the objectification of women; the fact that you are not beautiful, with long legs, there is no space for you in this media-driven and controlled society. Women and men have to go out every day and sell themselves [...] (Chambers, 2011, p. 65)

In the hostel where Salma stays upon arrival in Exeter, she meets another honour crime fugitive, Parvin, who has fled from a forced marriage and becomes one of her best friends and helpmates in Britain. As a second generation British-Asian who knows the ways of British society, Parvin advises Salma to: "Lighten up! Groom yourself! Sell yourself! [...] You are now in a capitalist society that is not your own" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 46). Hence, Salma has to take the veil off to find a job "as a strategy of economic survival" (Moore, 2013, p.254). Although Selma fled to Britain to escape the patriarchal oppression imposed on her body, she is facing a new form of control on her body. While she may appear to be freer or safer, in reality, she must once again conform to hegemonic structures of the society to survive. In both patriarchal or capitalist systems, Salma lacks autonomy over her body and faces challenges when she tries to reclaim ownership of it. In a patriarchal society, her body belongs to the community, whereas in a capitalist society, it is commodified and turned into an object to be sold. According to Marxist theory, the body can be seen as a site of control, integrated into the capitalist system. As the body is valued according to its contribution to the economy, it becomes alienated from its individuality. This reflects Marx's concept of alienation, where individuals are stripped of their identities and reduced to their labour value. Marx observes, "So much does labour's realization appear as loss of realization that the worker loses realization to the point of starving to death (Marx, 2000)." In Salma's homeland, her body is owned and directly dominated by the patriarchal system, functioning as communal property controlled to protect the interests of the collective unit. When Salma flees to Britain, she enters a capitalist society where ownership of her body changes form, yet it remains subject to control, violence and marginalization. Hence, it can be understood that capitalist system is no less destructive than patriarchal control.

When Miss Asher suggests Salma take the veil off on their journey to Britain, Salma refuses. In the new xenophobic society in which she lives, however, the veil marks Salma as being different, someone who is not "one of 'us'" someone who should be stayed away from. Salma says "people look at me all time as if disease"—a disease which might potentially harm them (Faqir, 2007a, p. 108). Hence, Salma prefers to be naked rather than be a "disease," even if she feels 'as dirty as a whore, with no name or family, a sinner (Faqir, 2007a, p. 114). Salma's feelings during her unveiling highlight the oppressive and violent nature of her new environment.

The cultural connotations of the veil, apart from being a religious requirement, make the veil a means of connecting Salma to her old culture; her not wearing the veil, on the other hand, would be seen as being unacceptable to her community of origin. Salma's removal of her veil echoes Faqir's own experience, even if she had always resisted wearing the hijab even when she was in Jordan: "I felt as if I had taken off my skin, my identity, my whole family and clan. They would not want to have anything to do with me now" (Faqir, 2007b).

Salma's unveiling can be read as mimicry to sell herself in the job market, an example of the necessary assimilation tactic. Esra Santesso's (2013, p. 122) interpretation that Salma's unveiling is a Lacanian mimicry of "camouflage" is a compelling perspective. "Salma takes it off to become socially undetectable, as 'mottled' as those around her." In this sense Santesso (2013, p. 112) surveys "a new understanding of mimicry that is site-specific, conscious and convenient—and often more escapist than resistant." At first, Salma wants to be invisible like "Casper" without encountering the dominant culture, because her "immigrant survival kit" says to "avoid confrontation at any price" (Faqir, 2007a, pp. 202–203). Therefore, Salma's invisibility is a survival strategy in both her past and new country. In her country of origin, she is veiled to be sexually invisible as the female perceived as a threat to societal order. Besides, after committing the honour crime she is imprisoned to be invisible to her family's eye. On the other hand, in Britain she is unveiled to be less visible; in related fashion, by drinking apple juice in pubs and disguising it as beer, she conceals her non-British, especially Muslim, identity. Moore (2013, p. 253) reminds us that this strategy is not just an escape from "racist assumptions […] but also to avoid being tracked down by her family." Fanon's (1965, p. 61) exploration of the veil as a symbol of survival adds depth to this discussion, describing it as a "technique of camouflage, into a means of struggle". Fanon (1965, p. 58) observes that without the veil, the body itself becomes a tool of camouflage in hostile environments, moving strategically and adapting to survive. Salma mirrors this idea, operating on camouflage, attempting to "move like a fish in the Western waters."

Faqir, however, does not glorify British life. Salma, as a racialized body in the xenophobic and capitalist environment, adopts her appearance to meet the expectations of the hegemonic group. Fanon's (1986, p. 116) observation that "The white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am fixed" fits Salma's experience too. She is fragmented and fractured under the dominant gaze. Merely focusing on the tragic ending may be misleading seeing as the story is already thoroughly tragic. Life in Britain does not offer Salma a life which can relieve her pain. Salma is marginal in both cultures; she is marginal as a sexual norm transgressor in Hima and her body and language marks her as an alien in Britain. She is often asked where she comes from which, in turn, reminds her that she does not belong there. Indeed, she expresses irritation at being asked that question:

> I could hear it sung everywhere: in cathedral, 'WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?' in the farmers' market 'Do you know where this vegetables comes from?' Sometimes even the cows on the hills would line up, kick their legs in unison and sing, 'Where do you come from, you? Go home!' (Faqir, 2007a, p. 167)

What causes Salma to return and risk her life is not madness, as Parvin and John intuit. Nor is it just maternal instinct as Salma claims. When Salma yearns for Layla, the scene mostly evokes nostalgia for her home and homeland highlighting her feelings of disconnection and rejection in her new life. During these moments, the setting changes between Exeter and Hima:

> How could I ignore Layla's cries […]? I stood at the bottom of the hill and looked back. It was green with grass, weeds and shrubs, but suddenly like magic everything was erased and it turned into a dry brown mountain covered with silver green olive trees, plum trees and grapevines. […] What was better: to live with half a lung, kidney, liver, heart or to go back to the country and get shot? To learn how to numb this throbbing pain or let it all end swiftly? (Faqir, 2007a, p. 201)

This scene ends when the purple iris of Exeter turns into the black iris of Hima. This may foreshadow Salma's returning back to Hima. Her duality of vision makes Salma belong nowhere instead of belonging to both places. As Faqir puts it, "she has a huge legacy that pulls her back. There is so much to love and deplore about both cultures" (Bower, 2012, p. 9). Perez (2011, p. 61) suggests that, as an in-betweener "suspended between now and tomorrow", Salma is fully conscious of the fact that tomorrow promises a return and that return promises death. Perez argues that "the image of return" means the "annihilation of both the original and the acquired identities." It can be argued that Salma's return denotes her attempt at claiming her agency, at whatever cost. To fully understand why Salma returns, however, it would first be useful to understand what it is to be Salma Ibrahim El Musa.

4. BEING SALMA IBRAHIM EL-MUSA

Although Bedouins have historically and traditionally valued "pastoral nomadism" and a desert lifestyle, they do not define themselves by their way of life but rather by the basic "principles of social organization: genealogy and tribal order," which depend on the proximity of paternal relatives (Abu-Lughod, 1999, p. 40). When Salma holds on to her Arabic name Salma Ibrahim El-Musa, as a Bedouin girl, she instinctively remains connected to her family and Bedouin origins. According to Said (2001, p. 176), nationalism, another strong form of collective association, is essentially related to exile as it is an "assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms the home created by a community of language, culture and customs; and, by so doing, it fends off exile, fights to prevent its ravage." In Salma's case, having her father's first name, Ibrahim, and her family name, El- Musa, after her name makes her paternal lineage evident and helps her to define herself as a member of a community and is an "assertion of belonging". Although she is given Asher as a surname, Salma does not have any connection to the Asher family, nor does she know anyone who belongs to that family apart from her adoptive mother, of whom she knows very little. Thus, being Sally Asher entails being alone—in other words, having an individual identity discontinued from a familial one. Transitioning from being a Bedouin, who defines herself by her paternal family ties, to having a surname from a legal mother with whom Salma shares no blood ties is not an easy step for her.

The notion of blood is important for Salma's home culture. This is clear when the El-Musa family's horse is killed by a member of another tribe. Salma's brother, Mahmoud, has to take vengeance on their opponent tribe by killing the opponent tribe's horse; otherwise, the opponent tribe could start shooting the men of their tribe. It becomes a matter of honour as "the horse is a member of the El- Musa family. His blood had to be avenged." Salma recalls the event:

> We congregated in groups, families, clans, tribe; our honour must be protected, our blood must be avenged; eating together, sleeping together ten to a room or a tent, our destiny shackled together in a chain. […] I had broken the metal ring tying me to my family. […] If you had no family, you killed no horses [and you are not killed]. (Faqir, 2007a, p. 249)

This is due to the fact that if someone is not a part of the collective, then their behaviours do not stain the collective honour as it depends on the honourability of its members and the collective is only responsible for its members.

Salma always stays tied to her family psychologically and in the end, she returns and claims her daughter, her blood and family tie, which brings her death. The ties between mother and child are generally very close and warm in Bedouin society all throughout life (Abu-Lughod, 1999).

Faqir especially highlights the close relationship between Salma and her mother. For a long while, Salma wears her mother's letter—which she received in prison—and Layla's lock of hair as amulets around her neck. In addition, Salma wraps her mother's shawl around herself, not only to protect herself from the cold but also whenever she needs physical and emotional protection. For example, when Salma sneaks away from her country, she wraps up in her mother's black shawl, not only in order to warm herself up but also in order to help her not to think about the mother, father and daughter whom she is leaving behind. At those times when Salma needs her mother's affection, the shawl becomes an object which reminds her how compassionate her mother is:

> The mist and the waves told me that I was moving further and further away from my country, my mother and above all from her. My mother's black shawl was wrapped tight around my shoulder, but I could still feel the cold. Whenever I was beaten by Mahmoud, my brother, Mother used to stroke my head to calm me down. 'It's all right, child. It's all right princess. [sic.]' She would undo my braids, rub my head with olive oil, run her fingers through my hair, stroke my face with her rough fingers, fondle my ears, massage my hands. [...] (Faqir, 2007a, p. 95)

Being brought up in such a society, Salma remembers the close ties she had with her mother and believes that her daughter needs that kind of affection as well. Salma lives with the fantasy of meeting and living with her daughter. Indeed, she imagines that her daughter needs her protection as much as she needs her own mother's protection. Salma's mother is portrayed as a person who collaborates with her daughter and tries to hide her pregnancy instead of cooperating with the patriarchal system which requires Salma's death. Salma's adoptive mother, however, although tries to rescue Salma from violence, is characterised by Salma as a person who inflicts violence: 'Through the flames of the fireplace I saw her smiling at me, then my mother stretched her arms to me, Miss Asher slapped me, Minister Mahoney blessed me, then Elizabeth shouted at me" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 66). Salma does not feel any emotional ties or gratitude to Miss Asher. Furthermore, the scenes with Miss Asher evoke violence, as in the case when her facial expression resembles that of depictions of the crucifixion of Jesus. Miss Asher, as a European rescuer, is the female version of the colonial powers beyond the text who historically claim that they are, in Spivak's (1988, p. 271) term, "saving brown women from brown men". Without Salma's consent, being saved turns out to be more painful for Salma and she experiences the everyday violence of racism and inequality in the host country. With the trauma of estrangement from home into an unfamiliar land, Salma eventually decides to return to her country and is killed as a result.

Her life in exile increases Salma's losses. Being deprived of her freedom, daughter and family, Salma is offered a new life in which she is psychologically imprisoned. Additionally, the deprivation of her mother tongue and homeland are added to her losses. No substitutes can compensate Salma for these detachments, nor does she allow them any real chance to replace her losses. Salma's new family with John and Imran, instead of filling in the gaps, becomes a reminder of her dispossessions, as well as her guilt over Layla. This is expressed through the following reaction: '"Please hold on to Imran and let go of Layla," he [John] said. When I heard her name coming out of his lips my ribcage collapsed as if I was punched' (Faqir, 2007a, p. 280)

In Freudian terms, Salma is suffering from an extended amount of deep melancholia seeing as she does not show any interest in any "object of love" which may replace her lost objects of love. Freud (2000, pp. 243–245) correlates mourning and melancholia first by listing the main mental

traits of melancholia as being "painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment." The melancholic reaction to the loss of a loved one brings a loss of interest in the outside world which does not recall the lost object and the loss of capacity to accept a new object of love. This would mean replacing the lost object and diverging from any activity which is not related to the lost object.

In the case of Salma, mourning never properly begins as she does not accept her loss and hopes to rejoin her daughter; hence, she remains melancholic with a notable decrease in self-esteem. It is useful to return to Freud in order to better understand Salma's melancholia. While suffering from melancholia, the ego becomes poor and empty and the melancholic "represents his [sic.] ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished." (Freud, 2000, p. 245) Salma, as a representation of a melancholic subject, becomes more severely disoriented when she has a chance to have a relatively more normal life in Britain. While Salma's acculturation in xenophobic British society might have increased as she is married to a British husband and a mother of a British child, she feels guiltier about her past. Thus, her return becomes unavoidable because only in returning will she be able to compensate for or acknowledge her loss, or at least be able to be punished because her "picture of a delusion of (mainly moral) inferiority is completed by sleeplessness and refusal to take nourishment"; and this, in turn, psychologically symbolises her "overcoming of the instinct which compels every living thing to cling to life" (Freud, 2000, p. 245). According to the clinical examinations of Freud (2000, p. 248), if the melancholic's many and diverse self-accusations are all listened to with patience, with some slight modifications, the harsher of these fit someone "whom the patient loves or has loved or should love." This means that the "self-reproaches" of the patient are actually reproaches made against an object of love and which is transferred from it to the patient's own ego. Hence, Salma's rejection of nourishment can be read as her reproach to the fact that her daughter was taken from her without being given the chance to suckle her mother's milk.

Salma's self-accusation is mostly focused on leaving her daughter behind. Her special attachment to motherhood is highlighted by Salma's psychological ties with her mother and grandmother. Layla's supposed need for her mother is a projection of Salma's own need of her mother. Salma experiences something akin to what Freud calls the death drive by wishing to return to her motherland. Her death drive might represent her desire to return to the protection of the maternal womb where all of her needs are met as well as her overcoming of the life instinct. According to Freudian doctrine, the death instinct is equal to the womb instinct because the former reflects the wish to return to an earlier condition—to return to the inorganic condition which precedes life (Goux, 1989). Although Salma knows that going back to her homeland entails the possibility of being killed, she decides to challenge death in order to relive an earlier sense of happiness. Salma feels incomplete and unprotected due to her segregation, not only from her mother but also from her native language and homeland. This feeling of incompleteness is perfectly portrayed in the following lines:

> The small leather bag containing my mother's letter [representing her native language] folded around the lock of her hair looked like an amulet hanging on the side of the Indian Mirror. My tribal protection [representing her homeland] had been removed, my blood was spilt and my arms had broken out with red sores. (Faqir, 2007a, p. 93)

This portrayal resonates with the Lacanian concept of the fragmented body in the context of the mirror stage (Goux, 1991). Seeing as Salma is far away from her motherland and her own culture, she needs to experience a feeling of completeness. Before marrying a British husband, Salma fantasizes that feelings of completeness will occur like magic upon marrying a British husband. Salma, however, comes to realise that this is not possible in a society where she does not feel unified in relation to communal identity (which, itself, can function like a mirror). The communal identity gives Salma at least a fantasy of completeness; however, in Britain, she is an outcast who feels fragmented. The trauma of her losses and her desire to return to an earlier stage of bliss produce the urge to feel united and complete again. When Salma returns to her homeland, she would conform to her society by letting them punish her by means of honour killing as it is too painful for her to wrestle continuously with the feeling of incompleteness. This return, in turn, means that she would again be a part of her community and united with them, even if her community would only accept her when dead. Dying is simply her willingness to return back to an inorganic state from which life emerges in the hope that she can feel complete again. Even though the price she pays for belonging to this particular community is high, her "longing is to return to the womb, to return to death, to return to pre-consciousness and pre-individuality" to compensate her loss (Fromm & Funk, 2010, p. 76).

5. CONCLUSION

To summarise, Edward Said's humanist critique, which requires the novel to be analysed in relation to historical, political, social, and cultural human experiences, offers a framework for understanding the complex relationship between Salma's identity and the social factors that shape her sense of self. Salma's story illuminates the issues surrounding honour killings and the broader cultural and historical contexts. Said's philological hermeneutic approach encourages us to empathize with the perspectives of others and examine the worldly context of the texts. The psychological trauma experienced by Salma—a person forced to migrate to a country dominated by colonial, individualistic and capitalist discourses and alienated from a culture with strong social ties—can be better understood by adopting a humanist critique and attempting to see things from Salma's perspective, setting aside our own assumptions.

In a tribal society with an intense sense of communal identity, there also exists a strong sense of unity. When Salma becomes an outcast from her society and ultimately loses her family and community, this becomes a tragic event for her because she also loses her sense of unity. In order to regain this sense of unity, she desperately wants to return back to her homeland. The individual freedom and autonomy offered to Salma in England does not necessarily mean freedom for her because she has different perceptions regarding the concept of freedom. Salma feels pressured to adopt a Western concept of individualism that clashes with her communal values. For Salma, this individualistic society is not something to be desired. Arguably, what Salma wants is to regain her tribal protection and communal identity in order to feel united and complete again. Salma asks herself which is better: "to live with half a lung, kidney, liver, heart or to go back to the old country and get shot" (Faqir, 2007a, p. 201)? This question presents an impossible choice, yet bearing the burden of an "impossible history" Salma returns to her society, despite the consequences.

My Name is Salma presents a morally challenging idea: as soon as Salma returns to her community, she must accept its rules, with her dishonour once again becoming a concern for the community. Here, the "death drive" transforms into a "killing drive," seeking to restore the

society's sense of completeness by eradicating the perceived dishonour. As the dishonoured member of the community, Salma is ultimately killed, returning to an inorganic state.

This reading of *My Name is Salma* deepens our understanding of the conflict between existing as an individual in a community and being subject to its requirements or being stigmatised and alienated in the society. It also highlights the broader truth that the desire to belong can lead individuals to accept community rules that tightly control their behaviour. Salma's attempt to reconcile her various identities is reflected in her fractured narrative, which further complicates Bhabha's hybridity and Said's contrapuntal perspective, challenging their transformational potential.

Salma's trauma, particularly the guilt over losing her daughter, remains unresolved. Her alienation in a new country, where she faces new forms of oppression and stigmatization, only deepens her psychological struggles. As a result, Salma's sense of self-worth is further eroded by the stigma she faces in both worlds. Coming from a collectivist society, Salma carries a double burden in her new environment. Not only is she unfamiliar with this new form of stigma, but she also constantly finds herself in conflict with her previous norms. She never feels at home, valued, or accepted and cannot experience the sense of belonging that Said describes—the feeling of being at home anywhere. Instead, she finds herself belonging nowhere. Ultimately, the choice she makes to leave both societies reveals a harsh truth: neither space allows her to truly exist.

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