

Gender injustice in Niqula Haddad's *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*: A radical feminist analysis

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Abstract

This study examines representations of gender injustice in Niqula Haddad's novel Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah. The purpose of this research is to identify the patterns of oppression depicted in the narrative and analyze how these forms of injustice reflect broader social norms within Arab society. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method and uses Kate Millett's radical feminist theory as a theoretical framework, which views patriarchy as the fundamental source of women's subjugation. Data were obtained through library research, involving close reading, annotation, and classification of textual evidence related to gender injustice, followed by analysis of the narrative elements. The findings, analyzed through Kate Millett's radical feminist framework, reveal five prominent forms of gender injustice experienced by the female characters: marginalization, subordination, negative stereotyping, physical and non-physical violence, and the burden of double work. Marginalization is reflected in the restriction of female characters' access to rights, mobility, and opportunities. Subordination appears through the positioning of female characters as inferior and powerless within both family structures and broader social systems. Negative stereotyping is manifested in the labeling of women as morally weak, emotionally unstable, or inadequate, which reinforces discriminatory attitudes. Violence is expressed through coercion, harassment, and objectification, indicating how women's bodies and agency are controlled by male authority. The double burden emerges when female characters are expected to fulfill domestic responsibilities while simultaneously contributing to economic needs without equitable support from men. The study concludes that gender injustice in the novel is not merely an individual experience but a structural manifestation of entrenched patriarchal values embedded in social, cultural, and familial institutions. The study contributes to Arabic literary criticism and feminist discourse by demonstrating how literature reflects and critiques structural gender inequalities in Arab society. This research contributes to feminist literary studies by highlighting the role of Arabic prose in documenting and challenging gender-based injustice, while also encouraging readers to develop greater awareness of the need for social justice.

Keywords: patriarchy, subordination, marginalization, violence, stereotyping, feminism

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Introduction

Gender inequality is a global issue, including in Arab countries (Saputra & Rodiah, 2024). Its root lies in unequal social structures and patriarchal culture that restrict women's roles (Rahmania et al., 2022). This phenomenon is reflected not only in real life but also in literary works, where female characters are often portrayed as experiencing discrimination (Agustina, 2024). Gender injustice arises from systems that place one sex in a disadvantaged position (Fakih, 2008) and often stems from divisions of social roles perceived as incompatible with cultural and religious values (Muzakka, 2021). Thus, gender injustice is multidimensional, shaped by structural, cultural, and ideological factors.

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According to Suharjuddin (2020), gender inequality frequently manifests in five forms: marginalization, subordination, negative stereotypes, violence against women, and double burden. Marginalization positions women at the periphery of social structures, limiting access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making (Fakih, 2008). In the context of gender, marginalization is often triggered by social and cultural constructions that place men at the center of power and position women as subordinated. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) explains that women are frequently positioned as the Other, defined not by their own essence but as complements to men. From the perspective of radical feminism, marginalization restricts individual freedom and reinforces the intergenerational cycle of gender inequality.

Subordination places women beneath men in family, society, or workplace contexts, diminishing their social standing and significance (Yonata, 2020). While subordination shares similarities with marginalization, it emphasizes a lower positioning within the social hierarchy, causing women's roles and presence to be regarded as less significant than men's (Arief et al., 2024). Stereotypes attach negative labels to women, shaping societal perceptions, including the idea that women are inherently seductive or temptresses (Maryam, 2019).

Violence against women, both physical and non-physical, reflects the patriarchal system positioning women as weak, powerless, and submissive (Eleanora et al., 2021). It includes rape, assault, sexual harassment, threats, and coercion, occurring in various settings and creating a pervasive sense of insecurity (Sasongko, 2009). The double burden arises when women participate in the public sphere without equitable redistribution of domestic responsibilities, leading to excessive workloads (Utaminingsih, 2024). This burden often combines domestic tasks, child-rearing, and economic contributions, particularly during financial crises.

Patriarchy, a social system privileging men, generates discrimination and injustice against women (Tanjung et al., 2024). Literature functions as a reflection of society, critiquing these injustices while raising public awareness (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Feminist movements, globally and in the Arab world, advocate equality, freedom, and justice for women, with figures like Huda Sha'rawi, May Ziyadah, Nawal El-Sadawi, Fatima Mernissi, and Amina Wadud advancing women's rights (Zulkarnain, 2023). Feminist theory, especially radical feminism, is used to examine female representation, power relations, and social systems in literary texts (Putri & Kartikasari, 2025). This perspective emphasizes that gender injustice, subordination, and violence are rooted in social structures rather than being individual issues (Darmasari & Gusnita, 2024).

One literary work highlighting these issues is *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* by Niqula Haddad, which portrays Arab women as represented through the female characters in the novel as being trapped within a patriarchal culture, facing heavier social burdens and harsher consequences than men for violating societal norms (Sing, 2022). Women bear stigma and shame, while men's transgressions are often overlooked (Syahrizan & Siregar, 2024). The novel reflects how patriarchal culture reinforces social expectations, inequality, and generational perceptions of gender roles, shaping both women's opportunities and limitations. Febrianti et al. (2023) argue that women in Arabic literary works are frequently placed in subordinate positions due to the dominance of patriarchal structures. This view is reinforced by Latif et al. (2024), who find that social norms further sustain restrictions on women's roles and mobility in literary narratives. Meanwhile, Barokah and Ghazali (2024) show that some female writers respond to these constraints by articulating criticism and resistance through their

language and literary expression. A similar pattern is noted by Zakia and Rahmah (2024), who identify recurring forms of subordination and female resistance in modern Arabic literature. Collectively, these studies highlight the centrality of patriarchal power relations in shaping women's representation in Arabic literary texts. However, no previous research has specifically examined the forms of gender injustice depicted in Niqula Haddad's novel *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*. This study therefore fills that gap by analyzing the manifestations of gender injustice and the representation of patriarchal culture in the novel.

The significance of this study is twofold. Theoretically, it broadens understanding of patriarchal constructs in Arabic literature and contributes to feminist literary studies. Practically, it serves as a medium for readers to understand the social context and to foster awareness of gender justice. The study aims to analyze: (1) the forms of gender injustice experienced by female characters in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, and (2) how the patriarchal system is represented within the narrative. By doing so, it emphasizes the novel's role in reflecting real social conditions while offering insights into women's struggles, resistance, and the consequences of a patriarchal system that continues to shape Arab societies.

Method

The research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a radical feminist approach. The data were obtained from Niqula Haddad's novel *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, published by Hindawi. Data collection was carried out through library research, which involved comprehensive reading, annotation, and classification of textual segments related to the forms of gender injustice.

The stages of analysis include data description, classification based on the forms of gender injustice, contextual analysis through the lens of radical feminism, and the formulation of conclusions. This study aims to provide a specific analysis of the representation of gender injustice experienced by the female characters in the novel, while also revealing how the patriarchal system is reproduced through literary narrative. Drawing on the radical feminist perspective formulated by Kate Millett (1972), this research emphasizes that the injustices experienced by the female characters are not merely individual problems, but rather part of the patriarchal structure that restricts women's freedom within Arab society.

Results and Discussion

Based on the analysis, this study identifies five forms of gender injustice experienced by the female characters in Niqula Haddad's *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*. The following section will elaborate on these five forms of injustice in detail, accompanied by a contextual analysis that illustrates the condition of Arab women as represented in the novel.

Women as the second sex: A portrait of marginalization

The following section provides a detailed explanation of gender injustice experienced by the female characters in Niqula Haddad's *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, particularly in the form of marginalization. In this scene, Yvonne expresses her despair toward Maurice, the man who betrays her after promising marriage, leaving her socially and legally unprotected. Her words reflect her awareness that both social norms and legal systems fail to defend her rights as a woman.

بل بالقوة والقساوة والطمع والغدر تستحوز على أمانيك، فلماذا تسكت عن حقلك إذ كانت الشرائع لا تنصفك، والناس لا يعدلون (ص. 86)

“On the contrary, through strength, cruelty, greed, and treachery, they seize your desires. So why should you remain silent about your rights when the laws do not grant you justice and people do not act fairly?” (p. 86)

This passage illustrates that women are rendered powerless and subjected to unjust treatment, as evidenced by Yvonne’s words “*they seize your desires*” and “*laws do not grant you justice*”, which show how male authority and social/legal systems fail to protect her rights. This represents a form of systemic marginalization maintained through patriarchal structures and aligns with Kate Millett’s radical feminist theory, which argues that patriarchy operates through cultural, social, and legal institutions to sustain male dominance and structurally subordinate women (Millett, [1972](#)).

The marginalization depicted in the novel also reflects social realities in the Arab world. Human Rights Watch reports that although the Saudi government, including Mohammed bin Salman, has rhetorically expressed support for the fulfillment of women’s rights, in practice women continue to face legal restrictions, discrimination, and limitations on their autonomy through patriarchal social and legal systems (Watch, [2018](#)). This parallels Yvonne’s experience, illustrating that women suffer injustice not only individually but also structurally.

Subordination of women

The female characters in *Ḥawwā’ al-Jadīdah* experience subordination in multiple forms, reflecting patriarchal structures in both family and society. Subordination is evident in the way male characters attempt to control women’s actions and decisions, as well as in the internalization of power dynamics within the household.

For example, during a visit to Yvonne’s house, Maurice, the man who betrays her, deliberately provokes her to assert his control and pressures her to submit to his will. In one scene, he declares:

انتبهت إلى أن هذه الزيارة تغيظ إيفون جدًا، فعقدت النية على أن أعيدها حتى تذلل لي وتلتمس مصالحتي. (ص. 68)

"I realized that this visit greatly angered Yvonne, so I intended to repeat it in order to make her submit to me and beg for reconciliation." (p. 68)

This act of coercion demonstrates how men perceive women as subject to their authority. Similarly, Marie’s experience under the authority of her uncle, alongside the complicity of his wife and children, illustrates the familial reinforcement of subordination (Haddad, [2015](#)). These examples show that women’s autonomy is consistently limited, both by direct coercion and socialized domestic expectations.

This pattern of subordination is in line with Kate Millett’s radical feminist theory, which argues that patriarchy operates as a political system that legitimizes male control over women through social, cultural, and familial institutions (Millett, [1972](#)). The domination exercised by Maurice over Yvonne reflects what Millett terms sexual politics, where power relations between men and women are maintained through coercion and psychological control. This pattern of subordination is not merely fictional. A recent report by Human Rights Watch ([2023](#)) shows that many countries in the Middle East and North Africa still impose male-guardianship laws restricting women’s freedom of movement and autonomy, which reflects patriarchal control similar to that experienced by the women in *Ḥawwā’ al-Jadīdah*. The novel also portrays women’s awareness of their oppression, highlighting the structural nature of subordination rather than presenting it as isolated incidents.

Deep-rooted negative stigma: Stereotypes

In *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, female characters are frequently labeled as emotional, weak, morally loose, or deceitful. Such stereotypes shape how male characters and society treat them, restricting their agency and perpetuating gender injustice.

For example, when a female character is alone in public, she is immediately judged as a prostitute:

وإذ كانت وحدها حسبها أولئك السكارى إحدى البغيات. (ص. 21)

"And when she was alone, those drunken men regarded her as one of the prostitutes." (p. 21)

This quotation illustrates how societal assumptions stigmatize women merely for being unaccompanied. In the society depicted in the text, it is a widespread cultural expectation that a woman alone in public is automatically considered a prostitute, reflecting entrenched patriarchal norms that impose moral judgments and restrict women's freedom. The negative perception is not based on her actions, but on socially constructed gendered expectations.

Similarly, female characters are often perceived as weak and unprotected. In one reflection, Yvonne contemplates the injustice of the world:

لأني فتاة والفتاة ضعيفة لا نصير لها. (ص. 77)

"Because I am a woman—perceived as weak and without protection." (p. 77)

Here, Yvonne recognizes that, although God is all-forgiving, societal norms harshly punish women for transgressions, simply because they are women. Their vulnerability is socially constructed, reinforcing dependency and limiting their ability to resist injustice. This reflection emphasizes how patriarchal structures systematically marginalize women, leaving them exposed and without recourse.

Moreover, female characters are stereotyped as untrustworthy and prone to deceit. Maurice, the man who betrays Yvonne, accuses her directly:

كفالك كذبًا بعد، إنك لا تمايزين عن مثيلاتك إلا بمثل هذه الفلسفة. (ص. 59)

"Enough of your lies; you are no different from other women with such nonsense." (p. 59)

Here, Maurice's statement illustrates how women's words are doubted simply because of gendered assumptions, perpetuating a stereotype of dishonesty. By addressing Yvonne in this way, the novel highlights how patriarchal attitudes normalize mistrust toward women and reinforce male dominance. Women are also perceived as morally corrupt or fleeting in their affections. In the novel, Maurice reflects to himself a common societal stereotype about promiscuous women:

صرت أقول في نفسي: أما هي مومس؟ إذا عمر حب المومس عاصر وردة الربيع، ومهما طال عهدا فلا يطاول مطلعها، وإذا وفت مرة قال الناس نحن في عصر العجائب. (ص. 65)

"I began to say in my heart: Is she not merely a promiscuous woman? The love of a promiscuous woman lasts no longer than the life of a spring flower. And even if it endures, it will not outlast her false anticipation. And if she is faithful even once, people would say: We are truly living in an age of miracles." (p. 65)

Here, Maurice's internal reflection illustrates how societal assumptions define women's morality and emotional reliability. By presenting this thought as a personal reflection rather than a direct accusation, the novel reveals the pervasive and internalized nature of patriarchal norms that perpetuate gendered double standards, in which women's moral conduct is scrutinized far more harshly than men's.

Finally, the narrative reflects a local societal stereotype that categorizes women into four types, ranging from virtuous to corrupt:

النساء أربع:

الأولى: امرأة محصنة فاضلة، حياتها الروحية ساطعة النور، وحياتها الحيوانية شفافة الغلاف لا تكاد تلقي ظلًا، ففضائلها ظاهرة. والثانية: امرأة محصنة ولكنها فاسدة حياتها الإنسانية ضئيلة النور، وحياتها الحيوانية شفافة الغلاف قليلاً، فيظهر نورها مكمدًا كنور الشمس في ساعة كسوفها، وهو اكمداد الفساد.

والثالثة: امرأة دنسة فاسدة حياتها الإنسانية قاتمة؛ لأن الفساد أطفأ نورها وحياتها الحيوانية غير شفافة لِمَا غشيها من سواد الدنس. والرابعة: امرأة دنسة ولكنها غير فاسدة، حياتها الإنسانية ساطعة النور، وحياتها الحيوانية قاتمة لِمَا غشيها من الدنس، فتحجب ذلك النور، ولكن إذا أنعم المستبصر النظر فيها استشف من خلال حياتها الحيوانية الكثيفة شعاع الحياة الإنسانية الساطع، فهذه يمكن إصلاحها. (ص. 74-73)

There are four types of women:

1. First: A woman who is chaste and virtuous. Her spiritual life shines brightly, while her physical existence is clear, like a veil that casts almost no shadow; hence, her excellence is evident.
2. Second: A woman who is chaste but corrupt. Her human qualities emit only a faint light, and her physical presence is slightly clear. Her light appears dim, like sunlight during an eclipse, and this dimness arises from the corruption within her.
3. Third: A woman who is impure and corrupt. Her human qualities are shrouded in darkness, as corruption has extinguished the inner light. Her physical existence is also unclear, obscured by the darkness of sin and impurity.
4. Fourth: A woman who is impure but not corrupt. Her human qualities shine brightly, yet her physical existence is dark due to the covering of impurity. However, if someone with clear vision observes her carefully, they can perceive the radiance of her human life behind her dark physical form. Such a woman can still be reformed." (pp. 73–74)

This categorization illustrates how local cultural norms impose structural stereotypes on women, shaping societal expectations and restricting women's autonomy and social standing. From the perspective of radical feminism as formulated by Kate Millett, the stereotypes imposed on women in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* represent a form of ideological control that sustains patriarchy through psychological domination (Millett, 1972). By constructing women as weak, morally suspect, and emotionally unstable, patriarchal power is normalized and internalized both by men and women themselves. These stereotypes function as political instruments that legitimize male dominance and reduce women to subordinate social positions.

This literary representation aligns with real conditions in several Arab societies, where women still face structural discrimination in public morality, legal protection, and social autonomy. Reports from international media and human rights organizations indicate that women remain vulnerable to social stigma, weak legal protection against gender-based violence, and limitations on public freedom (2017). Thus, the stereotypes depicted in the novel reflect not merely fictional constructions, but systemic patriarchal domination operating at both cultural and institutional levels.

Control over women's bodies: Violence

In *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, violence against women manifests in both physical and non-physical forms, reflecting a deeply rooted patriarchal structure in which male characters exert control over women's bodies. One form of non-physical violence is harassment through teasing and ridicule. In one scene, a female character is subjected to harassment while she is in public, even though she may not fully understand the language used against her:

فجعلوا يعرضون بها في هزلهم ومزاحهم، ويصوبون إليها مغزى تغزلهم وهم يتكلمون بالفرنسية. (ص. 21)

"They began to tease her through jokes and banter, directing their flirtatious intentions toward her while speaking in French." (p. 21)

This example demonstrates how women are objectified and socially demeaned, constituting indirect violence that undermines their dignity and autonomy. By highlighting that the perpetrators

are intoxicated men, the text also underscores how social norms and male privilege condone or facilitate harassment, further entrenching gendered power imbalances.

The violence against women depicted in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* is closely connected to social realities in the Arab world. According to Komnas Perempuan (2010), women in Saudi Arabia were not allowed to go out alone without a male guardian due to fears of harassment and sexual violence. This condition reflects how women are positioned as vulnerable subjects who must remain under male supervision. This reality parallels the novel's depiction of women becoming targets of violence when they appear alone in public.

Physical violence is also depicted, particularly in the form of coercion to fulfill men's desires without consent. In one passage, Maurice forcibly restrains Fantine, Yvonne's friend and a café employee, despite her attempts to resist his advances:

ولما لعبت الخمر في رءوسنا صرنا نتلائم ونتضام، وشعرت أن فانتين كانت مرتعبة حينذاك وتحاول أن تفرّ من بيننا، ولكني كنت قابضًا على كفها. (ص. 67)

"As the alcohol began to affect our minds, we started kissing and drawing close to each other. I sensed that Fantine was frightened and tried to escape from between us, but I held her hand tightly." (p. 67)

This excerpt exemplifies coercion as a form of direct violence, highlighting women's lack of power and autonomy within patriarchal relationships. By emphasizing Maurice's role as the aggressor and Fantine's status as a working woman, the text underscores how male dominance and structural inequalities render women vulnerable to physical and sexual coercion. From the perspective of Kate Millett's radical feminist theory, the violence experienced by women in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* reflects the political nature of patriarchy, in which control over women's bodies becomes a central mechanism of male domination (Millett, 1972). Millet argues that sexual violence, harassment, and coercion are not merely personal actions, but systemic tools used to sustain male power within social structures.

Between domestic roles and economic demands: The double burden

The phenomenon of the double burden is clearly depicted in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*. Yvonne, the female protagonist, struggles to meet both the domestic and financial needs of her family, particularly after being abandoned by Maurice, the man who fathered her child. This illustrates that the double burden encompasses not only physical or professional labor but also the psychological strain resulting from unequal social and economic expectations:

اقتنيت آلة للخياطة وكنت ألتمس من خياطة مجاورة لي أن تعطيني بعض قطع قطنية، فأخيطها بأجرة زهيدة حين تكون طفلي نائمة. (ص. 89)

"I bought a sewing machine and asked a tailor near my home to give me some pieces of cotton fabric, then I sewed them for a very low wage while my daughter was asleep." (p. 89)

This excerpt demonstrates the dual burden borne by Yvonne, showing how she must navigate both domestic care and income-generating work simultaneously. This situation arises from the lack of responsibility on the part of men, forcing Yvonne to simultaneously care for her child and continue working to sustain their livelihood. It highlights how gender injustice is reinforced by social structures that expect women to manage both domestic and public roles without adequate support.

From the perspective of Kate Millett's radical feminist theory, the double burden experienced by Yvonne represents a structural form of oppression rooted in patriarchal power relations that assign domestic responsibility to women while simultaneously exploiting their labor in the public sphere

(Millett, 1972). Millett argues that patriarchy operates not only through direct domination, but also through subtle social arrangements that naturalize women's unpaid domestic labor while demanding their economic productivity. Yvonne's situation confirms that women's exploitation occurs at both the private and public levels, leaving them physically exhausted and psychologically burdened. This condition is not merely fictional.

Reports by international organizations show that women in many Arab countries continue to carry a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic labor while also being required to contribute economically due to poverty, divorce, or abandonment by male partners (2017). Thus, the double burden in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* reflects a systemic gender injustice that remains deeply embedded in contemporary social realities.

The findings of *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* regarding marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and the double burden both align with and differ from previous studies. For instance, marginalization in Haddad's novel portrays women as socially and legally excluded, similar to Febrianti et al. (Febrianti et al., 2023) in *Cantik Itu Luka*, which also shows how patriarchal social structures deprive women of freedom and reinforce subordinate positions. Subordination in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* often arises from direct coercion by male figures, comparable to the moral and social restrictions faced by women in *The Girls of Riyadh* (Latif et al., 2024) and the strict social control and forced marriage depicted in *Women of Sand and Myrrh* (Zakia & Rahmah, 2024).

Stereotyping in Haddad's novel functions as a mechanism that undermines women, linking social assumptions to cultural and religious norms. This aligns with findings in *Cantik Itu Luka* (Febrianti et al., 2023) and *The Girls of Riyadh* (Latif et al., 2024), where female characters internalize societal expectations and patriarchal norms. Violence, both indirect harassment and coercion, reflects cultural norms privileging male authority while restricting women's autonomy, similar to patterns observed in *Cantik Itu Luka* (Febrianti et al., 2023), though Haddad emphasizes interpersonal and social contexts rather than broader socio-historical ones.

Finally, the double burden in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* arises from men's lack of responsibility, forcing women to simultaneously manage domestic and economic duties, whereas in *Cantik Itu Luka* the burden is mainly caused by family demands and economic conditions (Febrianti et al., 2023). In contrast, studies by Barokah & Ghazali (2024) highlight women's resistance, while female characters in Haddad's novel show limited resistance, reflecting stronger structural and cultural constraints.

Social representation of women

While the previous discussion highlighted the manifestations of gender injustice experienced by female characters in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, the following section explores how these injustices are structurally embedded and maintained within the broader patriarchal system. This approach allows us to view women's subordination not as isolated events but as a systemic feature of the social order portrayed in the novel.

In *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, female characters not only face various forms of gender injustice but also endure intense social pressure from their surrounding environment. Societal views in the novel reflect a patriarchal culture that positions women as primarily at fault and deserving of negative stigma, especially when they are perceived as "tainted" or having violated social norms.

Ironically, although men are also involved in violating these norms and even push women into humiliating situations, they often escape social sanctions. Men can continue to live with respectable status, while women must bear shame, discrimination, and social penalties alone (Puspita & Sophia, 2023). This illustrates the presence of a deeply rooted double standard in patriarchal society, in which the moral and social burdens are disproportionately placed on women.

Based on the findings in the text, there are two main forms of social representation of women in this novel: social stigma directed at women who are perceived as “tainted” and social constructs that control women’s bodies and dignity.

Social stigma against “tainted” women

In *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, women who are perceived as having lost their purity—even when they are actually victims—are treated as inferior, impure, and socially unworthy. Yvonne narrates her experience of being shunned by neighbors, family, and people around her:

ويتجنبونني تجنب السليم الأجرّب؛ لأني ساقطة دنسة في اعتبارهم؛ ولأنهم في الرأي العام صالحون أبارر. (ص. 86)
 "They kept their distance from me as healthy people avoid those suffering from contagious diseases, for in their eyes I was considered a vile and impure woman, while they (the men) were regarded by the public as virtuous and honorable." (p. 86)

This excerpt demonstrates the heavy social stigma imposed on female victims. A woman’s social position is determined solely by society’s moral judgment, without consideration of the actual circumstances or causes. In contrast, men involved in the same events are typically not subjected to similar condemnation, highlighting a gendered double standard in social perception.

From the perspective of Kate Millett’s radical feminist theory, the stigma imposed on “tainted” women reflects how patriarchy governs female sexuality through moral control and social punishment (Millett, 1972). Millett argues that women’s bodies become political sites where power is exercised through ideological regulation, particularly in defining purity and honor. Yvonne’s social exclusion illustrates this mechanism clearly: although she is a victim of betrayal, she is condemned as morally corrupt, while the man responsible remains socially respected. This pattern mirrors real social conditions in many patriarchal societies. Reports by international human rights organizations show that women who are victims of sexual violence in several Arab countries often face social ostracism, family rejection, and legal discrimination, while male perpetrators frequently avoid social and legal accountability (2017). Thus, the stigma against Yvonne in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* is not merely a fictional construction, but a reflection of systemic gender-based injustice rooted in patriarchal moral standards.

Social constructs controlling women’s bodies and dignity

The societal perspective depicted in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* shows that a woman’s value and dignity are closely tied to her chastity. Yvonne explicitly tells Maurice:

أعلم يا موريس أنني في نظر الآداب الاجتماعية امرأة ساقطة، ولكن ليس كل ما في شخصيتي ساقطاً. (ص. 42)
 "I know, Maurice, that according to social norms, I am considered a vile woman. Yet not everything within me is blameworthy." (p. 42)

Here, Yvonne acknowledges that local customs label her as “immoral,” but she clarifies that not all aspects of her life or character are corrupt. This highlights the tension between societal judgment and personal integrity. Similarly, Yvonne reflects on social attitudes toward women in general:

نعيم الفتاة عفافها، فموتها أفضل لها من فقده. (ص. 108)
 "A girl’s pleasure lies in her chastity, and death is preferable for her than the loss of it." (p. 108)

This quotation illustrates how social constructs seek to control women's bodies and dignity, positioning chastity as the sole measure of morality. When a woman is perceived to have "lost" this standard, society devalues her entirely. Both excerpts demonstrate how social constructs seek to control women's bodies and dignity. Such norms position chastity as the sole measure of a woman's morality, so that when this standard is perceived as lost, her dignity collapses in the eyes of society. This social pressure not only causes physical and social suffering but also imposes a profound psychological burden (Nurhayati, [2012](#)). Women are forced to accept identities shaped by societal views, while they have no space to defend themselves or reclaim their own dignity.

The findings of this study show that the female characters in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* experience five forms of gender injustice: marginalization, subordination, negative stereotyping, physical and non-physical violence, and the burden of double work. These findings align with previous research showing that women in literary works often face oppression due to male dominance and patriarchal norms. Febrianti et al. (Febrianti et al., [2023](#)), for example, demonstrate that female characters in Indonesian and Arab narratives frequently experience marginalization and stereotyping as a result of deeply rooted patriarchal structures. Similarly, Latif et al. ([2024](#)) reveal that the women in *The Girls of Riyadh* are subjected to subordination and social control that parallel the restrictions depicted in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*.

On the other hand, several studies highlight not only oppression but also women's resistance. Barokah and Ghazali (Barokah & Ghazali, [2024](#)) show how *Bahitsa al-Badiyyah's* poetry articulates women's voices, defies patriarchal norms, and presents critical perspectives through language. Likewise, Zakia and Rahmah ([2024](#)) identify patterns of resistance among female characters in Arab novels who challenge social expectations and reclaim agency. In contrast, the female characters in *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* exhibit very limited resistance; instead, the novel emphasizes the structural and cultural forces that confine them, portraying patriarchy as a system that shapes women's identities, restricts their mobility, and subjects them to both domestic and social injustice.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on Niqula Haddad's *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah*, a text that has received minimal scholarly attention in feminist literary studies. While previous studies discuss gender injustice in various Arab literary works, none have specifically analyzed how this novel constructs patriarchy through multiple layers of marginalization, violence, and social stereotyping. By identifying five distinct forms of gender injustice and interpreting them through the lens of radical feminism, this study contributes a new perspective that positions the novel as a critique of entrenched patriarchal systems in early modern Arab society. This contribution fills a gap in the existing literature and expands the scope of feminist analysis within Arabic prose narratives.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the novel *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* by Niqula Haddad presents five prominent forms of gender injustice experienced by its female characters: marginalization, subordination, negative stereotyping, physical and non-physical violence, and the burden of double work. These findings reflect social realities in which women still face systemic gender-based oppression, both in private and public spheres. The injustices depicted in the novel are not limited to interpersonal relationships but are reinforced by broader social norms that perpetuate stigma and restrict women's autonomy. Within the framework of radical feminism, these forms of injustice illustrate the persistence of patriarchal domination that shapes the lived experiences of women. Thus, *Ḥawwā' al-Jadīdah* serves as a literary

critique of systemic inequalities faced by women and underscores the necessity of dismantling patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender-based oppression.

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