



The Patriarchy and Tribe in Wajdi Al-Ahdal's Novel *A Land without Jasmine*

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the intricate relationship between patriarchy and the tribe in Wajdi Al-Ahdal's Novel *A Land without Jasmine*, arguing that the tribe functions as the primary executive arm of patriarchy. This research begins by establishing the theoretical frameworks of patriarchy and tribe, highlighting their symbiotic reinforcement, particularly within the Yemeni society. The analysis is structured into two main parts. First, it examines patriarchal system within the family, focusing on the psychological surveillance imposed by Jasmine's brother, father, and even her mother, demonstrating how the system is internalized and perpetuated by both men and women. Second, it analyzes the tribe's role as the ultimate enforcer of the patriarchal honor code, superseding state law. Key narrative events, such as Jasmine's disappearance and the brutal murder of Ali, are investigated as case studies. The findings confirm that the tribe provides the coercive power necessary to maintain a patriarchal social order, enforcing its ideology through violence and intimidation. The research concludes that the novel serves as a powerful critique of the mechanisms of control that sustain gender inequality, recommending future research into forms of resistance against this deeply entrenched system.

Keywords: Sheikh of the Tribe, Masculine Dominance, Yemeni society, Honor, Violence.


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النظام الأبوي والقبيلة في رواية وجدي الأهدل (بلاد بلا سماء)

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المخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف العلاقة المعقدة بين النظام الأبوي والقبيلة في رواية وجدي الأهدل "بلاد بلا ياسمين"، حيث يطرح أن القبيلة تعمل كذراع تنفيذي أساسي للنظام الأبوي. يبدأ البحث بتأسيس الأطر النظرية للنظام الأبوي والقبيلة، مُبرزاً تعزيزهما التكافلي لبعضهما البعض، خاصة في سياق المجتمع اليمني. وينقسم التحليل إلى جزأين رئيسيين: الأول، يدرس النظام الأبوي داخل الأسرة، مركزاً على المراقبة النفسية التي يفرضها أخ ياسمين وأبوها وحتى أمها، مما يوضح كيف يتم استبطان هذا النظام وتكريسه من قبل الرجال والنساء على حد سواء. الثاني، يحلل دور القبيلة باعتبارها الفارض المطلق لقانون الشرف الأبوي، متجاوزةً بذلك قانون الدولة. ويتخذ البحث من الأحداث السردية الرئيسية، مثل اختفاء ياسمين والقتل الوحشي لعللي، دراسات حالة. وتؤكد النتائج أن القبيلة توفر القوة القسرية اللازمة للحفاظ على النظام الاجتماعي الأبوي، فإرضاءً أيديولوجيتها من خلال العنف والترهيب. ويخلص البحث إلى أن الرواية تمثل نقداً قوياً لآليات السيطرة التي تديم اللامساواة بين الجنسين، ويوصي بإجراء أبحاث مستقبلية حول أشكال المقاومة ضد هذا النظام المتجذر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: شيخ القبيلة، الهيمنة الذكورية، المجتمع اليمني، الشرف، العنف.

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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 أجريت عليه.



Introduction:

Some researchers see patriarchy as a specific form of male domination and a social system. In contrast, others see it as an oppressive system that sees men as superior and greater than women, and their deeds are valued more highly than women's. Patriarchy takes many forms, in which it represents power, leadership, dominance, and control, which are owned by men. Patriarchy is closely related to men, manhood, and masculinity (fathers, brothers, husbands, etc.). They use their power on women. This system depends on the customs and traditions of our society, and it represents some aspect of our culture. In addition to patriarchy, the tribe is considered a crucial concept for understanding social structures, especially in societies like Yemeni society. The tribe is a socio-political group characterized by familial ties or common descent, which often possesses a hierarchical power structure based on traditions and customs. It functions not merely as a familial entity but as a fundamental social and political framework that frequently intertwines with and reinforces patriarchal principles. Therefore, studying the relationship between the patriarchal and tribal systems is crucial for understanding the deep-rooted cultural and social mechanisms that perpetuate oppression, which this study aims to achieve through the analysis of Wajdi Al-Ahdal's novel.

The significance of this research lies in its focus on understanding the concept of patriarchy and tribe and the relation between them. It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the deep-rooted cultural and social mechanics of oppression in a specific context, using a powerful literary narrative to make its points clear and impactful. It explains how patriarchy is not just an idea but a system with devastating real-world consequences.

This research aims to achieve several objectives, such as:

- i. To analyze the theoretical frameworks of patriarchy and tribe, establishing how these two systems intersect and reinforce one another, particularly in Yemeni society.
- ii. To demonstrate, through a close textual analysis of Wajdi Al-Ahdal's 'A Land Without Jasmine', how the tribe functions not as a mere social backdrop, but as the primary executive arm of the patriarchal order.
- iii. To investigate how key narrative events, such as the disappearance of Jasmine and the murder of Ali, serve as literary case studies illustrating the enforcement of patriarchal honor codes through tribal violence, often in defiance of state law.

To achieve these objectives, the research uses a Critical Analytical Method, where the Novel *A Land without Jasmine* by Wajdi Al-Ahdal is analyzed with the aim of uncovering and deconstructing the complex relationship between patriarchy and the tribe.



This research advances from the hypothesis that the patriarchal and tribal systems in the Novel *A Land without Jasmine* are symbiotically intertwined, where patriarchy provides the ideological justification for male dominance, and the tribe provides the social and physical power necessary to perpetuate it.

Wajdi Al-Ahdal's Novel *A Land without Jasmine* has attracted big scholarly attention, with researchers approaching it from various critical perspectives. For instance, studies have focused on hegemonic masculinity, its manifestations, and its destructive impact on women, particularly within the Yemeni context (Al-Osime, 2024). Other analyses have concentrated on the novel's narrative structure, examining the literary techniques Al-Ahdal employs to highlight his central themes (Al-Ahdal, 2021). Furthermore, researchers like Mohammed al-Mahfali (2021) have explored the theme of "woman as a value object," analyzing how female characters are positioned within the novel's symbolic economy. While these studies provide invaluable insights into masculinity, narrative, and symbolic value, they often examine these concepts in relative isolation. A critical gap remains in understanding the specific mechanism through which patriarchal ideologies are enforced. This research argues that the missing link is the tribal system. The existing literature has not yet fully explored the tribe's function not merely as a social backdrop, but as the primary executive arm of patriarchy. Therefore, this study builds upon previous scholarship by shifting the focus to the symbiotic and destructive relationship between the patriarchal system and tribal power, aiming to provide a more holistic understanding of the mechanisms of oppression at play in the novel.

The Theoretical Frameworks of Patriarchy

Many scholars and researchers have defined the concept of patriarchy in many ways. In her book *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1991), Sylvia Walby defined patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". She stated that this definition was developed before developing the details of patriarchy's forms, and she mentioned that the use of the term social structure in this definition is important. It implies rejection of both biological determinism and the notion that every singular man is in a dominant position and every singular woman is in a subordinate one (Walby, 1991). Walby said that patriarchy as a term has a history of use among social scientists. Max Weber (1947), in his book *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, used the term patriarchy to refer to a system of government in which men ruled societies due to their positions as heads of households. She also clarified that the term patriarchy needs to be conceptualized and abstracted. The abstract level of patriarchy consists of six structures: patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in cultural institutions, patriarchal relations in sexuality, male violence, patriarchal relations in the state, and the patriarchal mode of production (Walby, 1991). She also distinguished between two main forms of patriarchy: private and public. She emphasized that the private form of patriarchy is based on household production as the main position of women's oppression, while the expropriation of women's labour takes place firstly by individual patriarchs within the household. She clarified



that the principal patriarchal strategy of this form is exclusionary. Whereas the public form of patriarchy is based fundamentally on public positions such as employment and the state, it is a more collective appropriation. In this form, the principal patriarchal strategy is segregationist and subordinating (Walby, 1991).

Allan G. Johnson also discussed the term patriarchy in his book *The Gender Knot* (2005). He said that patriarchy is considered a kind of society, and this society is more than a group of people; it is not only men. Johnson said that patriarchy does not refer to any man or group of men. It refers to a kind of society in which men and women participate. He also asserted that a society is patriarchal because it promotes male privilege by being male-dominated, male-centered, and male-identified. Besides, it refers to an obsession with control. Then he explained these characteristics, and he started by dominating (Johnson, 2005). Johnson said that patriarchy is considered male-dominated, i.e., men hold the big positions in society, and he can work in many fields such as authority, politics, economy, religion, education, domestic, etc., and all these fields are reserved for men. Men can occupy the best positions as the head of state, religious leaders, school masters, members of legislatures at all levels of government, senior law partners, tenured professors, generals, and admirals. All these tend to be male under patriarchy. We notice that when a woman tries to find her way into higher positions or when she is successful and independent, people tend to be struck by the exception to the rule and wonder how she will measure up against men. The writer in this part confirmed that male dominance confirms the idea that men are superior to women.

He also clarified that male dominance does not mean that all women are weak or powerless; many women are strong. They can be better and greater, and many female models are more powerful than what most men will ever be (Johnson, 2005). The second point that Johnson explained about the patriarchal society is male identification in the sense that the society and its cultural core are based on the idea that all men in this world are in the foreground, and all women are in the background and are marginalized. The writer said that societies are considered to construct a symbolic world, for example, the society in general uses male nouns and pronouns to represent people. Most societies often refer to human beings as "man", or use the pronoun "he", even when men talk or call women, they use nicknames. Furthermore, when a woman gets married, she is given her husband's surname. Also, the idea of career assumes that the career holder has a wife at home to do vital work, such as taking care of children and husbands, doing laundry, and cleaning the house, etc. Men restrict the future of women in the housework and in marriage.

He also clarified that there is another aspect of male identification. It is the cultural description of masculinity and men. This description includes many qualities such as strength, control, toughness, logic, decisiveness, power, self-sufficiency, and rationality etc. All these qualities are associated with masculinity and manhood. In contrast, there is a cultural description of femininity and womanhood. This description includes



many qualities such as mutuality, readiness to negotiate and compromise, cooperation, sharing, equality, caring, vulnerability, intuition, and emotional expressiveness (Johnson, 2005). The third point, which Johnson clarified, is male-centered. What is meant here is that man considers himself the center of everything. Patriarchy is male-centered. That means that the attention is focused primarily on men; what they do and how they think and work. News, stories, films, drama, and even books all talk about courage, heroism, spiritual transformation, morals, endurance, and other struggles that give human life its deepest meaning. Men are essential, whereas women are considered secondary (Johnson, 2005). An obsession with control is the fourth point that Johnson talked about. At this point, control is an essential element of patriarchy; men preserve their privilege by controlling women. Johnson explained that men use control to assert that they are strong, rational, autonomous, independent, dispassionate, and knowledgeable. They always see themselves as right and in command of every situation, especially the situations that concern women. All these qualities are assumed to mark the men as superior and justify their privilege (Johnson, 2005).

So, patriarchy, according to Johnson, is "a set of symbols and ideas that make up a culture embodied by everything from the content of everyday" (Johnson 29). He also clarified that the patriarchal culture has ideas about the nature of things as men, women, and humanity, with masculinity and manhood most closely associated with being human, femininity, and womanhood relegated to the marginal position of "other" (Johnson, 2005).

Ibrahim Al-Haidari, in his book *The Patriarchal System and the Problem of Sex among Arabs* (2003), pointed out that in ancient times, especially in Mesopotamia, there was a so-called matriarchal system, and he explained how this system turned into a patriarchal system. Also, he talked about the status and greatness of women in that era. He pointed out that some anthropologists believe that the transition from the matriarchal system to the patriarchal system went through four stages. In the first stage, there were agricultural people who worshipped the moon as a symbol of the mother goddess. In the second stage, the male or masculine god of the father appeared, which was represented by the seven days of the week among the Sumerians. The third stage was that a lover of the mother goddess became a king as a representative of the moon god. In the fourth stage, the king's power increased, and he gained the power of the local kings who worshiped the moon. At this stage, patriarchal marriage dissolved instead of matriarchal marriage. People in that age began to name their children by the names of their fathers instead of names of their mothers, the solar calendar replaced the lunar calendar, and the number of days of the year became 365 days instead of 360 days. The collapse of the matriarchal system led to the rise of men's status and the supremacy of patriarchal culture (Al-Haidari, 2003).

Al-Haidari, also in his research "Patriarchal Male Hegemony in Society and Authority" defined the term "Patriarchy". He clarified that patriarchy arose from the Greek language and means "rule of the father." It refers to the dominance and control of the father over the family, where decisions are solely in the hands of the male



"patriarch," who is considered the head of the household and the leader of the tribe. The patriarchal system forms a distinct social and psychological structure, deeply rooted in the collective memory, that characterizes families, tribes, authority, and society in the Arab world. It creates a hierarchical and tiered relationship based on irrational domination and submission, which conflicts with the values of modernity, civil society, and respect for human rights (Al-Haidari, 2016, p 15).

The scholars agreed that the concept of patriarchy in general is used to refer to male domination, power, and the way men dominate women. It is the system of male domination and female subordination.

The Theoretical Frameworks of Tribe

Alongside the patriarchy, the tribe represents a pivotal concept for understanding social structures, especially in societies like Yemen. A tribe is generally defined as a socio-political group characterized by familial ties or shared ancestry, often possessing a hierarchical power authority structure based on traditions and customs. Its function is not limited to being a family entity; it is a fundamental social and political framework that frequently intertwines with and reinforces patriarchal principles. In this context, this section reviews the concept of the tribe, drawing on various research and studies, in preparation for analyzing its role as an executive tool for the patriarchal system in the novel *A Land without Jasmine*. Many researchers discussed the concept of a tribe. Kamal Misra talked about the concept of tribe. He clarified that the word tribe is a complex and debated term. Many people associate it with ideas of 'primitivism' or 'backwardness,' typically using it to describe indigenous populations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, or Native Americans. Anthropologists tried to define a tribe as a group of people living in a single area, speaking a common language, sharing culture and traditions, and having a unified political and economic system (Misra, 2008). Patricia Crone, in her search "The Tribe and the States," defined tribe as a distinct type of society that primarily organizes its social roles by attributing social importance to biological characteristics such as kinship, sex, and age. This makes it a fundamentally primitive society, as its core organizational principles stem from these natural, given relationships, regardless of how elaborately those structures might develop (Crone, 1986, p 446).

Furthermore, Crone clarified that a tribe is a descent group (sometimes multiple such groups) that forms a cohesive political community. While it may be subdivided into smaller descent groups or integrated into larger ones, its distinguishing feature is that it represents the most inclusive aggregate of individuals who identify with each other as a unified group under common leadership (Crone, 1986, p 447). She added that a tribe functions as a socio-cultural ethnic entity. Within this entity, political unity might be confined to smaller descent groups, or it could be entirely dependent on the specific context in which the tribe exists (Crone, 1986, p 448).



Maurice Godelier indicated that the origin of the word "tribe" is derived from the Latin term "tribus." Historically, a tribe was formed by several groups of men and women interconnected by kinship (Godelier, 2010/2015). He defined a tribe as a societal structure that forms when groups of men and women, who recognize each other as kin—whether through actual or fictitious descent or affinity—unite. These groups are interdependent, collaborating to control a territory and occupy its resources, which they exploit together or individually, and are prepared to defend it. Each tribe is identified by its distinct name (Godelier, 2010/2015).

In his book, *The Palace and the Diwan: The Political Role of Tribes in Yemen*, Dr. Adel Al-Sharagabi and other authors defined tribal society from two perspectives: social and cultural. From a social perspective, a tribal society is one in which the tribe represents the sole social organization, founded on the principle of equality. From a cultural perspective, the tribe refers to a society based on tribal values, culture, or identity (Al-Sharagabi et al., 2009). They further asserted that the tribe, particularly the Yemeni tribe, constituted a self-contained and integrated political, social, and economic unit. It served as a system for managing communally owned natural resources and as a military unit responsible for defending its members and affiliated groups (Al-Sharagabi et al., 2009).

Tribal and Patriarchal Authority in the Novel *A Land without Jasmine*

This section turns from the theoretical discussion of patriarchy and tribe to a direct textual analysis of Wajdi Al-Ahdal's *A Land without Jasmine*. It argues that the novel serves as a powerful case study, clarifying how abstract patriarchal ideologies are enforced through the concrete actions of the family and the tribe. The analysis will proceed by examining three core manifestations of patriarchal control within the narrative: first, the pervasive system of surveillance and suspicion imposed on the female protagonist, Jasmine, by her own family; second, the role of the father and brother as guardians of a fragile, honor-based system; and third, the weaponization of the tribe as the ultimate enforcer of patriarchal justice, often in defiance of state law. Through a close reading of key events and character dialogues, this section will demonstrate that the tribe is not merely a social backdrop but the primary executive arm of patriarchy in the novel. Patriarchy is clear through the events of Wajdi Al-Ahdal's novel *A Land without Jasmine*. Jasmine complained about the suffering that she lives in her society from her male family members who are in the home, or males who are outside. All gazes focus on her and her behavior. They observed her night and day. She complained that the closest persons to her were the source of her suffering, as her father, her brother, and her mother. Her suffering was inflicted by all members of her family. (Al-Osime, p 677).

This patriarchal system within Jasmine's family first manifests as a pervasive system of psychological surveillance, a role primarily embodied by her older brother. He acts as the domestic enforcer of patriarchal norms, viewing his sister's education not as an opportunity for her growth, but as a potential source of



dishonor. This suspicion transforms their sibling relationship into one of a guard and a prisoner. Jasmine describes this violation of her inner world:

"At home, I have to put up with my oldest brother's covert attempts to read my diary. He suspects that love may have found its way into my heart. Ever since I enrolled at the University, where instruction is coed, he has been searching my papers for my hypothetical boyfriend" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Jasmine here showed her suffering, especially in her home. A home is considered one of the places where a person exercises his comfort, freedom, acting as he or she is, without being shy or fearful. (Al-Osime, p 677).

Al-Osime, in her research "Hegemonic Masculinity in its Manifestations in Wajdi Al-Ahdal's Novel *A Land without Jasmine*" highlights that Jasmine's brother, who is meant to be her closest and most supportive person, becomes the source of her suffering due to his perspective and beliefs. He assumes that girls attend university not for education, but to form relations with males. This belief leads him to conclude that his sister's attendance brings shame and scandal to the family, suspecting she is there for other motives. Consequently, he reads her notes to acquire any evidence. Al-Ahdal depicts the prevalent beliefs within Yemeni society regarding women who study in mixed-gender universities. This society perceives women in a narrow, unjust, and cruel manner. The novel perfectly embodies the condition of women and their suffering, which stems from this masculine society's constricted worldview. It presents a vivid picture of the reality women inhabit. From the moment a female is born, she is enveloped by restrictions and pressures from all directions (Al-Osime, p 677-678). Jasmine did not suffer only because of her brother, nor was he the only one responsible for her pain; her father was also one of these causes. She 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's father has the same belief and outlook as his son. He said that, "The mature female searches for a mate" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/ 2012). He has a fear that she will "sully his honor, disgrace him and besmirch his reputation" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Jasmine's father doesn't see Jasmine as his daughter with her personality and dreams. Instead, he reduces her to just a "female." He sees her as a biological creature whose only purpose in life is to find a man. This view strips her of her humanity and makes her education or ambitions seem worthless, because he believes her instincts are what truly drive her. He also sees his daughter as a "biological time bomb." This makes him live in constant fear of his reputation. Therefore, he feels it is his



right to control her to protect himself from the "explosion" she might cause. Jasmine also complained of her mother's treatment. Her mother has the same patriarchal thoughts as her husband and her son. 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. Every day she raises the same subject with me, "What did you do today?" and interrogates me about my relationships with male professors and classmates in the Faculty. Her heightened anxiety distresses me, but despite everything, I forgive her and love her (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Al-Osime, in her research "Forms of Violence against Women in the Novel *A Land without Jasmine*," asserted that the patriarchal system is not simply a system of men oppressing women, but a deeply rooted social ideology that women themselves can absorb and perpetuate. The mother, herself a product of this system, becomes an agent of that same system by enforcing its restrictive norms on her daughter. This ensures the system's survival across generations and makes it incredibly difficult to dismantle, as its guardians are not just external authorities, but also the closest and most loved members of the family (Al-Osime, p 926).

Among the situations that also indicate the dominance of the patriarchal system is what Wajdi Al-Ahdal mentioned in the novel, as narrated by Jasmine about the slander of Alhaji Sultan, the grocery owner, how her life changed after this slander, and her life was turned upside down. 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 come into contact with. (Al-Osime, p 928). Ali, who is Jasmine's neighbor, narrated 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). Ali also narrated Jasmine's father's reaction to this slander and how it was violent and immediate. He said that "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). This event is considered a powerful microcosm of the patriarchal system. The power of Hajj Sultan's slander lies not in its truth, but in the authority the system grants his male testimony over a woman's conduct. The father's immediate and explosive rage is not merely personal; it is a defense of his honor, which is inextricably tied to his daughter's perceived purity. He acts not as a protector of his child, but as the enforcer of the patriarchal system.

Having established the mechanisms of the patriarchal system within the family. The narrative reveals that the family is not the final authority; it is merely the first line of defense. The ultimate enforcer of the patriarchal code is a larger, more powerful entity: the tribe. It is here that patriarchal ideology, centered on female honor, is weaponized and enforced with lethal power, often in defiance of state law. The Yemeni



society is considered a masculine and tribal society. The tribe in Yemen represents the main pillar of the social structure in Yemen. It is one of the most significant social models in managing community cohesion and security. The tribe has its authority. The authority is complete with men. Social traditions also support this issue greatly. Al-Ahdal also confirmed this point in the novel. It is considered one of the most important points that he has discussed. He referred to the tribe and to its authority in many situations. Through these situations in the novel, Al-Ahdal wanted to clarify the extent of the influence of the tribe's authority; the extent of its strength and ferocity. The tribe doesn't underestimate the reputation and honor of a girl. The women in the tribe are considered a red line. They also consider women a source of shame. This appeared in the novel when Jasmine disappeared. The inspector who investigated the issue of Jasmine's disappearance described Jasmine's tribe as "a fierce tribe" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). He also said:

I went back to her family's residence and at the door to the building found a crowd of her relatives, some armed with Kalashnikov rifles. They were arguing vociferously with each other, all wound up and ready to explode. I mingled with them, and they began to ask me loudly about their missing relative. Their faces were terrifying, so angry that they spewed ill will, and their eyes glowed with savagery like the pupils of ferocious lions. Jasmine is a member of a fierce tribe, and all its men are heroic warriors for whom a daughter's honor is a red line. Any creature crossing that line is destined to die (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Al-Ahdal talked about the sheikh of the tribe. He referred to him in many situations. The sheikh of the tribe is considered to be domineering, fierce, and ruthless. He deals harshly, especially with those who don't comply with his orders. His appearance in the novel marks a turning point in its events. He appeared after the disappearance of Jasmine. The aim of his appearance was not to search for Jasmine but instead to take revenge on her because she brought shame to her family and tribe. The inspector neatly described him and his appearance:

The tribe's sheikh arrived in a late-model sedan that bristled with armed men. He stepped out haughtily and majestically, encircled by guards on every side, and the men of the tribe clustered around him... I saw Jasmine's father grovel so humbly before the sheikh that his abasement could almost have killed him as his head bowed to the ground" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Al-Ahdal here described the tribe's sheikh and his position in society. When the inspector said, "The tribe's sheikh arrived in a late-model sedan that bristled with armed men", he also said, "He stepped out haughtily and majestically". This is considered an indication of his importance, pride, and greatness in his tribe. He has the authority. He makes all decisions related to the tribe and its members. He is considered an authoritarian and ruthless character. For instance, Al-Ahdal described the car in which the sheikh of the tribe came. It is another indication of the sheikh's personality and authority.



Al-Ahdal used the term (rifles) twice in the novel. The first use was when the men of the tribe came to the house of Jasmine to ask about her disappearance. The inspector said, "Some armed with Kalashnikov rifles" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). The second use was when Jasmine's mother said, "they're crushing his bones with rifle butts" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). The rifles refer to the force. Al-Ahdal wanted to say that the Yemeni society is armed. This is the reality. In Yemen, it is not only the tribes that use weapons, but also the urban society.

The tribe's men used their ascendancy to take their revenge, as they claim, when Ali went to Jasmine's family to give them her clothes, which he found at the pomegranate tree. Jasmine's mother said, "When we opened the door, Ali entered, breathless, his face beaming with joy and delight. He handed us all the clothes that my lost daughter had been wearing, including her underclothes" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Ali thought that Jasmine's family would be happy when he gave them Jasmine's clothes, but what he did not expect was what happened. Jasmine's family did not believe him. They started beating and threatening him. Jasmine's mother narrated this situation when she said:

None of us, my husband, my three sons, and I, believed a word of what he said. So, we thought the worst of him. My son Hamdan raised his janbiya dagger and threatened him: "You've brought us our sister's clothes, even her bra, so tell us where she is or I'll slay you with my own hands the way I would slaughter a lamb. Ali collapsed in tears and proceeded to swear weighty oaths that he was telling the truth. My son Salih struck him and dragged him by his hair, demanding that he tell the truth. We were all shouting in his face like madmen, raising our voices at that late hour of the night. So, before the neighbors gathered to see why we were screaming, my husband intervened and threw Ali out of the house" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Al-Ahdal confirmed that the tribe has the power and the authority in many situations in the novel. No one can stand against it and its decisions. The presence of the sheikh and the men of the tribe throughout the novel contributed to the aggression of the event, bringing it to the climax, and then the shockingly brutal end of Ali. For instance, when the sheikh of the tribe knew what had happened, he and Jasmine's family initiated a vile conspiracy to kill and take revenge on Ali. They considered Ali the person who defamed the family's reputation. Jasmine's mother said:

When Ali left the building on his way to school, armed men from our tribe intercepted him on one of the streets and forced him at gunpoint to climb into the car with them. They took him to the sheikh's private prison, where they tortured and beat him to make him tell the truth and to show them where Jasmine had fled. But he didn't change a single word of his claims before departing from this life; may God be compassionate to his soul (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Muti' Radman, the police officer, described the case of Ali when they found his carcass: "Ali Nashwan's face was swollen and covered with wounds. There were contusions on his head, his bones were broken and



crushed, and his ribcage had been completely demolished. His male organ had been chopped off, and his groin area had been stabbed repeatedly. Tucked between his buttocks was a wilted bouquet of qat" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

Ali was innocent. He wasn't a bad person. Through the events of the novel, his character is characterized by morals that reflect a good upbringing. His character in the novel played a big role in changing the events. He was the reason for revealing the course of events, and Ali was the only person who found the place where Jasmine disappeared. He was the sacrificial lamb that Jasmine's family offered to the tribe to follow customs and traditions. Jasmine's family was proud of their criminal activities, which they did against Ali. Jasmine's family and the tribe felt that they had restored their honor and prestige by killing this little boy. Jasmine's mother said:

The men of our tribe boasted about their crimes against Ali, and details like their crushing his bones with rifle butts, slicing off his penis, pounding his head against the walls, and stabbing him below his belly spread through all the households of the neighborhood until the news reached the ears of our neighbor Umm Ali. Then her heart became ballooned, and inevitably she died only a few days after her son was slain" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Jasmine's mother also asserted that Ali was innocent. They had unjustly reaped him. She said, "When I remember this charming boy, I sigh, because we wronged him. We killed him, even though he was innocent. I still have a photo of him (I don't remember now how I got it) and whenever I look at it, my eyes flow with tears of regret and remorse" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). In the novel, many indications explain the status of the tribe's sheikh and his important position within the tribe. Al-Ahdal clarified this status. He also clarified how people are submissive and humiliated by the sheikh of the tribe, and how they fear him. As the inspector said, "I saw Jasmine's father grovel so humbly before the sheikh that his abasement could almost have killed him as his head bowed to the ground" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). The inspector also said, "The venerable sheikh issued his directives calmly and gravely. Then he climbed back into his superb sedan--as his guards elbowed each other for the pride of place, leaping into the rear seats, and left the neighborhood as swiftly as he had appeared" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). The tribe and its men in the novel represent the hegemony. It is an irresistible power and authoritarianism that crushes the weak. It disregards the state and law. Here, it is concluded that the tribe is one of the most important dimensions that Al-Ahdal dealt with in the novel. The events of the novel are based on it. The tribe in our society makes the laws. It runs the country and the society. For instance, the son of a sheikh may openly kill any person in front of people. He may be imprisoned and released from prison because he is the son of a sheikh or he belongs to a large and famous tribe. The situation may reach the point of threatening the family of a victim to harm them if they demand their right to revenge. Ali's father said to the inspector, "I beg you, by the life of the person you hold most dear, keep this information to yourself and let it remain our secret. If the girl's family learn this, a calamity will ensue.



They will eat my boy alive with their bare teeth, and their daggers will shred his body before he has time to utter a word in his defense" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). The people who belong to big families have protection, and they can do anything they want because they know that the ascendancy and the authority of the tribe will protect them. This is evident in the novel through many situations. For example, the power of the tribe is what made Dr. Aqlan continue his moral corruption. It protects him from any punishment or trial. Dr. Aqlan knows that the tribe will support and defend him. This was clear in the situation that happened between the inspector and his assistant, and Dr. Aqlan confirmed that. The assistant 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). Another situation was with Dr. Aqlan:

Inspector Abdurabbih didn't dare ask, because the man had 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. We said goodbye to him, thanking him for graciously answering our questions, and departed praising God for our safe deliverance, as if he were the one who had been interrogating us, not the other way around (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012).

One of the situations that indicates the dominance and power of the tribe was when Jasmine's mother said, "I was afraid my husband and sons would be arrested and tried, but the sheikh's influence shielded them from interrogation" (Al-Ahdal, 2008/2012). Even the inspector and the entire CID know the details of Ali's murder, but they were unable to catch the killers or even directly charge them or the tribe. They feared for their lives from the oppression and power of the tribe.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research confirmed its central hypothesis that the tribal system in Wajdi Al-Ahdal's *A Land without Jasmine* is not merely a passive social setting but an active and essential mechanism for the patriarchal system. The novel proves that while patriarchy provides the ideology of male dominance, the tribe acts as the armed enforcer of this ideology. The analysis showed how the tribe enforces patriarchal values through a firm rule of honor, transforming women into symbols whose violation demands violent retribution. Furthermore, this research revealed the deeply insidious nature of this system by revealing how it operates within the family itself, turning even the mother—the closest person to the protagonist—into an agent of patriarchal surveillance. This finding highlights that the system's power lies not only in external authorities like the father or the tribe, but also in its ability to be internalized and perpetuated by women themselves, ensuring its survival across generations. The authority of the Sheikh, the mobilization of armed tribesmen, and the



brutal murder of Ali all serve as narrative evidence of a system where tribal power is used not for justice, but to maintain patriarchal control at any cost, even overriding state law.

The significance of this research extends beyond literary analysis. By dissecting the relationship between patriarchy, the tribe, and the family unit, the novel serves as a powerful critique of deep-rooted social structures that perpetuate oppression. It highlights how cultural traditions can be weaponized to enforce gender inequality, offering a profound insight into the mechanisms of social control that operate in many traditional societies.

Based on these findings, further studies are recommended to explore avenues of resistance within these systems, as portrayed in literature or social reality. Future research could also analyze the impact of modern socio-economic changes on this entrenched relationship in the Yemeni context, or conduct comparative studies with other cultural contexts for a broader understanding of this complex phenomenon.

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