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### Mother-Child Relationship in Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove: A Fragile Landscape*

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<b>Keywords:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- mother child relationship</li><li>- Arabian women</li><li>- motherline</li><li>-honour killing</li></ul>	<b>Abstract</b> <p>British-Jordanian novelist Fadia Faqir's <i>The Cry of the Dove</i> is a story of an Arabian girl from a Bedouin tribe in the Levant, who is punished by death for flouting social norms of the tribe. Her tribe believed that dishonour can only be wiped off with blood. Apart from a covert advocacy of feminist ideals and women's emancipation, the novel offers a window to the strong mother-daughter relationship, which in itself is viewed by prominent feminist critics as a form of rejection of patriarchal oppression. In the present paper, mother-child relationship depicted in the novel has been explored through a character analysis of the leading as well as minor female roles in the book, such as the protagonist Salma, her mother Hajjeh Amina, and her friend Noura and Madam Lamaa. The study concludes that in the novel mothers are depicted to forge a strong relationship with their children, especially daughters, in a continuum of motherline.</p>
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## علاقة الام بالطفل في رواية صرخة الحمامة لفادية فقير

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كلية الاداب \_ قسم الترجمة \_ جامعة تكريت

الخلاصة:	الكلمات الدالة:-
صرخة الحمامة للروائية البريطانية-الأردنية فاديا فقير تروي قصة فتاة عربية من قبيلة بدوية في بلاد الشام ، والتي تُعاقب بالقتل لخرقها القواعد الاجتماعية للقبيلة، حيث اعتقدت قبيلتها بأن العار لا يمحي إلا بالدم. إضافة الى ان الرواية تدعو بشكل ضمنى للمثل النسوية والى تحرير المرأة، فإنها تعرض ايضا العلاقة القوية بين الأم والأبنة، والتي ينظر إليها النقاد النسويون البارزون على أنها شكل من أشكال رفض الاضطهاد الأبوي. هذا البحث يستكشف العلاقة بين الأم والطفل التي تصورها الرواية من خلال تحليل الشخصية للأدوار الانثوية الرئيسية والثانوية مثل البطلة سلمى ووالدتها الحاجة أمينة وصديقتها نورا والسيدة لمى. وتستننتج الدراسة بانه في الرواية تم تصوير الامهات على انهم يقيمون بشكل مستمر علاقة قوية مع أطفالهن وخاصة البنات.	- علاقة الأم بالطفل - المرأة العربية - الأمومة - قتل الشرف  <u>معلومات البحث</u> <u>تاريخ البحث:</u> الاستلام: 2020-12-16 القبول: 2021-1-17 التوفر على النت

### Introduction

A woman's relationship with her children, especially mother-daughter relationship, acquires a special significance in a woman's life as, quite often, it opens up fresh avenues for her self-expression, the ones that are commonly suppressed in her relationship with her husband or other family members, particularly if her life is spent in a patriarchal establishment. In the contexts of some societies, such as Arabian societies, where devaluation of women in most spheres of activities, except cooking and reproduction, is specifically inherent in the cultural practices, the mother-child relationship has a strong bearing on women's survival instincts and their sanity. But mother-daughter relationship is not a monolithic construct representing a positive outcome in every case since, in many cases, mothers may find their daughters difficult to handle, daughters may feel that mothers are too nosy, interfering in their personal affairs, as well as mothers' relationship with their married daughters may differ drastically in quality and degree from their relationship with their unmarried daughters. In some cases, mother-daughter relationship may be an outcome of a complex amalgam of all the above mentioned factors at play. Moreover, mother-daughter relationship in

strong patriarchal societies may be qualitatively different from the same relationship in societies with weakened patriarchal hold over women.

Jordanian-British novelist Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* (2007) offers a window to peep into mother-daughter relationship in a strongly patriarchal Arabian society. The storyline of the novel revolves around the life of a girl, Salma, from the Bedouin tribe of Hima in the Levant. Salma commits the crime of indulging in forbidden love, having premarital sex and getting pregnant out of wedlock, the punishment for which is death. For her safety, first she was sheltered into women's prison where she gave birth to her illegitimate daughter, and then she was smuggled out of country to England. Her daughter was taken away from her immediately after birth, even before she could have a glimpse of her or suckle her. Her life in England becomes a constant emotional ordeal as she pines her daughter because she knew that her daughter was not safe in her parent country. Salma also suffers from pangs of memory of her mother, who was the only person who provided her emotional support during her testing times, at home or in the foreign land. In the present paper I have taken up an examination of the troubled mother-daughter relationship in the Arabian tribal family set-up as represented in *The Cry of the Dove*, in two generations of mothers and daughters - Salma and her mother, and Salma and her daughter. Although the relationship between Salma and her mother presents all the possible complexities of mother-daughter relationship, i.e., a difficult daughter, a mother perceived to be nosy, and the strained situation of a woman unable to protect her daughter against patriarchal aggression, yet they forge a strong bond and provide each other, with emotional support. My reading of Fadia Faqir's representation of mother-daughter relationship in *The Cry of the Dove* is that to the novelist the strong bond between a mother and her daughter under the given circumstances is a political act posing a challenge to the patriarchal social structure since the mother's defence of her 'erring' daughter is defiance of the mainstream ideological-social rules.

*The Cry of the Dove* has been approached critically from various angles, and one of the angles is to critique the idea of mimicry in postcolonial theory as a form of empowering for the colonial subject (see Santesso 2013) with reference to Faqir's representation of the protagonist Salma as, in the words of Paolini (1999), a "fractured subject marked by a permanent sense of lack" (58). However, my focus in the present paper is a critique of unequal power-distribution in Arabian societies, favouring men to the total disadvantage of women, as feminists would interpret it. In addition, I will also investigate the point highlighted by some feminist critics (e.g. Green 2015; Caplan 2000; Lowinsky 2009, 1992; Conway-Hicks 1988; Johnson 1988; Rich 1986, 1980; Friedman 1980; Hirsch 1981; Chodorow 1978a, 1978b 1974) that mother-daughter relationship in itself is a bond between two women in which one replicates the qualities of the other being her mother's daughter, thus rejecting the patriarchal dominance in their own way, relegating the 'father figure' to non-existence. To support both points, I have employed character analysis as a method of investigation.

## **Discussion**

In *The Cry of the Dove* mothers' relationship with their male children differs in degree and quality from their relationship with female children. For mothers, daughters stand apart and their relationship with them is more of intimacy compared to boys with whom mothers are generally aloof. Though, at the same time, it is not to be interpreted that Arabian mothers love their sons less. Their relationship with their sons has more to do with cultural practices that prioritize male over female children, and relegate girls to

the status of nonentities. For instance, writing an essay for her assignment on Shakespeare's sister, Salma wonders why she was asked to write the essay on the sister, not on Shakespeare himself, and realizes that "Nobody talks about the women" (152). She recalls the Arabian 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" (153). Arabs prefer male children as, according to Salma's father, "The burden of girls is from cot to coffin" (96), and so, girls come with heaps of responsibilities and loads of problems. Boys are looked at as the providers for the family and protectors of the culture of the tribe, which includes protecting womenfolk at home whose status is almost like cultural artefacts. That's the reason it's difficult for women, even for mothers, to establish emotional intimacy with their male children. Women are happy to give birth to male children since that is their cultural duty as well as an essential act for their survival since, apart from several other pressures on women, one of the pressures is to prove themselves worthy of respect of the tribe by giving birth to a male child. For girls, on the other hand, the case is entirely different as women are not only happy but feel self-fulfilled to birth a girl. Salma's mother's feelings had undergone a complete upheaval when she gave birth to Salma. She recalls what her mother had told her, that "she had forgotten all the pain of labour when they told her it was a girl. She said that when she looked at my swollen closed eyes open for the first time her heart had never been the same" (96). A similar kind of experience was repeated by Salma who, conceiving out of wedlock, was dying of guilt and not eating well. When she imagined her unborn daughter swimming blindly in the dark waters of her womb, suddenly her heart was overwhelmed: "How could I die myself without killing the baby inside me?" (214). She began eating properly after that because she realized that the baby was blameless, though she was still tortured by the idea "how could I bear to live with all that shame?" (210). Salma had been trying to let go of her daughter since she was born, but "kept trying and failing then trying better to fail better" (204). To stress upon the point again, it's worth noting that though Salma loves her son born in Britain, Imran, also deeply, she is more concerned about her daughter. At one point, when her English friend, Gwen, questions her about the fate of Imran if she returned to Hima looking for her daughter, Salma says, "Sons are treated better. They can fend for themselves. Daughters are helpless" (215).

### **Hajjeh Amina and the "Motherline"**

In the backdrop of mother and daughter forging a stronger bond, it would be helpful to look at the character of Salma's mother, Hajjeh Amina, with reference to the concept of "motherline" forwarded by the Jungian psychoanalyst Naomi Ruth Lowinsky (1992 and 2009). The concept of motherline is difficult to define, but its essence can be gleaned from the acts performed by a mother for her daughter since the idea is to connect women to their roots as women. In other words, motherline is the biological, psychological, and cultural linking thread binding generations of women together. Women, particularly in a family-line, use their shared heritage to rediscover their own feminine identities and seek self-fulfilment. In its psychological aspect, motherline comes from awareness of the mother and creates a bond of strength between mothers and daughters. In *The Cry of the Dove*, it's not only the long line of mothers and daughters that pass on this awareness in their actions and words to the next generation but also the close family relations, such as Salma's grandmother Shahla. Daughters turn out to be their mother's daughters as women transmit their grit and determination to their daughters, as for instance, Conway (1998) writes that, "I would like to thank my

mother whose determination, tenacity, and sheer grit have energized me; I am my mother's daughter, as she was her mother's daughter" (122). In *The Cry of the Dove*, Salma is her mother's daughter as regards grit, determination and love towards her children, while her mother is her mother's daughter, who in turn had been her mother's daughter... endlessly. Father is relegated to non-existence, a nonentity, in this arrangement of mother-daughter relationship. A good example of father figures being relegated to the status of nonentities is the way Salma's grandmother coaches her to follow her heart in matters of love being well-aware that in Arabian societies women have hardly any say as regards their choice of life-partner or love-life. Salma recalls that her grandmother, Shahla, "used to weave her long thin white hair into braids and say, 'Follow your heart always, daughter of mine.' Her marriage was a love match" (21).

Fadia Faqir presents Salma's mother, Hajjeh Amina, as a potent resource in the continuum of motherline. Amina did all that was possible in her circumstances to forge with her daughter a relationship of respect, love and strength. She was the kind of mother who allowed her daughter "to swim in the spring" (14):

'Mother, the water is cool. Can I swim?'

'If they see you they will kill me. Only a loose woman takes off her clothes and swims in public. Men might see you,' she said and pulled up her black face mask, hesitated then added, Be quick!' (198)

Salma was aware of the fact that her mother took a risky decision, and therefore, "she should have said no, but she said yes" (199). Her mother's decision was an act of shaking off patriarchal dictates, as well as in opposition to the received wisdom about mothers that they are suffocating creatures, as Conway-Hicks (1998), writing about her conversation with her mother, observes. The received wisdom, in Hicks' words, advises daughters about their mothers that they "do not have to offer back in kind until they, too, become mothers and realize how thankless the job can be" (121). It's a different thing that sometimes Salma's mother had to be suffocating to her, but that was to protect her from the patriarchal tyranny. When she noticed that Salma was in love, she was alarmed and shouted, "'Salma, you stupid child, are you in love?' I fixed the white scarf on my head, pulled my loose pantaloons up and nodded" (9). She was alarmed because for Salma love and passion were surely suicidal as her father and brother would shoot her between the eyes. She had to be extra watchful for her movements now:

When Hamdan stopped revolving in orbits and I stopped kissing the horse, the goats and the trees, my mother and his mother grew suspicious.

'You little slut, what have you done?' My mother yanked my hair.

'Mother, please.'

'You smeared our name with tar. Your brother will shoot you between the eyes.'

'Mother!'

My petals were plucked out one by one. She yanked, bit, belted until I turned black and blue and sank blissfully into darkness. (25)

But she did all that to her only to see her alive and happy. In fact, Salma's mother, like Pecola's mother Pauline Breedlove in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, is herself

so damaged by the internalized, overarching patriarchy that she can neither love nor protect her daughter from destruction by her tribe. Not only from the tribe, she is unable to protect her even from her son, Salma's elder brother Mahmoud. Whenever Mahmoud beat Salma, her mother would just stroke her head to calm her down. "It's all right, child. It's all right, princess," (73) she would utter helplessly. She could only protect Salma in her dreams, the kind of dreams Salma had while living a destitute life in Britain, that her mother Hajjeh Amina had come to meet her in the prison, she was crying and holding a brown sack of oranges, standing on the other side of the barbed wire fence. Salma and her mother would stick their hands to the wire and push and push until their palms touched. "My mother's hands would be as rough as ever, and endangering my lips I would kiss them through the barbed wire" (44). The mother knew by experience that girls in that society were born to shed tears, and so, she forbade her daughter to cry and consoled her saying that her tears were gold, not to be shed over small matters. Salma repeats the same trick with Parvin, her roommate at women's hostel in Exeter: "'Parvin, stop crying please. Your tears gold,' which was what my mother used to say whenever I cried" (70).

However, the mother doesn't give up under adverse circumstances, and that's what provides a strong emotional support to Salma. She feels devastated at Salma's unwanted pregnancy, yet when guilt-ridden Salma gives up eating, she was concerned for her health, and as, afraid of the men of the family, she could not openly advise her to eat properly, she gave her oblique hints, from which Salma would get the message reading between the lines, that she was advising her to start eating again. When Salma was locked into the prison for her safety, Salma was sure that her mother wanted to visit her, but couldn't because her "father and brother must have forbidden her from crossing the threshold of the house" (189).

### **Tenacity**

The connecting link between mothers and daughters in motherline concept is the daughter inheriting the qualities of her mother as a woman. The inheritance sidelines the stronghold of patriarchy. Salma in *The Cry of the Dove* carries forward the legacy of firmness from her mother, i.e. the tenacity to hold out in the face of troubles. It's this dogged determination of hers that is visible in her firm resolve to go find her daughter even at the cost of her life and sacrificing her life of comfort. It is important to remind ourselves at this juncture that daughters inherit a lot many of characteristic personality traits from their mothers, a woman-to-woman legacy of strength, and when daughters recognize their mothers as strong, dynamic and complete persons, they establish the motherline, which, as Conway-Hicks emphasizes, "is crucial in resisting domination" (123). Thus, even if Hajjeh Amina is not overtly sketched in the novel, it is clear that Salma's unrelenting nature, grit, courage, determination, and integrity have been passed down to her from her mother. Salma doesn't relent a bit unless she achieves her objectives. For example, her life was threatened by her brother for her unwanted love connection, but once she determined she was going to give birth to her illegitimate daughter, she saw it through. She illegally migrates to the UK, reorganises her life and then visits her village looking for her daughter, though she knew for sure she was likely to be killed by her kinfolk there.

### **Agent of Cultural Transmission**

Nevertheless, mothers in patriarchal establishments also function as agents of cultural transmission, especially inculcating patriarchal values in their daughters. This imposed role brings about conflicting emotions in their character, and Salma's mother is also not untouched by such conflicting values in her character. Salma recounts her mother telling her the story of Jubayyna. She also kept telling her she was better than everyone else, until she believed her (65). Then she fell, and fell, and her mother could not save her. The fall referred to here is concerned with the conflict between women's sexuality and motherhood we shall discuss shortly. In the story of Jubayyna, her friendly camel saves her from the castle of the giant, while in real life, Salma's mother deserted her. She did not come forward to protect her from her father and brother, the real-life giants, and Salma regrets it: "Even camel knew the meaning of friendship and ties" (65). One more, relatively similar, example of mother's conflicting character in the novel is from the story of Parvin. Parvin's mother failed to save her from a doomed marriage, and therefore, she had to run away from her home (69-70).

The origin of the conflict in mothers' characters that mostly aligns them with patriarchal forces lies in their failure to distinguish motherhood from mothering (see Green 2015; Adrienne Rich 1986). Mothering means giving birth to children, whereas motherhood defines a woman as nothing but a mother. Mothering is a choice, while motherhood is imposition of a role. A mother must adhere to the rules patriarchy dictates to her, so it is patriarchal in nature. The idea is closely linked to the feminist ideal of segregation of motherhood and sexuality. Patriarchy conflates the two and reduces women's sexuality to motherhood. A woman in patriarchal set-ups, like in Arabian societies, has to be a mother to express her sexuality or have children. There's no other choice for her. Female chastity and the maternal superiority are the problematic ideals imposed upon her sexuality. Salma was flabbergasted to hear the taxi driver in Britain address her as 'miss.' "Miss in Hima was reserved for virgins, Mrs for married women or widows, but there was no title for those who had sex out of wedlock for they simply got shot" (148) she recalls.

Giving birth out of wedlock is a threat to the male hegemony; it looks upon the act as the woman's choice not to be tied to a family, a woman disloyal to the laws of dependence of women on men in every sphere of their lives. The problem is that women in this arrangement are defined only as mothers, not as individuals, who have to only provide a line of successors to the male, who cannot do anything else, cannot take any other identity, including financial control of the house. Motherhood hides every other aspect of a woman making her life full. It's not the social code, but rejection of the role as mother that is resented by patriarchy in premarital love. In premarital relationship, the girl no longer needs to turn to the male family members for strength (see Johnson 1988). Mothers in strong patriarchal societies, such as Hajjeh Amina, fall for the idealized roles of women in motherhood since they don't see themselves or their daughters in any other roles, and thus, perpetuate the established cultural norms. Hajjeh Amina chides Salma for premarital sex since that's cultural transgression, but she accepts her motherhood and her illegitimate daughter. Same is the case with Salma. She feels guilty for her own immature sexuality and indulgence in premarital sex out of passion, and to her women in the British society who are least bothered about motherhood or legitimacy of children are loose women.

### **Gender affinity**

In mother-daughter relationship, gender affinity also plays a highly significant role. In feminist theory, shared gender prepares a solid ground for solidarity and common interest among women. Women's relationship with the different gender is always fraught with incongruity in interests and ideological dissension. The reasons are various, but the most common of them is that women, irrespective of their age, class, race or colour, share a common history of patriarchal oppression. It is very easy for Salma to forge a mother-like bond with elderly Gwen, far removed from her cultural base, while she finds it hard to understand Max, her boss, or Allan, her shift manager at the hotel. Gwen knits a sweater for her daughter Layla, seeing which Salma forcibly holds her tears back (63). In her organ donation card, she gives the address of Gwen to be contacted in emergency with her (64). She always remembers being away from her land, her mother, and her daughter, never from her father and brother.

### **Love**

Gloria Friedman (1980) believes that the essential factor in the successful emergence of an adult woman is the loving bond between mother and daughter (90). "In addition to their maternal nurturing roles, one major task that mothers have, is to hand down a legacy of motherhood – to teach it, cultivate it, nurture it, and especially to share it and be an example of it" (90). Salma would have died during or after childbirth, but lived to protect her newborn child, for the sheer love for the child. She would have taken the bullet to end her miseries after the birth of her child, but decided to live for the sake of her child which she wasn't even given a chance to have a look at. In Britain she again and again calls to her mind her daughter left as a child back home. Salma's mother is ready to forgive her daughter for her crime. She takes her illegitimate daughter home and looks after her. She loved Salma's daughter very much. She goes blind constantly weeping for her daughter Salma. All these actions can be ascribed to her deep bond with her daughter. Salma's teacher and would-be husband, John, is a northerner and feels 'like a fish out of water' in the south. One day he got a call from a neighbour telling him that his mother had bronchitis. 'She coughed so much we took her to Casualty.' The following, emotionally charged, scene is a testimony to Salma's own bond with her mother:

My fingers slowly slid across the coarse tablecloth and held his rough thumb.  
His hand was trembling when he said, 'I must go to see her.'  
'Yes, you must. Waste no time. See your loved .. .' I choked.  
'You must miss her terribly,' he said and held my hand.  
'Me miss her horribly' I said and wiped an irrepressible tear. (199)

### **Salma and Hajjeh Amina**

It is important to note that in the course of the whole narrative in *The Cry of the Dove*, Salma remembers her father and brother only occasionally, whereas, her memory is completely focussed all the time on her mother and daughter. She is acutely aware, and scared, of the physical distance from both of them: "Where was I? How far was I from my mother? How far was I from her?" (55). This fact speaks volumes as the act of remembering her mother involves Salma knowing more of her mother. Conway-Hicks' (1998) idea that "learning about mothers works to free the mother daughter connection from the confines of patriarchy" (122) is very significant at this juncture. Conway observes that "greater knowledge about mothers contradicts and opposes the oppression of women under patriarchy. For instance, this greater knowledge includes a



passing on and a recording of women's history" (122). As we have discussed above, Salma's relationship with her mother is largely directed by the forces of patriarchal mother-daughter relationship in which the mother acts as a cultural transmission agent for her daughter, but still Salma's mother replaces that relationship with a more realistic recognition of her individuality that binds her with her daughter. Salma's relationship with other women is also based on a similar attitude. Caplan's (2000) project of mending mother-daughter relationship may also come handy to grasp Salma's understanding of other women's troubles. Caplan observes that, "Those of us who believe we are supportive of women but deeply resent our mothers are probably not as wholeheartedly benevolent toward women in general as we think we are" (8). And conversely, those who are wholeheartedly supportive of other women, as Salma in *The Cry of the Dove* is, deeply love their mothers, as Caplan notes that, "the better the connection we have with our mothers, the better our connections with other women tend to be" (8). The most valuable item a destitute Salma in Britain possesses is her mother's letter and a lock of hair she always keeps close to her heart: "I stitched my mother's letter together with the lock of hair inside a leather pocket and turned them into an amulet, which I wore around my neck like a necklace" (40) In the same manner, Salma loves her daughter deeply. She writes her, sometimes imaginary, the other times real, letters. In one such letter she tells her why she was forced to abandon her at the mercy of others:

When I got pregnant with you, Layla darling, my mother begged me to leave the village before my brother found out. 'He will shoot you between the eyes with his English rifle. You must go, daughter, before you get killed.' (62)

### **Salma and Layla**

In Salma's relationship with her daughter, there are several factors at play, such as a mother's bond with her daughter, urge to protect her child, connecting to her motherline, and rejection of patriarchy. Salma has entirely different feelings for her daughter compared to her feelings for her son born in Britain, though her husband pressed upon her to "hold on to Imran and let go of Layla" (221). She also loves her son, but leaves him with his father to go back to her home country for the sake of her daughter. Her actions back home may be cited as the best example of a mother's strong bond with her daughter even if she had never seen her. When she learns that her daughter has been killed by her uncle because he believed "Like mother, like daughter" (224), Salma lost her mental balance: "Face blackened with ashes, T-shirt sticky with spilt tea, sweat and tears, I sat on the ground sprinkling sand over my dishevelled hair" (225). Mothers are protective, caring and supportive of their daughters, whereas, for their sons they are, comparatively, not so protective as they believe that boys can fend for themselves, while girls are at the receiving end and vulnerable. They may even think of their sons as show-off males, displaying undue patriarchal power. For instance, Salma's grandmother, Shahla utters about Mahmoud: "He thinks he is the sheikh of the tribe. He walks like a turkey cock, legs wide apart. He was circumcised late, that's what it is" (167).

However, there is something more at stake in Salma-Layla mother-daughter relationship, that is, the urge to protect her child is extremely strong. Salma always thought that her daughter was in danger, that she was crying and that she needed her presence back home to save her from the tyranny of her patriarchal tribe: "I recognized

that breeze. She was out there looking for a resting place, for a foothold, for rescue” and, “A shiver ran through me as if I had caught a sudden chill and my ugly dark nipples, which were one and a half centimetres long, the size of my little finger up to the first joint, stood erect” (36). The biological linkage, discussed in motherline concept, between them is so strong that sitting in Britain Salma sensed something bad happened to Layla in her hometown Hima. When Parvin confronted her on her constant crying for Layla, she says, “I depressed. I dream of Layla almost every night. Something must have happened to her. Mother's heart knows” (214). She always feels guilty about leaving Layla behind, in danger. In the course of the whole narrative, numerous instances are repeated when Salma is depicted full of remorse for her desertion of Layla and trying to reorganise her life in Britain, such as, “I did not deserve to be here, I did not deserve to be alive. I let her down” (26), or, for example, she says to Minister Mahoney, “I left her behind. Deserve to die, not live, me,' I said and began crying. `I also old, no home, no money, no job” (27). Salma hasn't seen the face of her daughter but she gives her a face: “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” (84).

Salma-Layla mother-daughter relationship may also serve as a spring board to review feminist perspectives on mother-daughter relationship in non-White communities in the backdrop of family being seen as the hub of gendered socialization and unequal power distribution among family members. For example, Allen and Jaramillo-Sierra (2015) note that “feminist perspectives on family relationships begin with the critique of the idealized template of the White, middle class, heterosexually married couple and their dependent children” (93). Non-White, lower middle-class, and mostly Asian, families and their issues hardly get any perspectival attention in this scheme of things. As, for example, Salma muses about the British society, “What are brothers like with their teenage sisters in this country?” (166). The genesis of not only her problems but also the problems of her daughter lies in the unequal distribution of power to family members in Asian societies. So, even if there exists a strong bond and love between mothers and daughters, under the given circumstances, mothers are helpless to save them from patriarchal tyranny. Salma is almost deranged thinking of her daughter seeking rescue: “Where is my daughter? Is she alive or dead? My eyes are hungry for her face! My ears are tuned to one call, "Mama," my nose sniffing for her scent” (185). What I mean is that among non-White mothers, like Salma, the mother-daughter bond may be stronger, motherline connections firmer, and the urge to tear away patriarchal yoke to pieces fiercer, as, learning of the murder of her daughter by her brother, Salma cries, “Yubba! My father! Yumma! My mother!' I howled blowing my cover to the tribe then collapsed on the floor” (225). The blowing off of her cover to the tribe is not only symbolic but realistic here.

However, mother-daughter deep-bonding relationship is not the only psychological aspect of motherhood depicted in *The Cry of the Dove* that provides a sense of fulfilment to Arabian women. Also, it is not just being a mother or being happy in the role of mother, but fulfilment of the urge to mother and the urge to protect their children that works like self-realization for them, even in the face of patriarchal imposition of mothering and mere motherhood upon their being. Thus, as mothers, two minor characters, Noura and Madam Lamaa, are worth noting for their sacrifices for their children. Noura's husband took a second wife and divorced her. Her two children, Rima and Rami, lived with her. Initially, she worked night shifts at a kebab shop. Early

morning, she had to go back home quickly to take Rima and Rami to school. “There were no buses at that time of the morning so she had to run the three miles back to her house” (105). But Rami was diabetic and needed insulin. To meet the additional monetary requirement, she works at a pub, sells her body. Then she was imprisoned on the charges of prostitution. Similar is the story of Madam Lamaa who lost her sanity after her husband took a second wife because she looked ugly to him after her menopause. In desperation, one night she went to the storeroom, “opened each sack and scattered the rice, the flour, the sugar, the lentils, the dry fruit all over the place” (125). She took her clothes off and walked out of the house stark naked. Patriarchal norms of their society allowed men to take more than one wife and leave the first one in the lurch, as puts Noura: “That fucking cicada!” said Noura then added, ‘They threaten us with taking on a second wife to keep us in our place’” (125). Noura blows the cover of patriarchy off her head and doesn’t care a bit about the societal attitude towards her. She knows none will help her raise her children, so, it doesn’t matter to her what she does to make a living and raise her sons.

### **Conclusion**

In feminist theory, personal is political, so, the mother-daughter relationship also acquires political overtones. If the mother denigrates her daughter for flouting patriarchal rules, she tries to be part of the patriarchal system for her own safety and concerns. If the mother denigrates her daughter but at her heart she tries to support her, she is secretly fighting against patriarchy because she knows she may be alone in her fight and won't win against a whole system. *The Cry of the Dove* advocates for female empowerment in Arabic societies. The novel portrays women characters challenging the dominant patriarchal norms and primarily supporting each other in their struggle for survival. The strong bond between mothers and their children portrayed in the novel indicates primarily women’s assertion of their selfhood, assertion of women’s fundamental right to have her urge to mother fulfilled and protect her children.

The novel also presents a critique of the gendered socialization and unequal distribution of power. Men in Arabic societies, as presented in *The Cry of the Dove*, are groomed to grow up with a strong sense of power over women. Mahmoud, Salma’s brother, is infused by their tribe with so much power that his mother, and even father, fail to control him. He kills Salma’s daughter against his father’s will, and then kills Salma unheeding his mother’s pleading. There is no distribution of power in Arabian societies, its only one-way flow towards men. A character analysis of the protagonist Salma, her mother, and her friend Noura shows that women resent this social phenomenon, and to counter the patriarchal tyranny to whatever extent possible, they forge a strong mother-daughter bond. The patriarchal tribe considers sexual relationship out of wedlock a heinous crime and the girl indulging in the act is considered as bringing dishonour upon the tribe, the honour of the tribe is to be restored only by killing the culprit. Salma as well as her mother resent this situation. Women in Arabic societies are forbidden premarital love because they are subservient to men. Their desires and self-expressions are suppressed. *The Cry of the Dove* is a critique of this phenomenon too. Salma’s mother resents subservience when Salma falls in love, and Salma resents subservience when she imagines her daughter to be about the age to have fallen in love.

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