

Forms of Violence against Women in the Novel *A Land without Jasmine*

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nada.ezzadeen27@gmail.com**Abstract:**

This research focuses on the phenomenon of violence and its various forms, particularly violence against women. It also discusses other forms such as domestic violence and harassment, as portrayed in Wajdi Al-Ahdal's novel *A Land Without Jasmine*. The research uses a socio-analytical approach to examine the impact of violence on societies and to analyze its representation in the selected novel. The research is divided into an introduction, two main sections, and a conclusion. The first section explores the theoretical framework of violence and violence against women through a review of perspectives offered by scholars, researchers, and philosophers. The second section analyzes various forms of violence such as domestic abuse and harassment through the events of the novel. The research presents several findings, including the motivations for male-perpetrated violence and harassment, which may stem from cultural, emotional, or ideological factors. It also highlights that such violence is often carried out by individuals close to the women, including fathers, brothers, and husbands. Furthermore, the research highlights that women, too, may commit acts of violence against other women

Keywords: Woman, Domestic Violence, Harassment, Physical Abuse, Psychological Abuse.

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أشكال العنف ضد المرأة في رواية بلاد بلا سماء

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الملخص:

يركز هذا البحث على ظاهرة العنف وأشكاله المتعددة، وبشكل خاص العنف ضد المرأة. كما يتناول أشكالاً أخرى من العنف مثل العنف الأسري والتحرش، كما وردت في رواية "بلاد بلا سماء" للكاتب وجدي الأهدل. يستخدم البحث منهجاً اجتماعياً تحليلياً لدراسة تأثير هذه الظاهرة على المجتمعات، وتحليل تمثيلها في الرواية المختارة. ينقسم البحث إلى مقدمة، ومبحثين رئيسيين، وخاتمة. يتناول المبحث الأول الإطار النظري للعنف والعنف ضد المرأة من خلال مراجعة وجهات نظر عدد من الباحثين والمفكرين والفلاسفة. أما المبحث الثاني، فيركّز على تحليل أشكال العنف المختلفة، مثل العنف الأسري والتحرش، كما تجلّت من خلال أحداث الرواية. توصل البحث إلى عدد من النتائج، من أبرزها الكشف عن الدوافع الكامنة وراء العنف والتحرش الذي يُمارَس ضد النساء من قبل الرجال، والتي قد تعود لأسباب ثقافية، عاطفية، أو أيديولوجية. كما يُبرز البحث أن هذا النوع من العنف غالباً ما يُمارَس من قبل أفراد مقرّبين من المرأة مثل الأب أو الأخ أو الزوج. إضافة إلى ذلك، يشير البحث إلى أن ممارسة العنف لا تقتصر على الرجال فقط، إذ قد تمارس بعض النساء العنف ضد نساء أخريات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المرأة، العنف المنزلي، التحرش، الإيذاء الجسدي، الإيذاء النفسي.

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© نُشر هذا البحث وفقاً لشروط الرخصة Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)، التي تسمح بنسخ البحث وتوزيعه ونقله بأي شكل من الأشكال، كما تسمح بتكييف البحث أو تحويله أو الإضافة إليه لأي غرض كان، بما في ذلك الأغراض التجارية، شريطة نسبة العمل إلى صاحبه مع بيان أي تعديلات أُجريت عليه.



Introduction

Violence is widely recognized as a public health phenomenon and a significant violation of human rights with global implications. Consequently, there is a pressing need to understand the nature of violence and its different forms, particularly violence against women. This research explores the forms of violence as depicted in Wajdi Al-Ahdal's novel *A Land Without Jasmine*. This novel, a significant literary work by the Yemeni writer, offers valuable insights into the somber realities of social life in Yemen, where violence in its various guises, ranging from physical and psychological aggression to social violence, is pervasive. Through a meticulous analysis of the narrative structure, characters, and key events within the novel, this study aims to illuminate these complex issues.

The significance of this research lies in shedding light on the phenomenon of violence against women, along with other forms of violence portrayed in the events of Wajdi Al-Ahdal's novel *A Land Without Jasmine*. It aims to explore the causes and motivations behind acts of violence. Furthermore, the research focuses on how Yemeni literature discusses the issue of violence and examines its impact on society.

This research is designed to achieve many objectives such as:

- i. To understand the concept of violence, violence against women and its forms.
- ii. To know the motivations of men to practice violence against women.
- iii. To explore the forms of violence in Wajdi Al-Ahdal's novel *A Land without Jasmine*.

This research uses a socio-analytical to understand and analyze the forms of violence and Al-Ahdal's novel *A Land without Jasmine* events.

Many literary scholars, writers, and researchers have shown great interest in studying the phenomenon of violence, as well as Wajdi Al-Ahdal's novel *A Land Without Jasmine*. This section briefly presents a chronological review of previous studies, identifying the research gaps and clarifying how the current study differs from them. It focuses on academic works and articles related to violence and the selected novel, such as

Mohammed Al-Hiba (2021) published a research paper entitled "Negotiating the Image of Yemeni Women in Wajdi al-Ahdal's *A Land without Jasmine* (2012)". He discussed the negative and deformed image of women which had been presented in Wajdi al-Ahdal's *A Land without Jasmine*. He also discussed the obstacles that women suffer from them as illiteracy and their socioeconomic suffering in society. Al-Hiba also discussed the particular impact of such perpetuated stereotyping images in bettering or worsening the status of women.

Devi Laila Maghfiroh (2021) in her undergraduate research almar'ah fi al'afkar alnamatiah fi almujtama alyamanii wal'andunsii fi riwayat bilad bila sama' li wajdi al'ahdal wa riwayat jakarta li najib alkilani binazar helene cixous sikus (dirasat almuqaranah al'adabiah), "Women in the Stereotypes of Yemeni Society and Indonesian Society in the Novel *A Land without Jasmine* by Wajdi Al-Ahdal and the Novel *Azra*



Jakarta by Najib Kealani Based on the perspective of Helene Cixous (Comparative Literature Study)" aimed to describe the Stereotypical forms of women in the novel *A Land without Jasmine* and the novel of Azra Jakarta. This research also aimed to reveal the socio-cultural representation behind the stereotypes of women in these two novels. Maghfiroh in her search referred to the form of stereotypes of women in the novel *A Land without Jasmine* consisting of father and community competitors, objects of gender equilibrium, beauty, bearers of family honor, teasers, prostitutes, moral crisis... etc. Whereas the women in the stereotypes of Indonesian society in the novel Azra Jakarta consists of steadfastness, beauty, can be conquered through marriage, skepticism, sensitivity is their shortcomings... etc.

Hatem Al-Shamea in his PhD dissertation Religion "Taboos Sexual Politics Reconfiguring the Yemeni Identity in Select Novels of Wajdi Al-Ahdal (2018)". He traced critically the traditional norms which have been framed as a forbidden area called "taboo". This area is man-made. Al-Shamea worked on four novels of Wajdi Al-Ahdal; *A Land without Jasmine* was one of them. Through these novels, he revealed the origins and development of the taboos in the society. His dissertation also revealed the violent cultural inheritance of the patriarchy which is deeply rooted in the Arab society. It exposed religious and political violence, but he discussed all these issues in the Arabic societies not only in our society in Yemen.

While some of the ideas in this research may overlap with previous studies, this work is distinguished by its in-depth focus on violence against women and its various forms, particularly within the context of society. What further sets this research apart is its attempt to investigate the reasons behind men's use of violence against women, their engagement in harassment, and their tendency toward dominance and control.

1. Violence

The concept of violence relates to the notions of harm, human suffering, and destruction. It is considered a complex, unwieldy, and socially constructed concept, often marked by ambiguity. Violence includes not only psychological or physical harm but also mental and emotional harm. Many scholars mentioned the origin of the concept of violence Peter Imbusch, in his research "The concept of violence", clarified that the concept of violence has two contrary views: the first one is that violence is ascribed to human nature, so it is considered immutable, and the second view was that violence is a social condition (Imbusch, 2003, p 13). He discussed the etymological origins of the concept of violence and their changes in the meaning (Imbusch, 2003, p 15). The term violence has etymological meaning as Imbusch pointed out in his research, and he pointed out that the word violence is complex and polysemous, and it is used in different contexts and diverse meanings. In German, they used the term *Gewalt* which means *violence* and stands both for physical assault and the authority of the state and its institutions, but this term is in contrast with some languages as Anglo-Saxon, francophone, and Ibero-American.



The term *Gewalt* reflected the two Latin roots *vis/violentia* and *potentia/potestas*. This explains how the connection between power and violence was made (Imbusch, 2003, p 15). Imbusch also illustrated that violence is an extremely complex phenomenon including major ambiguity between the destruction and the creation of order. Through this search, Imbusch talked about the public opinion polls which revealed that the concept of violence is extremely common and extends from physical and psychological injury and particular forms of crime to sociopolitical discrimination (Imbusch, 2003, p 13). He also illustrated that violence itself is omnipresent. It is a largely conditional phenomenon, and its ubiquity is independent of the particular cultural area. Imbusch emphasized that we face violence everywhere in large or small concerns, at national or international level. This phenomenon occurs in social environments (at home, at school, in the family, in streets and public places, against women and children) (Imbusch, 2003, p 14). At the end of the introduction of his research, Imbusch **emphasized** that the exact use of the concept of violence is hampered by the notions that overlap with semantically related concepts such as conflict, power, force, aggression, etc., which are not identical with violence (Imbusch, 2003, p 14). The concept of violence has been defined and indicated to the origin of its use in the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, for instance in the late 13th century it was defined as “physical force used to inflict injury or damage”. This definition was from Anglo-French and old French. From Latin *violentia*, the definition was “vehemence impetuosity”; from *violentus*, the definition was “vehement, forcible” (*Online Etymology Dictionary*).

To establish a foundational understanding of the concept of violence, the researcher will refer to reliable linguistic sources to provide a clear linguistic definition. Various dictionaries and academic sources define “violence” differently. For instance, the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines violence as “the exertion of physical force to injure or abuse,” while the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes it as “the expression of physical force against one or more people, compelling action against one’s will on pain of being hurt.” Additionally, the *American National Council* defines violence as “behavior by persons against persons that intentionally threatens, attempts, or actually inflicts physical harm” (Salhi, 2013).

In academic discourse, several scholars have explored the complexity of defining violence. Vorobej, in his book *The Concept of Violence* (2016), emphasizes that any definition of violence aims to draw conceptual connections while highlighting certain aspects of social life that other definitions may overlook. He argues that the phenomenon of violence is conceptually complex, highly ambiguous, and can be used in various ways and for different purposes (Vorobej, 2016).

Similarly, El-Bushra and Lopez, in their study *Gender-related Violence* (1993), assert that violence is a multifaceted issue that must be analyzed within a broader web of psychological, social, economic, and political factors. They define violence as “an assault on a person’s physical and mental integrity—an underlying feature of all societies, an undercurrent running through social interaction at many levels.” They



further stress that violence is not limited to physical harm, particularly against women, and argue that gender-based violence takes many forms, including domestic violence, child abuse, sexual and emotional harassment, female feticide and infanticide, genital mutilation, political violence, rape, war, and state violence (El-Bushra and Lopez, 1993).

1.1. Violence against Women

Violence against women is considered a common and serious problem. It is recognized as a public, social, and health problem. This type is usually practiced by parents, husbands, brothers, sons, or by the society itself. It may be physical, mental, psychological, economic, and sexual violence. The term violence against women has been defined by many organizations and interested researchers. For example, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined violence against women as "... any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life". (Krantz and Moreno, 2005). This definition illustrates that *violence* is defined as any acts that cause physical and mental harm, or have the power to cause harm. They see that the term gender-based violence emphasizes that it is rooted in inequality between women and men, and the relation between violence against women and gender-based violence is interchangeable (Krantz and Moreno, 2005). The researchers have defined the term gender-based violence as "acts or threats of acts intended to hurt or make women suffer physically, sexually or psychologically, and which affect women because they are women or affect women disproportionately" (Krantz and Moreno, 2005).

M. Cristina Alcalde also in her book *The Woman in the Violence*, focused on many issues such as domestic violence, women in developing countries, and gender-based violence. She explained the violence against women and referred to the report of the World Health Organization 2001 which states: "Available country studies from around the world indicate that between 10 percent and 50 percent of women are abused by an intimate partner and that the perpetrators are almost exclusively men" (Alcalde, 2010). She also referred to the fact that: "It was not until the 1980s that violence against women was first discussed as a human rights violation, and not until the 1990s that it began to receive more focused attention from social scientists" (Alcalde, 2010). Wajdi Al-Ahdal in his novel *A Land without Jasmine* portrayed the treatment of Yemeni men with women and their children. Violence, as reflected in the novel, has many forms whether psychological or physical. Jasmine suffered from these forms of violence whether inside her home (by her father, her mother, and her brother) or outside (by her doctor in the university, her colleagues, or even from strangers in the street). Jasmine's suffering was endless. She said: My life is nonstop suffering on account of the stares directed at me all the time, both inside our house and out. I'm under supervision night and day" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Here she said that "... and a right to a



happy life that a father doesn't poison with his suspicions and fantasies and that a mother doesn't spoil by poking her nose into my private affairs (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Al-Ahdal in the novel also pictured the life and suffering of Yemeni girls and women in the male-dominated society. The families in Yemeni society are plagued by bad doubts about them. Jasmine here represents the suffering that every girl lives with her family. For instance, Jasmine's older brother was searching her diaries to find any evidence or information about his sister's hypothetical lover. He suspected that "love had found its way into his sister's heart". This belief is prevalent among most men in our society. They believe that the mature female searches for a male. Jasmine also was subjected to violence from her father several times. This violence was psychological and physical. Jasmine said:

My father, for his part, is also plagued by doubts about me. I can tell he says to himself when he scans my eyes, "The mature female searches for a mate"! Ever since I became a young woman and my breasts developed, he has been prejudiced against me and apprehensive, fearing that I will sully his honor, disgrace him, and besmirch his reputation. Whenever he enters or leaves our building he always stares at my window. He feels qualms about my conduct and suspects me of standing behind the windowpane to flirt with young men. I have explained to him repeatedly that, during the day, passersby really can't see through the glass, but he doesn't believe me at all. In his heart of hearts, he believes that women's wiles are formidable (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Jasmine also said "My father has become my adversary and is openly hostile to me because I have not married yet and still live in his home. He considers me a landmine that will explode beneath his feet at any moment if he neglects to supervise me" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Jasmine here confirmed that these suspicions are not committed only by her brother, but also by her father who is supposed to be her support and safety. He, on the contrary, became the source of her fear and suffering. Jasmine's father has fear about his daughter. He thinks that she will sully his honor, and honor of the family because the men in our society have a belief that a girl brings shame.

Through the events of the novel, it is noticed that women also can be subjected to violence from other women, as Jasmine's mother does. Jasmine's mother is supposed to be the closest person to her daughter. Jasmine said "Even my mother, who is the creature in all of existence closest to my heart, stares at my face intensely when I return from the University, searching for any trace of love. I realize that she hugs me on my return so she can smell my clothing and make sure I don't bear the scent of any unknown Billy goat" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

2. Forms of Violence

Domestic violence and harassment represent critical modalities of interpersonal violence with far-reaching ramifications. Domestic violence encompasses maltreatment within intimate or familial settings,



whereas harassment encompasses unwelcome and offensive behaviors across diverse contexts. This section explores the extensive diversity of violence typologies, commencing with domestic violence and progressing to encompass harassment and its various manifestations. Comprehending these multifaceted forms is paramount for the development of efficacious strategies to combat violence and foster more equitable and just societies. This section will endeavor to elucidate the inherent complexities within each form of violence, analyzing their differential impacts on societies.

2.1. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence or intimate partner violence is a kind of violence in which abuse occurs in a marriage or house. It happens by one member in an intimate relationship against the other member in this relationship. Domestic violence isn't only against one member of a relation but it includes violence against children, parents, and the elderly.

Domestic violence has many forms such as verbal, emotional, physical, sexual abuse, economic, religious, and reproductive. Other forms range from subtle coercive forms to violent physical abuse and marital rape such as beating, acid throwing, and choking. The effects of domestic violence may cause psychological damage or may lead to death or deformity. According to the announcement of the World Health Organization, 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners.

Most organizations announced that most victims of domestic violence are women. They are exposed to many forms of violence, for example, the World Health Organization in its report declared that it found nearly 1 in 3 or 30% of women who have been subjected to sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner.

The World Health Organization also referred to the factors of intimate partner violence, as follows:

- Lower levels of education
- Low level of gender equality
- A history of exposure to child maltreatment
- Marital discord and dissatisfaction
- Male controlling behaviors towards their partners.

Domestic violence is a kind of violence that is considered one of male domination and patriarchal forms. Many researchers studied this issue and wrote many books, research, and reports about it. In her research "Domestic Violence, Past, and Present" (2011) Anna Clark clarified that before the 1970s, judges and police officers still saw women beating especially wives beating as a normal crime. Policemen tell and advise husbands to calm down and wives to stop annoying them, and thus the cases rarely come to court. She added that in the 1970s feminists began documenting the spread of women beating, and she asserted that not only the working class of men assaulted their wives, but also all classes of men (Clark, 2011, p 193). In her research Clark also talked about the historical background of domestic violence, i.e., she clarified that in the past men or



husbands saw violence as the legitimate way to correct their wives, and they exaggeratedly harmed their wives.

Clark clarified that wife beating in the ancient world was quite common. In her research, she referred to many women who have been subjected to domestic violence in all its forms, and for long periods. For instance, married women in the medieval period had fewer property rights than Roman women. A lot of secular and religious authorities vindicated that domestic violence is considered a "correction of wives", but this correction includes physical chastisement (Clark, 2011, p 195).

Richard L. Davis, in his book *Domestic Violence: Intervention, Prevention, Policies, and Solutions* (2008), also discussed the issue of domestic violence. He provided the readers with many definitions of domestic violence which the majority of the nationally recognized domestic violence agencies and advocates will accept. He used the definitions found on June 1st, 2007 on the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH) (http://www.ndvh.org/educate/what_is_dv.html). These definitions are:

- Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner.
- Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. It includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone.
- Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can happen to couples who are married, living together, or who are dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and educational levels (NDVH, 2007)" (Davis, 2008).

From these definitions, Davis noted that the NDVH website limited the definitions of domestic violence only to "the behavior between couples in their relationship" (Davis, 2008).

Al-Ahdal in his novel also referred to this kind of violence which Jasmine is subjected to as considered domestic violence. It happens between people in an intimate relationship, as what happened with Jasmine from her family. This kind of violence takes many forms, such as emotional, sexual, and physical.

Jasmine was subjected to physical violence by her father. For instance, because of the slander of Al-Hajj Sultan, the grocery owner, Jasmine's life changed. She moved from the world of children to the world of women. She began to veil her face with the niqab, and she was forbidden to contact with males. Her life turned upside down. Ali who is Jasmine's neighbor expressed this action. He said: ".....but a despicable slander from Hajj Sultan, the grocer, turned Jasmine's life upside down and ended the most beautiful chapter in my life" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Al-Hajj Sultan waited for Jasmine's father to return and told him that his daughter had played football in the street with her girlfriends. She was baring her legs, and the neighborhood's young



men had formed a circle around the girls and showered them with shameless expressions of love. Unfortunately, the father easily believed him and returned home very angrily. This situation was described by Ali, "when Nashir al-Ni'am stormed out of the bathroom, slamming the door behind him with all his might, my heart fell. I felt that an ineluctable calamity was descending on us. He took his vacant place, his face pulsing with anger" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). The action when the father "stormed out of the bathroom, slamming the door behind him with all his might" referred to his intense anger and his strength.

He started to ask Jasmine if she had played in the street. She answered 'yes', then he started cursing her with obscene words, hitting her, kicking her, slapping her, and insulting her in front of her mother and the neighbor's son. Jasmine didn't resist her father, while her mother couldn't intervene to help her daughter. Ali narrated this situation:

He picked up the dishes from the cloth and began to pour food over the head of Jasmine, who burst into tears but didn't budge. Blinded by rage, Nashir al-Ni'am rose and fell upon her like a savage beast, kicking and slapping her. Jasmine was moaning and weeping but didn't resist him. Her mother was wailing and screaming, but fear prevented her from intervening" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

In this situation, Al-Ahdal pictured the Yemeni woman as weak. The men in our society use all ways to make women weak, obedient, and submissive. They use these ways to force her to do whatever they want. This is what was represented by the father's behavior and his reaction to his daughter in response to the slander of Al-Hajj Sultan. This situation showed the social strength of male characters and the weakness of female characters which reveals the social conflict of gender in the Yemeni society (Al-Shama'a, 2020).

We can say that most men in Yemeni society use violence against women to make themselves feel dominant in their relations with their families, and they use violence when they feel that they fail to control their women.

Men in our society have authority inside the home. They are considered to be in control of all family members, especially their daughters. Men are the ones who make the decisions and they are the ones who command and end. Most men have created a harsh social system in which they could exploit, dominate, and physically abuse women. This is what happened with Jasmine after her father insulted her. He forced her to wear a veil when she wanted to get out of the house. He also prevented her from mingling with males and they prevented the neighbor's son from visiting her.

Ali also narrated this situation, "This incident was a turning point in Jasmine's life, and overnight she moved from the world of children to the world of women. She began to veil her face whenever she exited her apartment, and they secluded her from contact with males. They even prevented me from visiting her" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). The veil here is used as a reference to a barrier between a woman and the outside world. When a girl wears the veil, it means that the girl moves from the world of childhood to the world of adult



women. The family of the girl forces her to veil her face from strange men because they think that a veil protects her from gazes and harassment in the street. Some families consider the veil as Sutrah for their girls.

Ali who is Jasmine's neighbor was also subjected to domestic violence. He explained:

My father opened the door, his face glowering. He jerked me by the collar of my coat and hoisted me up, even though I'm heavy. So I walked up two steps and then sailed through the air over the third. My weeping mother greeted and embraced me to protect me from the anticipated punishment. My father brought out a knotted electric cord and prepared to beat me with it. (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Here, Ali's father represented the wrong parenting style, which causes a gap in the interaction between fathers and their sons. His father's treatment of his son has highlighted a feature of wrong upbringing in Yemeni society. Because this upbringing has turned into a time bomb whose only concern is to satisfy his instinct.

The man in our society is considered the only one who has the right to do what he wants with the justification of manhood. So, the parents bring up their son harshly, under the pretext that they are making him a reliable man in taking responsibility for the family.

2.2. Harassment

Harassment is now a universal issue that disturbs individuals, groups, and entire organizations. Some researchers noted that the concept of harassment is difficult to comprehend. There are also many questions about the kinds of behaviors that are considered harassment, and what is regarded as acceptable. Sara Oayyum and others, in their research "*Harassment: Causes, Effects, Solutions* (2021)", defined harassment as "the act of bothering or aggressively intimidating someone can cause major consequences for the people who are affected by it, leaving them scarred for the rest of their lives" (Oayyum et al., 2021).

The traits of harassment can be categorized as follows:

- Sexual coercion
- Unwanted sexual attention
- Gender harassment (Berdahl et al., 1996)

Sexual coercion (Quid Pro Quo) is unwanted sexual activity. This trait of sexual harassment is committed by someone who has power over the victim. Sexual coercion has been defined as the direct request or requirement of sexual acts for job or school-related rewards from a manager, university professor, teacher, etc. (Fairchild and Rudman, 2008). This kind of sexual coercion means when the harasser wants to commit sexual harassment with the victim and the victim refuses these behaviors, the harasser here begins to threaten or blackmail, i.e., he starts to threaten the victim by losing grades, jobs, etc., He uses these threats as means of pressure on the victim.



Some studies clarified that rape-supportive attitudes directly aid and facilitate the increase in sexual coercion (Oayyum et al., 2021). In sexual coercion, there are uninvited gestures such as lewd staring at one's physical appearance, touching, hugging, spontaneous verbal comments, etc. (Oayyum et al., 2021). Unwanted sexual attention is a trait of sexual violence that involves the degradation of women at the individual level, such as treating a woman as a sex object by sending her dirty emails, videos, and messages, grabbing her inappropriately, or leering at her.

The last trait of sexual harassment is gender harassment or gender-based harassment. This trait is most common and deep-rooted. It is considered a form of sex differentiation, and it happens when one person harasses another person for reasons relating to their gender. Fairchild and Rudman indicated in their research that this kind of sexual harassment "involves degradation of women at the group level such as making jokes about women as sex objects or posting pictures of women as sex objects" (Fairchild and Rudman, 2008).

According to Sara Oayyum and others, gender harassment has two categories: Sexist hostility and crude harassment. (Oayyum et al., 2021). There are many types of harassment such as discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, power harassment, harassment based on religion, psychological harassment, and online harassment (Oayyum et al., 2021).

In *A Land without Jasmine*, Wajdi al-Ahdal mentioned another kind of violence which is harassment. The novel has many situations that refer to harassment. As mentioned in the second chapter, 'harassment' is defined as "the act of bothering or aggressively intimidating someone can cause major consequences for the people who are affected by it, leaving them scarred for the rest of their lives" (Oayyum et al., 2021).

Jasmine was subjected to harassment in the street, in her college, in her neighborhood. The harassers were Al-Hajj Sultan, the drivers of buses, workers, and strangers. Through the events of the novel, Al-Ahdal tried to show that the harassers were not only strangers in the street, simple workers, or persons who are not educated, but the harassers might also be the educated people in the society who have high degrees like Dr. Aqlan.

These images which Al-Ahdal pictured in his novel represent the reality and suffering of Yemeni girls and women. Women and girls suffer from gazes of men in the street, obscene talk, and sometimes it may evolve into touching. Jasmine complained about harassment by Al-Hajj Sultan the owner of the grocery. She said, "... This man, even though he's made the pilgrimage to Mecca when he sees me peek out the window, stands there, smiling idiotically, and makes an obscene gesture. He puts in his ear his large store key, which he moves in and out while his eyes flash fiendishly (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

In this situation, Jasmine began to describe the character of Al-Hajj Sultan and her suffering because of him. When she appeared from her room window, this person started to behave immorally with her. He



started smiling and making obscene behaviors, such as playing with the keys of the lock and entering them into his ear. Jasmine here denounced his behaviors which contradict rationality and showed a lack of wisdom and balance. It contradicts his age and religious commitment. This is what Jasmine asserted when she said "even though he's made the pilgrimage to Mecca", and also when she said, "and stout with a grey beard and a prayer callus on his forehead" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

The words pilgrimage, beard, and a prayer callus stand to indicate the religious and social hypocrisy. This is what Al-Hajj Sultan pretends to be in front of people. In the novel, there is another reference to Al-Hajj Sultan's demonstration of religiosity and moral commitment in front of people. This happened when the inspector asked him about Jasmine, he answered "...Stroking his beard, he was slow to reply. "I ask Almighty God's forgiveness . . . what should I tell you, son?" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Also when he said, "Even a graybeard like me, who prays that God will provide him with a good ending for his life" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). "Forgive me, Lord" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012), "I'll close my shop. I want to catch the afternoon prayer at the mosque" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012), ".... and began playing with his black prayer beads" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

The use of the words 'beard, prayer beads', and his answer "I ask Almighty God's forgiveness" prayer at the mosque are all considered an indication of Al-Hajj Sultan's demonstration of religiosity and moral commitment in front of people. Through these actions, Al-Ahdal pictured the case of some men in society. They practice religious rituals inside the mosque, and when they finish, they practice harassment and bad habits. They start harassing women in the streets, with their bad looks, bad words, and bad behaviors. Jasmine also referred to the age of Al-Hajj Sultan when she said "He's as old as my father—fifty" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Here, she wanted to say that at this age, this man is supposed to be wiser and more balanced.

Al-Hajj Sultan didn't only harass Jasmine, but he used to harass the neighborhood children when they went to him to buy ice cream. This is what Ali said when he threatened Al-Hajj Sultan that he would expose him. Ali said, "I threatened to expose him in the community and to tell the grownup men that he was shameless and pressed against girls and boys from the rear when they headed to the freezer for ice cream" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Unfortunately, this phenomenon has spread widely in the society for many reasons. One of these reasons is the silence of women or shyness because talking about harassment is considered "taboo" in our society. Many women feel satisfaction when men look at them lustfully. This was confirmed by Jasmine. She said "Perhaps some girls feel good when men look lustfully at them" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

2.2.1. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a kind of harassment which had been defined by Sara Oayyum and others as:

Degrading behavior conducted by the harasser towards the harassed. The offender makes several wanted sexual advances towards the victim despite knowing they are



unwelcomed, which is made evident from the victim's obvious annoyance towards these atrocious acts. Although sexual harassment can take place anywhere, the odds of it happening are considerably higher in schools or workplaces. Sexual harassment is a sensitive topic to define as everyone has different definitions of what is considered personal space and boundaries (Oayyum et al., 2021)

Berdahl, Magley, and Waldo, in their research "The Sexual Harassment of Men? Exploring The Concept with Theory and Data" (1996), focused on the phenomena of sexual harassment in the workplace. They said that the problem of sexual harassment is important. It is about the power; it is rarely about sex. Power here means the ability to control others and influence them (Berdahl et al., 1996).

Margaret A. Crouch, in her book *Thinking about Sexual Harassment: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2001), discussed what people think about sexual harassment, and how they can define these phenomena. Some people see sexual harassment as the way men prevent women from competing with them in economic and political positions, whereas other people see sexual harassment happening because of the misunderstanding or the conflict caused by the differing sexual strategies of men and women. Other people see sexual harassment as the behavior of some individuals that unjustly harms other individuals in their place of work (Crouch, 2001).

Crouch pointed out that the expression sexual harassment was not in use Before the 1970s, but it was coined in the 1970s by the feminist movement (Crouch, 2001). At that time, this term was sociocultural. According to Crouch, Lin Farley claimed to have discovered the phenomenon of sexual harassment in a class on women and work at Cornell University in 1974. The first definition of sexual harassment was also given by Farley and Working Women United (Crouch, 2001). Farley defined sexual harassment as "any repeated and unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions, or physical contact that you find objectionable or offensive and causes you discomfort in your job" (Crouch, 2001). However, this definition was unclear in terms of the elements of the concept.

Crouch also referred to the definition by Catharine Mackinnon of sexual harassment which was "Sexual harassment, most broadly defined, refers to the unwanted imposition of sexual requirement in the context of a relationship of unequal power. Central to the concept is the use of power derived from one social spare to lever benefits or imposed deprivations of others" (Crouch, 2001).

2.2.2. Street Harassment

There is another kind of sexual harassment which is called *street harassment*. It is also known as eve-teasing. In this kind of harassment, a woman is exposed to a male stranger in public places such as streets, stores, parks, bus stops, public transportation, ...etc. Dhillon and Bakaya, in their research "Street Harassment: A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Young Women in Delhi" (2014), explained the behaviors that are



considered to be a form of street harassment like whistling, staring or gazing, making passes, obscene gestures, pinching, rubbing against women and fondling. (Dhillon and Bakaya, 2014). This kind of harassment is also known as *stranger harassment* Fairchild and Rudman in their research *Everyday Stranger Harassment and Women's Objectification* defined it as "[sexual] harassment of women in public places by men who are "strangers"". They said it is committed by men who are strangers to the victim.

Fairchild and Rudman stated that social science ignored these phenomena because there is no legal recourse (Fairchild and Rudman, 2008). This phenomenon restricts women and increases fears about safety when, for example, using public transport or walking alone, especially at night.

This kind of harassment is common in society, especially at work and school. It is considered an unwanted sexual activity that happens when the person is pressured, guilty, tricked, threatened, or forced in a nonphysical way. It might be from someone who has power over the victim. Jasmine was subjected to this kind of harassment by Dr. Aqlan who is a university professor at Science College. This doctor was known as a philanderer and a tireless flirt. This is what the inspector noted when he saw Dr. Aqlan. The inspector described Dr. Aqlan, "...Studying his features, the proportions of his clean-shaven face, his hair, which was dyed black, and his large ears, I realized that he was a ladies' man, an indefatigable Lothario" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Through the features of the doctor, the inspector knew that the doctor had an abnormal personality. His personality symbolized the moral corruption in society, he was the hero of moral scandals in the university.

Dr. Aqlan practiced sexual coercion with students. He uses their grades and threatens that he will fail them if they don't respond to his demands. He exploited his students sexually. Some students accepted and surrendered. Some students resisted and rejected his demands as Jasmine did.

This year Dr. Aqlan repeated his offense but this time the victim was a female, a beautiful student named Jasmine Nashir al-Ni'am. He failed her, even though he knew her grades in the rest of her subjects ranged from very good to excellent. When she went to consult him, he suggested dealing with the matter in his normal way. I heard her ask her girlfriends, while she ate a liver sandwich, the meaning of "marjoram." None of them knew. My response was to turn my back and listen even more intently. She explained to the other girls, "Dr. Aqlan promised he would pass me in his subject if I let him press the marjoram." The girls stopped swallowing their food and lowered their heads. They had caught on, but no one said a word (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Through this situation, Al-Ahdal wanted to clarify that it is not only people who do not have education and academic degrees who practice the harassment but also the persons who have higher degrees.

Dr. Aqlan represented the bad side of society, the people who have authority and use it badly. He doesn't fear anyone because he is supported by the authority and the tribe. He takes refuge in the power of the



tribe which legitimizes his moral corruption. His tribe also defended his corruption and his obscenity. This was confirmed by the inspector when he said:

We served Dr. Aqlan with an official summons, but he didn't respond. Then I telephoned him and informed him that we were expecting him to appear at such and such a time. He repeated his pompous refusal to obey and hung up on me. We can't get back at him, because he has influential connections in the government. If we try to show him our fangs, he'll fall upon us with his talons and hurl us beyond the sun" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

"Inspector Abdurrabbih didn't dare ask, because the man has support from above, any faux pas might bring down upon us a stern reckoning, because in the final analysis, we're nothing more than low-ranking policemen who lack any clout or power." (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). This proves that Dr. Aqlan has an influence in the state and he can do whatever he wants without being subjected to legal accountability, so the inspector and his assistant did not dare to accuse him and they interrogated him while they were afraid of him because of his power.

In the novel, there is another situation that denotes sexual coercion. It is what Jasmine mentioned in her diary. Jasmine's mother said:

What Jasmine recorded corroborates the rumor that women in the neighborhood have spread about him. The substance of it is that Afiya, a poor but beautiful widow with six orphaned children to support, receives food stuffs from him to feed her children and then—when no one is looking—slips into the shop's stockroom to settle her accounts (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Al-Ahdal here portrayed the general view of the males and the society toward divorced women or widows, and how they contend with them. Because of the poverty and weakness of Afiya, Al-hajj Sultan exploited her sexually. He used to give her foodstuffs from his grocery store to feed her children and then took whatever he wanted from her. These situations show us that the phenomenon of sexual coercion is widespread in society in all its forms and it is practiced by men of all classes.

CONCLUSION

This research was about forms of violence in the novel *A Land Without Jasmine*. It discussed violence and its forms. The researcher reached many results such as:

- The research showed that men's motives differ in practicing violence against women and harassing them. Their motives may be ideological and cultural, and their motives may be emotional and sexual. Some men suffer from repression. Most men and women suffer from repression, whether it is sexual or psychological repression. This is what Wajdi Al-Ahdal tried to emphasize through the events of the novel *A Land without Jasmine*.



- Men also suffer from sexual repression and this is one of the reasons for violence and harassment. Men are considered victims of sexual repression. Wajdi Al-Ahdal referred to sexual repression through the situations of the novel, especially the situations that happened with Jasmine whether this harassment was physical or verbal or moral harassment. She was exposed to these kinds of harassment in the street, at her university, and in her neighborhood. She was molested by her university professor, grocery owner, workers, drivers of buses, and even strangers. Jasmine here represented most Yemeni girls and women, whereas Dr. Aqlan, Al-hajj Sultan, and other characters in the novel represented the case of most men in the Yemeni society.
- The rate of violence against women is very high and increasing. Violence is usually practiced by the father, brother, husband, and the people who are around women, inside or outside the home. Not only men who use violence against women, women also use violence against other women. This is what Al-Ahdal referred to in the novel in the situations of Jasmine's mother with her daughter. Men also practice violence against other men as happened with Ali from his father, or the crime committed by the tribe against Ali which carried out the orders of the sheikh of the tribe.
- We cannot say that all men are bad or practice violence or harassment. Some men are good and they support women. They are men who respect women. They deal with women in a good way. They do not harm or injure women. There are good fathers, brothers, and husbands who support women. Some strangers are good. They do not practice harassment with women in the street. And we cannot say that all Yemeni women are weak or subordinate. There are successful and educated women who reached the highest positions. They don't accept being treated violently or badly.

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