



**Voices of Those Left the Portrayals
of Behind: A Study of Yemeni Women
in Migration Fiction**

By

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DOI: 10.21608/aakj.2024.268033.1676

Date received: 5/2 /2024

Date of acceptance: 30/3/2024

ملخص:

تهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل تصوير المرأة اليمنية في أدب الهجرة ودراسة التحديات المتعددة التي تواجهها بسبب أنماط هجرة الذكور. وباستخدام نظرية الهجرة القائمة على النوع الاجتماعي، توضح الدراسة كيف تصور روايات الهجرة الأدوار التقليدية للجنسين داخل الأسر اليمنية، مثل تقسيم العمل، وأدوار مقدمي الخدمة، وسلطات اتخاذ القرار. من خلال التحليل النوعي للسرديات المتنوعة، يدرس البحث كيفية تأثير الهجرة على تركيبة وديناميكيات الأسرة اليمنية، مما يستلزم زيادة تحمل مسؤوليات إضافية من قبل النساء اللاتي تركزن في اليمن. تسلط النصوص المختارة في الدراسة الضوء على الصعوبات والضغوط الاقتصادية التي تتحملها النساء وعلى المرونة وسعة الحيلة التي أبدتها هؤلاء النساء في التعامل مع ظروفهن الجديدة والتكيف للحفاظ على سبل عيشهن. ومع ذلك، تكشف الروايات أيضًا عن تداعيات اجتماعية مختلفة للهجرة، مثل الانفصال الأسري الدائم، وتمزق الروابط الاجتماعية، وتهميش الوظائف الإنتاجية الاجتماعية للمرأة. و من خلال التدقيق في التجارب الحياتية للنساء اليمنيات في أدبيات الهجرة، تعمق هذه الدراسة الفهم لواقعهن المعقد وتؤكد على ضرورة تمكين المرأة وتعزيز العلاقات العادلة بين الجنسين داخل التركيبة الاجتماعية اليمنية. وتضيف نتائج الدراسة عمق تجريبي لمجال دراسات الهجرة، والتحليلات المتعلقة بدور المرأة ضمن الديناميكيات الاجتماعية داخل المجتمع اليمني. الكلمات المفتاحية: مجتمعات المهجر، النوع الاجتماعي، الهجرة، الأدب اليمني، المرأة اليمنية.

Abstract:

This paper explores the representation of Yemeni women in selected migration literature, to elucidate the manifold challenges they face due to patterns of male migration. Using Gendered migration theory the study shows how migration narratives portray traditional gender roles within Yemeni households, such as divisions of labour, provider roles and decision-making powers. Through a qualitative analysis of diverse narratives, the research examines how migration impacts and transforms domestic structures and family dynamics, necessitating an increased assumption of caregiving responsibilities and provider roles by the women left behind in Yemen. The texts highlight the economic hardships and strains endured and the resilience and resourcefulness displayed by these women in navigating their new circumstances and adapting to sustain their livelihoods. However, the narratives also reveal various social repercussions of migration, such as enduring family separation, fracturing social networks, and marginalization of women's socially productive functions. By investigating the lived experiences of Yemeni women as depicted in migration literature, this study deepens conceptual understanding of their complex realities and underscores the imperative for empowering women and fostering equitable gender relations within Yemeni social organizations. The findings contribute empirical depth to the existing research on migration studies, gender analyses, and understandings of the social dynamics within Yemeni society.

Keywords: Diaspora communities, Gender, Migration, Yemeni literature, Yemeni women

Introduction:

The overarching aim of this study is to examine portrayals of Yemeni women in selected migration-themed novels through a postcolonial feminist lens. Specifically, it seeks to address gaps in the existing literature by exploring how women left behind are depicted in navigating socioeconomic and emotional struggles :due to male migration from Yemen. The research questions are how do literary works shed light on the gendered hardships faced by women amid conflict, poverty and lack of opportunities pushing men to migrate? What insights do these portrayals provide into evolving societal perspectives on issues like traditional gender roles and drivers of mobility?

Migration is an enduring and intricate phenomenon that has influenced societies and cultures across different historical periods. In contemporary times, migration has garnered substantial interest within literary works, attesting to its significance and implications in present-day society. “Migration and the movement of people across borders has piqued the interest of various scholars from anthropology, ethnography, social sciences, economic and cultural history, international law, and even the visual and literary arts. (Ladele & Omotayo, 2017). Modern fiction serves as a medium through which authors can delve into the manifold experiences of migrants, providing insights into their motivations, challenges, and moments of achievement. People move from one place to another for various reasons, whether seeking better economic opportunities, escaping conflict or persecution, or yearning for adventure in unknown lands. Clark and Maas argue that although migration is undoubtedly influenced by labour market opportunities, it is

important to recognize that non-economic factors such as changes in family dynamics, lifestyle preferences, and housing requirements also exert strong influences on long-distance migration choices. These non-economic motivations often bring substantial economic advantages along with them. (2015) The theme of immigration has been a significant subject for many modern writers, as it captures important social dynamics and personal experiences of the modern world. The immigrant journey - whether internally or across national borders - often presents complex emotional and practical challenges for those undergoing the process of relocation, as well as their families and host societies. (Silver, 2014). In literary works, immigration is frequently depicted as a source of internal turmoil for characters striving to reconcile shifting identities and cultural norms. It can also be a catalyst for external conflict and change, as established social structures and cultural values are disrupted by the influx of outsiders. Writers commonly portray immigrants struggling with difficult adjustments to new host communities and environments, from learning new customs and traditions to navigating unfamiliar governmental and bureaucratic systems. Their portrayals reveal the often demanding experience of uprooting and re-establishing one's life in a foreign location. Moreover, some works imply that issues stem not just from personal adjustments but also problematic attitudes within receiving countries, whether institutional discrimination or societal resistance to cultural diversity. Through their narratives, authors provide nuanced insights into the complex personal and sociocultural dynamics surrounding the widespread modern phenomenon of human migration and mobility.

Migration is an enduring and intricate phenomenon that has influenced societies and cultures across different historical periods. In contemporary times, migration has garnered substantial interest within literary works, attesting to its significance and implications in present-day society. “Migration and the movement of people across borders has piqued the interest of various scholars from anthropology, ethnography, social sciences, economic and cultural history, international law, and even the visual and literary arts. (Ladele & Omotayo, 2017). Modern fiction serves as a medium through which authors can delve into the manifold experiences of migrants, providing insights into their motivations, challenges, and moments of achievement. People move from one place to another for various reasons, whether seeking better economic opportunities, escaping conflict or persecution, or yearning for adventure in unknown lands. Clark and Maas argue that although migration is undoubtedly influenced by labour market opportunities, it is important to recognize that non-economic factors such as changes in family dynamics, lifestyle preferences, and housing requirements also exert strong influences on long-distance migration choices. These non-economic motivations often bring substantial economic advantages along with them.(2015) The theme of immigration has been a significant subject for many modern writers, as it captures important social dynamics and personal experiences of the modern world. The immigrant journey - whether internally or across national borders - often presents complex emotional and practical challenges for those undergoing the process of relocation, as well as their families and host societies. (Silver, 2014). In literary works, immigration is

frequently depicted as a source of internal turmoil for characters striving to reconcile shifting identities and cultural norms. It can also be a catalyst for external conflict and change, as established social structures and cultural values are disrupted by the influx of outsiders. Writers commonly portray immigrants struggling with difficult adjustments to new host communities and environments, from learning new customs and traditions to navigating unfamiliar governmental and bureaucratic systems. Their portrayals reveal the often demanding experience of uprooting and re-establishing one's life in a foreign location. Moreover, some works imply that issues stem not just from personal adjustments but also problematic attitudes within receiving countries, whether institutional discrimination or societal resistance to cultural diversity. Through their narratives, authors provide nuanced insights into the complex personal and sociocultural dynamics surrounding the widespread modern phenomenon of human migration and mobility.

Migration has been part of the life of Middle Eastern societies, especially Yemeni society. Within Yemen, migration holds deep relevance given the historical circumstances compelling emigration. Harsh conditions including conflict, poverty and lack of prospects have long driven Yemenis to pursue improved prospects internally and abroad. Civil wars since the 1960s exacerbated displacement and emigration. Historically, Yemen has been a country of emigration, “immigration and transit. ; The fate of Yemeni society has been, tied to emigration as well as to the presence and activities of a Yemeni diaspora scattered throughout the world, in the Gulf countries mainly since the 1950s, in Asia and Africa, and also in

the United States and Europe.(Thiollet, 2014) Yemenis have engaged in movement internally and abroad for generations in pursuit of improved prospects, as harsh circumstances including financial hardship, conflict, and lack of professional prospects have compelled emigration. The intensity of these push motivators, coupled with pull attractions like labour demand in neighbouring Gulf nations, drove emigration rates higher in the late 20th century.(Wodon, 2014).Subsequent civil wars since the 1960s have forcefully displaced millions within Yemen and pushed further emigration overseas. Recently, the conflict has diversified migrant demographics to encompass whole families migrating when feasible, including traditionally non-mobile groups like women and children. Forced and economic migration motives intersected as turmoil at home pushed departure while Gulf job prospects drew Yemenis overseas, complicating conceptualizations of complex migration drivers.

The theme of migration holds deep significance in Yemeni society and literature due to long-standing historical drivers as well as recent economic and political factors accelerating population movement. Migration features prominently across Yemeni novels as a lived reality and pressing social issue illuminated through representations of socioeconomic distress, cultural dislocation, and personal/national identity negotiations amid upheaval. Literary works also reflect on this theme over time, portraying immigrant experiences navigating new environments abroad while maintaining cultural roots. Novels address migration-related themes such as belonging, alienation, and loss. Authors capture immigrant perspectives through nuanced characters navigating adaptation challenges and

opportunities abroad, from finding work to integrating socially opportunities abroad, from finding work to integrating socially.

Depicting diverse migrant journeys illuminates personal migration impacts as well as broader communal consequences of mobility. Studying migration-centered Yemeni novels enhances understanding of how writers engaged this critical issue in relation to changing socio-political contexts domestically and globally. Characters offer nuanced views on migration's multi-faceted experiences shaping enduring Yemeni identities.

The extant body of research on the theme of migration in Yemeni literature has predominantly focused on examining the portrayal of migrant experiences and identities abroad. While providing valuable insights, these studies have largely overlooked the perspectives of other key stakeholders impacted by emigration flows from Yemen. The present study aims to address this gap by shifting the analytical focus onto depictions of Yemeni women characters in select migration-themed novels. In doing so, it seeks to bring underrepresented domestic female voices and viewpoints to the fore through a postcolonial feminist lens. Specifically, this research will examine how literature sheds light on the gendered socioeconomic and emotional struggles faced by wives and mothers left behind amid conditions of conflict, poverty and lack of opportunities in Yemen pushing many men abroad for work. By critically analyzing nuanced portrayals of womanhood through intensified domestic responsibilities, loss of decision-making authority, and other hardships detailed implicitly, this study enhances understanding

of migration's far-reaching multidimensional impacts beyond individual migrant.

various push and pull factors, such as seeking better economic opportunities, fleeing conflict or persecution, or pursuing new adventures and experiences. According to Sten P. Moslund, although migration is not a new phenomenon, the 21st century is notable for witnessing mass levels of human mobility and border crossing on a global scale. This widespread migration is blurring geographical boundaries and transforming cultures across nations. The experience of immigration and navigation of a new cultural landscape is a frequent subject explored in contemporary literature. Authors represent the migrant experience through diverse literary forms that capture the internal struggles of cultural adjustment and forming new identities, as well as the external journeys of emigrants venturing into unfamiliar territories. This surge in global migration has correspondingly led to a rise in literary works centred on transnational themes and characters. Authors have illuminated the multifaceted nature of displacement through fictional narratives, poetry, and memoirs. Such migration literature sheds light on the complex realities of uprooting, cultural blending, nostalgia for homelands, and the ongoing quest for belonging. These works not only reflect the lived experiences of cultural transition but also raise important questions about national identities, citizenship, and our shared humanity. Overarching themes of transition, hybridity, and living between cultures are inherent to the migrant experience of migration's far-reaching multidimensional impacts beyond individual migrant journeys. It also illuminates evolving societal perspectives captured through

female characters on issues like traditional gender roles, human resilience, and drivers of mobility over time. Ultimately, prioritizing neglected women's narratives within migration discussions aims to produce more comprehensive and inclusive scholarship on this enduring, transnational theme in Yemeni fictional works.

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory approach to comprehensively analyze portrayals of Yemeni women in select migration-themed novels using gendered migration theory and postcolonial feminist theory. It draws data from scholarly literature, books, and online sources about the topic. Through close textual analysis of fictional primary sources featuring migration as a central theme, detailed attention will be paid to depictions of Yemeni womanhood left behind. Specifically, the nuanced struggles women encounter domestically in male partners' absence abroad will be critically examined. Literary techniques used to convey such gendered hardships will also be investigated. Additionally, interlinkages between migration and interrelated themes like socioeconomic conditions, traditions, and identity formation will be explored. By employing qualitative methods to closely analyze key Yemeni novels incorporated as primary data sources, this research aims to address gaps and amplify muted female voices. It strives for a more inclusive understanding of migration's multidimensional impacts as portrayed through prominent Yemeni literary works over time.

Literature review

Migration has long been a prominent theme in literature. Throughout history, population movement between places has

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significantly influenced societies and cultures. People relocate for various push and pull factors, such as seeking better economic opportunities, fleeing conflict or persecution, or pursuing new adventures and experiences. According to Sten P. Moslund, although migration is not a new phenomenon, the 21st century is notable for witnessing mass levels of human mobility and border crossing on a global scale. This widespread migration is blurring geographical boundaries and transforming cultures across nations. The experience of immigration and navigation of a new cultural landscape is a frequent subject explored in contemporary literature. Authors represent the migrant experience through diverse literary forms that capture the internal struggles of cultural adjustment and forming new identities, as well as the external journeys of emigrants venturing into unfamiliar territories. This surge in global migration has correspondingly led to a rise in literary works centred on transnational themes and characters. Authors have illuminated the multifaceted nature of displacement through fictional narratives, poetry, and memoirs. Such migration literature sheds light on the complex realities of uprooting, cultural blending, nostalgia for homelands, and the ongoing quest for belonging. These works not only reflect the lived experiences of cultural transition but also raise important questions about national identities, citizenship, and our shared humanity. Overarching themes of transition, hybridity, and living between cultures are inherent to the migrant experience represented in literature. By giving voice to marginalized perspectives, migration narratives invite readers to contemplate the political, economic, and social forces shaping large-scale human mobility worldwide. In this way, as Gopal summarizes,

the aesthetics of migration literature are intrinsically tied to the politics of global movement.

Literature about migrants often explores the socioeconomic contexts and push factors within migrants' home countries that motivate their relocation. Writers frequently depict the experiences that compel people to leave their homelands, such as conflicts, poverty, or lack of opportunities. In addition, migration narratives commonly portray the experience of uprooting and transition itself. Upon arriving in their destination country, migrant characters are sometimes met with mixed receptions or face challenges like racism and hostility from hosts. Literary works also reflect on the feelings of rootlessness and identity searching that can result from cultural displacement. Migrants' writings tend to highlight their journeys and adjustments during and after relocating to new lands. Moreover, migrant literature typically reflects both the sociopolitical circumstances of migrants' home countries as well as the cultural realities they navigate in their new host societies. Recurring topics that writers explore include issues of equality, human rights, and negotiating cultural and linguistic identities. Additional common themes are nostalgia for home, the meaning of homelands, and concepts of nationhood. In this way, migrant narratives shed light on the diverse experiences of mobility and settlement in new environments around the world.

Several studies have explored the themes within migration literature from different linguistic traditions. Burge (2020) discusses the value of centering literature more prominently in migration research. The paper first examines how migration

stories have been categorized and the content they often cover. Burge then considers four significant ways this body of writing can enhance understanding of mobility: by challenging dominant narratives, questioning nationalist ideologies, providing historical context, and facilitating therapeutic purposes. Finally, the article identifies three areas of migration literature that have received less theoretical attention but merit consideration from social scientists interested in literary approaches. Additionally, Nappi and Stańczyk (2014) comparatively analyzed Agata Wawryniuk's *Rozmówki polsko-angielskie* and Sara Colaone's *"Ciao ciao" bambina* to shed light on the theme of female economic migration. The Polish graphic novel portrays a contemporary movement from Poland to Britain for work, while the Italian story captures Italians travelling to Switzerland in the 1950s seeking independence and self-fulfilment. Despite different periods and places, both works challenge the notion that migration is predominantly a male experience and emphasize the agency of female labourers. The article demonstrates how experiences of mobility in Europe have evolved over time while also highlighting women's resilience and determination in navigating the challenges of relocating.

In the Arabic context, Wessam Elmeligi's book presents a fresh perspective on the field of migration studies by highlighting the inherent connection between migration and the idea of return in Arabic culture. The book explores the significance of the Islamic hijra as a fundamental narrative of migration in Arabic tradition and provides insightful analyses of Arabic literary works, ranging from early texts like Ibn Tufayl's *"Hayy ibn Yaqzan"* to contemporary novels like Miral Al-Tahawy's.

Brooklyn Heights," including untranslated works. To provide a " comprehensive understanding of these narratives, Elmeligi draws on studies of cultural identity, focusing on the aspects most influenced by migration. The book examines various forms of return, both physical and symbolic, and their impact on the formation of cultural identity. By delving into these themes, Elmeligi offers a nuanced exploration of the complex relationship. between migration, return, and the shaping of cultural identities.

In her paper, "Modern Migration in Two Arabic Novels," Ikram Masmoudi explores the theme of migration in twentiethcentury Arab fiction. The paper discusses how the motif of the voyage is used to depict characters' journeys from the periphery to the center, seeking knowledge, empowerment, and a connection with Western modernity. Masmoudi focuses on the concept of departure and arrival, examining two novels, "The Saint's Lamp" by Yahya Haqqi and "Season of Migration to the North" by Tayeb Salih. The characters' arrivals in these novels represent different types of enigmatic arrivals, allowing them to reassess their roles and confront cultural differences. Despite their differing attitudes towards the West and their native culture, the characters' arrivals involve a negotiation between mindsets, resulting in an inner, transformative arrival and a deeper sense of. belonging.

A few studies have been carried out on the theme of migration in Yemeni literature. Manqoush, Riyad & el (2014) explore the portrayal of national identity and belonging among Yemeni migrants in Ethiopia through Mohammad Abdul-Wali's

novel *They Die Strangers*" published in 1971. It draws on the theories " of scholars such as Adnan Zarzour, Raymond Williams, Ernest Renan, Kamaludin Rifaat, Gastanteen Zureiq, Timothy Brennan, and John McLeod to examine the concept of nationhood in Yemen during the time of the September Revolution in 1962. The paper examines the challenges faced by Yemeni migrants in Ethiopia, including the loss of identity and the experience of living in a state of in-betweenness. The novel captures the internal emotions of Yemenis living both inside and outside Yemen during that period, shedding light on their struggles. The oppressive regime of the imam prevented them from integrating into their nation, and when they migrated to Ethiopia, they found themselves in a liminal space where they didn't fully belong.

Yahya Al-Wadhaf and Noritah Omar (2007) analyze *They Die Strangers* through a postcolonial lens. Abdul Wali's novel presents an informative narrative for understanding multicultural literatures. Published in 1972, *They Die Strangers* portrays the impacts of prolonged emigration on individuals, families, and society. Specifically, the article evaluates how the novel constructs Yemeni national identity, represents the experiences of women left behind and critiques migrants who abandon their homeland. Through discussions of body politics, the dreams of Yemeni farmers, and symbolic associations between women and the land, the writer argues the novel functions as a parody against those who migrate and live abroad disconnected from their Yemeni roots. Overall, the article aims to examine *They Die Strangers* through a postcolonial lens to shed light on the cultural meanings and contributions of this understudied Yemeni text.

Riyad Abdurahman Manqoush(2015) tries to compare and contrast the cultural dilemmas experienced by migrants in Mohammad Abdulwali's "They Die Strangers" (1971) and Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club" (1990). Both novels depict characters experiencing displacement, fragmentation, and loss in their adopted lands while maintaining memories of their home cultures. However, the stories diverge in their portrayals of migrant cultural dilemmas. The Chinese characters in "The Joy Luck Club" display greater hybridity and a desire to forget their homeland in striving to assimilate, suggesting Chinese traditions may be more oppressive. In contrast, "They Die Strangers" focuses more on Yemeni migrants' nostalgia for homecoming. Through analyzing these novels utilizing concepts from scholars on nation, diaspora and cultural identity, this study explores how the texts vividly showcase yet differently characterize the cultures, traditions and folklore shaping migrant experiences from Yemen and China.

While prior studies have examined migration themes in Yemeni novels through the lens of migrant identity formation and experiences abroad, insufficient attention has been paid to other stakeholders deeply impacted by emigration flows from Yemen. As the country struggles with conflict, economic stagnation, and lack of opportunities, many men feel compelled to seek work overseas. However, less is understood about the burdens subsequently shouldered by wives and mothers remaining in the home country.

This study aims to address this gap by shifting the analytical focus onto the lives and realities of women left behind

in Yemeni society due to male-led migration patterns. It applies Hochschild's "care drain" theory as a key feminist lens to examine changing care responsibilities for women depicted in selected Yemeni novels. Hochschild's framework recognizes that unpaid care work often disproportionately burdens women when male relatives migrate, intensifying childcare, housekeeping, and drained emotions without adequate support. Investigating how novels represent the gendered impacts of male emigration through shifting care burdens and negotiations of feminized roles for women can offer new insights into migration's broader societal repercussions.

Centring Hochschild's theory in analyses of female characters foregrounds important critiques of patriarchal structures that may emerge through literary portrayals of "drained" womanhood amid mobility patterns. Through close examination of depictions of Yemeni womanhood in novels centring migration, this research explores hardships faced by those in the domestic realm, critically assessing portrayals of emotional distress, increased household labour, lack of decision-making power, and other gendered challenges. Ultimately, bringing muted voices to the analytical forefront offers a valuable perspective on migration as a phenomenon with multidimensional societal effects beyond individual migrant experiences. In prioritizing the analysis of women characters, the study aims to expand migration impact understandings by centring a relatively overlooked stakeholder group with the potential for richer comprehension over time and borders.

Migration in Yemeni novel

Yemeni novel emerged as a significant genre in the postwar period grappling directly with the trauma of forced migration (Al-Jumly & Rollins, 1997). Al-Jumly and Rollins (1997) note that within Yemen's immense political and economic turmoil in the 1940s, vast numbers of citizens felt they had no choice but to emigrate abroad in search of safety and livelihoods. It was against this historical backdrop that the Yemeni novel took root as a means of confronting the harsh realities facing those compelled to relocate under duress. Rather than ignoring the displacement, Yemeni authors used fiction to draw attention to the immense hardship and loss of dignity experienced by a populace driven abroad by oppression (Al-Jumly & Rollins, 1997). Migration has emerged as a significant and compelling subject in the works of contemporary Yemeni writers, reflecting their deep interest and concern for the issue. The consistent presence of migration as a prominent topic in Yemeni literature over the years underscores its enduring relevance and the abundant material it provides for literary exploration. The motivations behind immigration can be attributed to various factors, often categorized as "push" and "pull" factors. Economic difficulties such as unemployment, low wages, and income disparities between the home country and the destination country typically serve as push factors. On the other hand, pull factors may include immigration policies and the labor market conditions in the receiving nations. Political factors, such as state repression, civil unrest, or widespread violence, can also play a role in driving migration. One or more of these factors have influenced migration patterns in Yemen. The experience of

emigration and detachment from their homeland is a shared reality for individuals across cities and villages in Yemen. There is no city or village whose people did not know emigration and alienation from their homeland.

Mohammed Abdlwali is a Yemeni writer who explores the themes of migration, diaspora, and national identity in his literary works. His narrative prose is extremely powerful and intimate in its treatment of the themes of immigration and estrangement. In his stories and novels, the Yemeni immigrant is the most prevalent hero. Abdu-Wali gave this subject very serious attention in his writing. He is an immigrant and the son of an immigrant, so how could he not be interested in the theme of immigration. In the 1930s of the previous century, his father emigrated to Abyssinia from his hamlet in the rural Taiz Governorate. On November 12, 1939, Muhammad Abd al-Wali was born in the city of Daburhan to an Ethiopian mother and a Yemeni father. Muhammad experienced early phases of upbringing suffering from this dual identity, and he used the specifics and dimensions of this suffering by projecting it onto some of his characters and heroes in a number of his narrative works.

In his novel "They Die Strangers," Muhammad Abd al-Wali explores the challenges faced by Yemeni migrants in Ethiopia as they struggle to maintain their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Through his characters, he effectively depicts the universal struggles migrants encounter in balancing their heritage with their new environment, drawing parallels to the experiences of Chinese migrants. Furthermore, Abdl-Wali delves

into the profound impact of discrimination on migrants, employing parody discourse to highlight the ironic and satirical aspects of their lives. Additionally, the novel touches on the ideology of return, a common theme in postcolonial narratives, by delving into the complex emotions and motivations of migrants yearning to go back to their homeland. Through these layered themes and stylistic techniques, Abdl-Wali offers valuable insights into the multifaceted migrant experience and the challenges faced by diasporic communities.

As reflected by his characters, Muhammad Abd al-Wali's views on emigration or alienation spanned from the revolutionary vision of rejection to the inherited or justified emotional state. In principle, he rejects the Yemeni's desire to leave his country, regardless of the alleged conditions. This can be seen from the following little dialogue in one of the chapters of his novel "They Die Strangers": (The doctor might learn all the nurse knew about Abdo. The physician was an Italian who adored Abyssinians. He said suspiciously after hearing what the nurse had informed him: This man living in that pit is beyond my comprehension! How " was he able to? Oh my God, this is hell on earth. But what other options do they have? For a living, they left their home, their nation, and their community behind for a living".

A Living, I agree with you. but.. is it a good reason for its sake we have to throw all our weapons in the air?..you say they fled their homeland. Why?..because they could not stand bravely against their filthy conditions. People who emigrate from their land, are traitors to that land“.

Another novel that explores the theme of migration is the novel “Salmeen”(2014) by the writer and novelist Ammar Batawi. The events of the novel take place during the period between the thirties of the last century until after the events of January 13 in the eighties of the twentieth century in the Hadramout plateau between Wadi Dawan and the city of Mukalla. It monitors the movements of Hadrami people in the homeland and abroad, from Java to Hadhramaut and down to the city of Jeddah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where the protagonist arrives safely escaping from slavery but discovers after he arrives from Hadhramaut to the city of Jeddah that slavery is still haunting him despite the interbreeding of his descendants from black to white, and despite his commercial status which he achieved is still unharmed in the eyes of many as a slave. The novel reveals that the Arab streets are still teeming with hatred and contempt of man for his fellow man. This novel is full of humanitarian issues, including human victory and defeats in the face of immigration, wars, and famine. According to Al-Aubathani, despite years of alienation, the novel's author's love and intense longing for his native country did not prevent him from going back to his original roots and sources to the flowing stream of experiences and the nuances of the Hadhrami personality, its elements, secrets, and psychological traits, and to the conscious desire to embrace all of its concerns and illnesses. When we understand the nature of our image and the qualities of our stage, we may therefore see this novel as a source of truth. Instead, it serves as a crucial resource since it explores the nuanced aspects of the overall context in which the facts of our rural life revolve and through which the characteristics of our new personality are developed. (Al-Aubathani, 2017)

Women as victims of migration

While economic factors are key drivers of migration, the absence of husbands due to migration necessarily alters the family structures and daily lived experiences of wives who remain behind. Research shows migration transforms household responsibilities and power dynamics within families. For example, wives take on new roles as sole caregivers and financial providers for their children (Gamburd, 2000; Hugo, 2002; Lan et al., 2015; Rigg, 2007). Susan Forbes Martin indicated that Women who are left at home as their husbands migrate also “experience changes in their role.” The stay-at-home spouses may now have greater household and economic responsibilities. Although they may be financially dependent on remittances from their overseas relatives, the women may have substantial autonomy over decisions about how the funds will be used. Should their husbands not return home, or stop sending remittances, the women may have to assume even greater responsibility for themselves and their children.” (2004) Migration has had significant impacts on women in Yemeni society especially in the 20th century. The redistribution of domestic and financial burdens within migrant families has wideranging social and economic implications for Yemeni women left behind by male migration. when men leave the country in search of work, it leaves Yemeni women as sole caregivers and heads of household. They take on the role of both mother and father, caring for children and managing the home. However, Yemeni women face numerous challenges in this new

role. With limited employment and education opportunities, they struggle economically to provide for their families. They also bear the emotional toll of separation from their husbands while taking on increased responsibilities. Despite the difficulties, Yemeni women demonstrate resilience to survive during periods of migration. Despite facing numerous challenges, Yemeni women demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. They draw on their inner strength and resourcefulness to overcome obstacles and ensure the survival of their families.

Migration is acknowledged to have both positive and negative effects. While some scholars argue that migration serves as a vital source of income that supports households and local economies (Rahman, 2012; Ullah, 2016), there are also social costs associated with the individuals left behind (Démurger, 2015). Extended periods of family separation can detrimentally affect social structures and well-being (Démurger, 2015). Muhammad Abd al-Wali's literary works prominently feature women, particularly those in rural areas, within the context of migration. These narratives shed light on the experiences of Yemeni immigrants and underscore the resilience and challenges faced by women who are compelled, either willingly or under duress, to shoulder the responsibilities and hardships of living independently. Abd al-Wali's novels delve into the multifaceted impact of migration on all parties involved, exploring the economic, social, and psychological consequences experienced by both male migrants and the women they leave behind. In *Land, O Salma*, the protagonist Salma has endured five years "

without her husband who migrated abroad. His prolonged absence has caused Salma great psychological distress and loneliness. Feeling deprived of her spouse, she has become more aware of the passage of time and the sensation of ageing. Living under the social restrictions and tyranny of tradition in her rural Yemeni society has made Salma painfully aware of the intense suffering in her life. In a moment of introspection and speaking to her soul, an internal voice tells Salma that it is time to face the truth - she can no longer bear to wait after so long for her husband's return. The soliloquy exposes Salma's struggle as well as portraying the lives of Yemeni women in rural areas who are left behind. "She heard a voice, like gentle whispers, saying, Salma, finally you are facing yourself. You must tell the truth. " Don't try to escape from yourself, for it won't benefit you. You must admit that the wait has been long and you cannot bear it any longer. Try to remember how long your husband has been absent from you... It has been five whole years, Salma, and here you are in the sixth year of waiting. And how old are you? Calculate without rushing... You are now twenty-six. Yes, you have started to feel that you have grown... quickly, without sensing life and enjoying it." (AbdulWali, 1958)

Abdul-Wali goes on to explain the plight of these women when he writes " In this context, women do not have the right to love whomever they choose, nor to enjoy their youth. They are merely servants whom men marry to serve their families. Men leave them and go far away, never to return. It is not within their rights to demand a divorce, as divorce is detestable". Salam and

women like her are servants to the family of their migrated husbands, to their fathers, to their sons, to their land.” They also suffer from the fear that their husbands might have married abroad because as Salma’s friend puts it” men, when distanced from their families, tend to forget about their homeland and become solely focused on earning money and engaging with women from the diaspora. They only reconnect with their homeland upon their return”. " Why couldn't your husband be one of them? You know the story of your uncle Zaid, who left his wife twenty years ago and never returned. He is alive, with a wife and children, and they say he will never come back. Yet, his wife still waits here." (36)

“ They Die Strangers” portrays the difficult realities faced by Yemeni women due to male migration. Their lives are often shown revolving around unending labour and toil on behalf of separated families. Through domestic duties, working in fields, and gathering essential resources, the women strive to sustain households alone in the absence of men. However, their loved ones' returns are frequently rare as exile consumes the migrants before they can reunite. Abd al-Wali reflectively depicts the passing of Abdou Sa'id, who left behind a long-abandoned wife, a son he never saw, and a homeland where he contributed nothing. He describes how such migrants ultimately die as strangers. These portraits underscore the hardships endured by stranded women out of devotion to their families. Despite facing endless responsibilities, uncertainties, and sacrifices, Abd alWali's female characters demonstrate remarkable willpower

and perseverance in service of hope. His novels aptly convey the challenges confronting Yemeni society through compelling depictions of female resilience amid the difficulties wrought by emigration. The theme of persistent waiting and longing for absent loved ones profoundly emerges in his migration-centered works.

The short story "If He Only Had Not Returned" illuminates the hardship experienced by Yemeni women in rural societies. The narrative centers on a wife who endures five years awaiting her migrant husband's return, hoping it will alleviate her suffering. However, upon his arrival, the situation proves even more dire. By sensitively depicting this woman's interiority and circumstances, the story unveils the profound vulnerability and lack of agency facing Yemeni wives in such traditional communities when abandoned by their husbands. It presents a nuanced portrayal of the gendered hardships within the migration experience through the intimate lens of one destitute yet resilient female protagonist. Her plight underscores the intersecting difficulties imposed by patriarchal norms, limited education, poverty and prolonged family separation due to male labour migration patterns. "If He Only Had Not Returned" evokes the "wife's palpable suffering through subtle yet powerful details, highlighting the profound toll of migration on Yemeni women left behind. The wife in the story faces immense hardship as a result of her husband's return in a gravely ill state. With the burden of sole responsibility for caring for the children and home during his years abroad, his return adds new burdens as his sole

caregiver around the clock. She is unprepared for his skeletal condition, finding a shadow of the man she remembers, which brings emotional turmoil and financial worries as his illness leaves the family's survival dependent on her limited options in their isolated village. As the ailing husband requires her constant care and companionship, she becomes increasingly isolated with limited community support to assist her overwhelming physical and mental exhaustion from years of self-sacrifice. Witnessing his rapid deterioration, she can only watch helplessly on as his uncertain prognosis breeds great distress, further disrupting family life and the children's well-being as they struggle to comprehend the frail stranger replacing their absent father. Facing gender oppression as a woman in Yemeni society, without her husband's provision, she finds herself in a precarious position of growing financial insecurity and the potential of greater difficulties if widowed, such as remaining in poverty if he passes.

Other novels like Mohammed Hanif's "Qaryat AlBatool"(1979) and Mohammed Mathna's "Rabi' Al-Jibal" have often highlighted the complex situation of women in the country through portrayals of unequal gender roles and status. In "Qaryat Al-Batool", political, economic, and social hardships in Yemen frequently prompt men to detach from their families through migration, leaving women to bear the consequences alone. The protagonist says "This, my son, is what has made me consider travelling throughout that period and until now, especially since, as you know, my wife passed away four years ago, and our only

son, Ali, is unable to find work at sea, and I don't know where he is. As for me, as you see, there is little left for me in this life, and I am bidding farewell to it... And so, my son, Yemeni families come to an end with the scattering of their members." (Page 57) In this passage, Haniber describes the harsh conditions in Yemen politically, economically, and socially. The man feels trapped by these difficult circumstances but has the opportunity to leave the country, especially since his wife passed away four years ago and his only son, Ali, works at sea without a fixed location. The novelist reflects on how Yemeni families are falling apart in such challenging times. He highlights that men escape from the harsh conditions of the country, leaving behind their families and homeland. During the era of the Imamate rule, Yemen was isolated, and women bore the consequences of men's migration. Women took on all roles and responsibilities to maintain the family unit. As the narrator indicates in the dialogue between Saleh and Hajj "Abu Ali," the conditions of their mothers and wives are deteriorating along with the state of the country. Therefore, men are fortunate if they can enjoy a better life in Yemen. However, if the political circumstances, poverty, and ignorance persist, women are left to endure the hardships of life, working in the fields and preserving the existence of their families. Despite their sacrifices, women remain in a marginalized position, and their efforts on behalf of the family and society are not recognized or valued.

Similarly, in "Rabi' Al-Jibal", malnutrition severely impacts coastal women left behind while men escape hardship

through work at sea or abroad.” The main character reminisces about women, represented by the image of his mother, solely in terms of memories "Just like my mother's face haunts me, with its sad features and her slender skeletal structure, if I were to reconstruct the paragraphs clearly... I would find it difficult, even though she isn't afflicted with tuberculosis or any other disease. However, she is one of the many women of the sea who have been struck by the chronic ailment of malnutrition..." (Page 60). He draws this comparison having seen other women who resemble his mother in their frail, ill and miserable states, like those "struck by the chronic ailment of malnutrition." In contrast, the man enjoys working at sea with the ability to travel between countries and accumulate wealth while indulging in pleasures. The passage portrays how women in these works are confined either to the domestic sphere of home or imprisoned within their bodies, without opportunities to venture beyond such limitations as portrayed by Yemeni authors and reflective of the societal discrimination women face. They are merely remembered by men in their absence rather than active agents in their rights. Overall, the excerpt conveys the gender-based hardships and alienation of women through the feminine symbol of the protagonist's wasting mother.

In Bushra Al-Muktari's novel "Behind the Sun" (2012), the female protagonist experiences victimisation indirectly through the oppressive conditions facing the men in her life. As the political conflict and war impact her husband and society, she bears both economic hardships and psychological toll. Though

she sacrifices greatly in these circumstances, the patriarchal social order overlooks her contributions, viewing her merely as a sanctity" - an undermining conception. At times, her absent " husband even doubts her fidelity despite her faithful role. This reveals the lingering stereotypical view of women in the popular mindset, one that subjects them to suspicion rather than recognizing their courageous efforts through fairness, gratitude and acknowledgement. As a result of this sustained injustice, the female protagonist ultimately loses her psychological well-being.

The literary works analyzed provide insightful portrayals of the gendered realities and disparate experiences of Yemeni women in the migration context. While their sacrifices and domestic contributions are crucial for community survival, women are often marginalized with limited opportunities for personal and social development. In contrast, men enjoy relatively more freedom and mobility between countries. Through depictions of unequal access to resources and agency, Yemeni authors critique the traditional social norms that restrict women's roles and potentiality. Nonetheless, the narratives also highlight women's immense resilience and adaptive strategies in navigating constraints. Their portrayal sheds light on the struggles faced daily by women within sociocultural confines, underscoring the need for empowerment initiatives and reforms promoting equitable opportunities and rights. Recurring themes of differential impacts on men versus women draw attention to the challenges of progressing gender justice in Yemeni society.

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Future research can expand on these findings by conducting intersectional analyses that acknowledge the influence of other identity factors such as socioeconomic class and ethnicity, which can amplify the consequences of gendered migration. Scholars can also examine the cultural challenges of navigating traditional norms versus modernization in transnational contexts. This research can provide insights into effective strategies that promote self-determination while respecting diverse cultural perspectives and behaviours. By grounding policy recommendations in migration and gender theories, women's agency, caregiving contributions, and overall well-being can be prioritized during times of upheaval. Additionally, studying the diverse lived experiences and advocacy approaches of women in different national and regional contexts can further enhance our understanding. Ultimately, continued empirical research and solution-oriented studies in this area can inform community-based empowerment programs and institutional support networks that assist Yemeni women and their families.

Conclusion:

In Yemeni fiction, the portrayal of women is often limited to stereotypical representations within traditional family roles. They are generally depicted as mothers, sisters, or wives who reflect the values, traditions and superficial backward social perception of women as submissive, surrendering and compliant with the will of the father, husband and societal customs. This traditional image of women is evident when novels address social issues such as migration, despotic rule, and social inequality, where mothers and wives are shown passively awaiting the return of migrating sons or husbands and suffering as a result of such circumstances, without exerting their agency or individual experiences outside of familial relationships. The portrayal generally lacks depth and complexity beyond superficial adherence to gender norms and roles.

Migration has been an enduring theme in Yemeni literature for centuries, depicted in genres ranging from ancient Sabaean tales to modern works. Authors continue exploring the complex challenges and human dimensions of migration, whether for economic reasons, political instability, or war. Classical Yemeni migration narratives often portrayed it as a journey of selfdiscovery, showing how protagonists transformed through leaving familiar surroundings. One aspect examined in this study is the depiction of Yemeni women left behind in migration literature. Examining such portrayals provides insight into their experiences and resilience as a vulnerable group facing multiple intersecting hardships. With family members migrating abroad, factors like gender inequality, cultural norms, and economic

difficulties shaped these women's circumstances. Literature shed light on the physical and emotional toll of prolonged separation, risks faced, and sacrifices made while passively awaiting returns. They also offer a platform for Yemeni women's narratives, contributing to awareness of vulnerabilities and injustices in the migration context through captured complexities and shared stories, hopes, suffering and dreams.

Moreover, migration literature offers an opportunity to address the intersectionality of Yemeni women's experiences. It recognizes that their identities are shaped not only by their gender but also by factors such as socioeconomic status. It is important to note that while migration literature can offer valuable insights into the lives of Yemeni women, it is not a monolithic representation of their experiences. Authors may have different perspectives, biases, and intentions, and their portrayals may vary. Therefore, it is crucial to approach migration literature with a critical lens, considering the multiplicity of voices and the broader sociopolitical context that shapes these narratives.

This analysis of portrayals of Yemeni women's experiences in migration literature provides valuable insights, however, it has some limitations. One key limitation is the reliance mainly on male-authored works, which are subject to potential gaps or biases in fully capturing women's perspectives and challenging patriarchal assumptions. Literature produced within the sociocultural constraints faced historically by female Yemeni authors is less able to represent certain nuanced realities or ascribe sufficient agency to female characters.

Nonetheless, Yemeni migration fictional works shed light on some of the transformative effects of male migration on family structures and the daily lives of women left behind. The literature highlights the increased caregiving responsibilities shouldered by women as sole providers for their families. It also illuminates the economic hardships they face in managing households without male support. Literary depictions underscore the resilience demonstrated by Yemeni women in adapting to difficult circumstances.

However, future research could build on these initial findings in valuable ways. Scholars can conduct more nuanced intersectional analyses to examine how gender interacts with other identity factors like socioeconomic class and ethnicity in amplifying migration consequences. The portrayal of navigating cultural traditions versus modern influences in transnational contexts is another area worth deeper examination.

By exploring the intersecting complexities of Yemeni women's lives through literature, we gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and needs. Yet acknowledging the limitations of relying solely on male authors reinforces the need for supplementary research centring on female perspectives. Examining resilience alongside continued marginalization also reveals the ongoing necessity of empowerment initiatives and policies promoting equitable opportunities and rights toward eventual gender equality in Yemeni society.

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