Stance-taking and the language of evaluation in the media discourse of the Arab feminist writer Lamia Swaylam: a study in Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Abstract:

The study investigates the phenomenon of stance-taking and the language of evaluation in the feminist media discourse of Lamia Swaylam. This research is situated within the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) introduced by Halliday (1978). The study adopts Martin & White's (2005) model of evaluation analysis. Data consists of three articles written by Swaylam in a famous electronic newspaper (*Arab majalla*). The study reveals that media discourse is more subjective than objective. Media language is attitudinal, ideologically loaded, stance-saturated and over-charged. Negativity is a significant feature in heated media discourse. Media language is a language of inciting, domination, contraction, imposition and up-graduation. Language is used strategically in order to achieve ideological aims and targets in media discourse.

Key words: Stance-taking, evaluation, dialogic contraction, dialogic expansion, media discourse, Gradability

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1. Introduction:

This paper examines how stance-taking and the language of evaluation are linguistically realized in Arab feminist media discourse. The study seeks to provide an insight into how the position of women and their relationship with men and the structure of the family are evaluated from a feminist perspective. The study tries to show the important role of the interpersonal

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function of language in the satisfaction of social as well as ideological needs of participants in communication. Media texts are seen as means of interaction between media writers and their readers. They interact with each other in order to exchange information and opinions, change attitudes and behaviors, and transmit socio-cultural values (Thompson, 2004, p. 45).

Feminism is a controversial movement that is widely represented on both national and international scales (Hannam, 2013, p. 2). The history of feminism in the West dates back to the mid-eighteenth century and the term itself is formally introduced in the late nineteenth century France where Hubertine Auclert, a French women's suffrage advocate, declares herself a feminist (Hannam, 2013, p. 6). Feminism is defined as "a cultural as well as a political" movement (Hannam, 2013, p. 2) with social objectives (Al-Ghanim, 2014, p. 147). It is also described as "a practical implementation movement" (Al-Ghanim, 2014, p. 147).

Feminists describe human societies as "male-oriented" societies (Benhabib, 1998, p. 88) where the "culture of male dominance" (Bayoumi, 2014, p. 95), "the Law of the Father" (Scott, 2014, p. 157), "male supremacy" and "patriarchy" (Hannam, 2013, p. 43) gather together in order to discriminate and oppress women. For feminists, the feminist discourse is "human" and the masculine discourse is "discriminatory and violent" (Bayoumi, 2014, p. 95). They present a universal image of a man as "a patriarchal ruse" and a universal image of a woman as an angelic victim (Scott, 2014, p. 158).

In general, feminists are against sex discrimination, gender inequalities, and the imbalance in power relations among men and women in education, voting, economic independence, civil rights of citizenship, property-owning, waged work, marriage and marriage responsibilities, and in public and private spheres of life (Hannam, 2013, p. 20- 24). Feminists are against the use of double standards of morality in dealing with women and women's issues in comparison with men and men's issues (Hannam, 2013, p. 43).

They focus on issues that are related to family life, marital violence, sexual harassment, child-raising, and domestic work (Hannam, 2013, p. 31; Bayoumi, 2014, p. 101). Women in Arab societies suffer from discrimination, powerlessness, marginalization, limited participation in political discourse, patriarchal control and dominance, domestic and physical violence, rape, and the cultural implications associated with harmful habits (e.g. female genital mutilation), honor crimes and polygamy (Al-Ghanim, 2014, p. 147- 154; Zaatari, 2014, p. 62). According to Al-Nakib (2014), women in the Arab world still suffer from "insidious forms of discrimination… including physical and sexual abuse, lack of physical and sexual autonomy, lack of intellectual and religious freedom, among many others" (p. 300). Feminists ask for humanity, equality and democratic and active citizenship (Landes, 1998, p. 4; Ortner, 1998, p. 21).

Feminism in the west as well as in the Arab world seeks to question the traditional structure and the well-established ideological heritage that is associated with men-women relationship; to change the way women feel, think and interpret the world around them (Hannam, 2013, p. 2); and to improve people's awareness and perception towards the position and role of women in human societies (Al-Ghanim, 2014, p. 147; Hatem, 2014, p. 3). They believe that all forms of discrimination against women are socially constructed and so these are liable to change (Hannam, 2013, p. 3-4; Zaatari, 2014, p. 58).

Stance-taking and Evaluation are two important categories mentioned in literature with regard to the interpersonal features of discourse. Stance-taking is a broad and varied phenomenon that has attracted the attention of many scholars and researchers in linguistics and related disciplines during the initial few years of the twenty-first century (Englebretson, 2007, p. 1). It is an essential property of communication (Jaffe, 2009, p.3). It plays a vital role in our social life (Du Bois, 2007, p. 141). Stance is defined as a term for expressing our lexical and grammatical

expressions of attitudes, personal feelings and assessments, value judgments, and commitment concerning the propositional content of a message (Biber and Finegan, 1989, p. 92; Biber et al., 1999, p. 966; Conrad and Biber, 2000, p. 57).

In stance-taking, people as human beings are involved in a process of evaluation. Evaluation is part and parcel of our daily interactions (Bednarek, 2006, p.4). It plays an important role in the perception, interpretation and categorization of different phenomena among stance-takers (Bednarek, 2006, p.4). Bednarek (2006) highlights the importance of the concept of evaluation in the construction of the ideological and moral orientations among participants in discourse.

Media plays a great role in people's lives. It has been described by Bell (1991) as a "mirror" which reflects the cultural, social, political, economical and even psychological background in any society (p. 4). The linguistic analysis of media language offers the linguistic tools for decoding and understanding "media messages" (Bell, 1991, p. 3). Media presents its attitudes, opinions and perspectives interpreting, assessing and evaluating what is right and what is wrong; what is good and what is bad; what is desirable and what is undesirable and what is possible/ necessary and what is impossible/ unnecessary.

2. Methodology:

Data consists of three media texts tackling the issues under investigation. These texts are randomly selected from one of the most famous and widely visited electronic newspapers (*Arab Majalla*). The selection standard for texts depends on the issues being discussed in order to allow the possibility for covering several feminist issues in the study. For issues of reliability and validity, the selected articles are analyzed and then reanalyzed after two months in order to guarantee accuracy and reliability of analysis. Every article is divided into clauses, and irrelevant clauses (e.g. asides) are excluded. Clauses are classified according

to the three systems of evaluation introduced by Martin and White (2005). Manual counting as a simple procedure for doing statistics is used. Percentages are provided for comparisons and contrasts among different linguistic tools identified in research.

3. Theoretical framework:

Appraisal theory is a system of interpersonal meanings (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 22). Three aspects of appraisal theory are proved to be important elements in the analysis of the language of evaluation (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 22). Martin & White (2005) present three major divisions of appraisal theory: evaluation (of attitudes), engagement and graduation. The system of attitude represents stances that are related to the emotions of writers or speakers; the system of engagement represents stances that are related to writers' or speakers' level of commitment or investment towards certain propositions. The system of graduation acts on both other systems: it serves to highlight or downgrade forms of evaluative meanings in context.

3.1. The system of attitude:

Attitudinal meanings play an important role in our life. They "tend to spread out and colour a phase of discourse as speakers and writers take up a stance" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 43). The system of attitude is divided into three basic kinds depending on what is being appraised:

(i) Affect: people's feelings
(ii) Judgment: people's character and behaviors
(iii) Appreciation: the value of things (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 23).

3.2. The system of engagement:

The system of engagement focuses on how speakers or writers position themselves dialogically toward a value position (Martin & White, 2005, p. 97). It concerns with "those meanings which in various ways construe for the text a heteroglossic backdrop of

prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and anticipated responses" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 97). Utterances are categorized as Monoglossic and Heteroglossic:

Monoglossic utterances: the use/ misuse of the speech act of assertion				
Heteroglossic	Dialogic contraction	Disclaim	Negation	e.g. laa لا 'not'
			Counter-expectation devices	e.g. laakinna لكنَّ 'but'
		Proclaim	Concur	e.g. rhetorical questions
			Pronounce	e.g. inna انَّ 'indeed'
			Endorse	e.g. /ʔaθbatat/ أثبتت 'prove'
	Dialogic expansion	Entertain	The use of modality and modal auxiliaries	
		Attribute	Acknowledge	Communicative verbs such as /yaquulu/ يقول 'say'
			Distance	

3.3. Gradability:

Attitudinal meanings as well as propositional meanings are characterized with gradability. There are two types of gradability: up-scaling (e.g. *extremely*) and down-scaling (e.g. *somewhat*). Martin and White (2005) define the two types. In up-scaling, the writer or speaker expresses a strong commitment to a value position and thus strongly align the reader or listener with this value position (p. 152). In down-scaling, the writer or the speaker has "only a partial or an attenuated affiliation with the value position being referenced" (p. 153).

For Martin & White (2005), there are two kinds of resources for amplification: focus and force: the term *focus* refers to grading according to prototypicality (Martin & White, 2005, p. 137). Focus includes "resources for making something that is inherently

non-gradable gradable" (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 41). These resources divide into two categories: 'sharpening' the focus (e.g. *real policeman*) or 'softening' the focus (e.g. *a sort of policeman*) of people and things. Sharpening or softening are related to: things (e.g. was what we saw with our *own* eyes); qualities; and categorical conepts like numbers (e.g. after *about* three years). It includes words such as *about, exactly, or real, sort of, kind of*.

The term *force* refers to grading according to intensity or amount (Martin and White, 2005, p. 135). It divides into two types: intensification and quantification:

Intensification refers to the assessment of the degree of intensity of qualities (e.g. *slightly foolish, extremely foolish*) and processes (e.g. *this slightly hindered us, this greatly hindered us*) including verbal modalities of likelihood, usuality, inclination and obligation (*it's very possible that, it's just possible that*).

Quantification refers to the assessement of amount that is applied to entities. Modes of quantification involve scaling with respect to amount regarding size, weight, strength, and number (e.g. *a few miles, many miles*), extent (e.g. *small amount, large amount*), and proximity in time and space (e.g. *nearby mountain, distant mountain*).

4. Research Questions:

Therefore, attempts have been made to answer the following research questions:

a) To what extent is media discourse replete with structures reflecting interpersonal meanings?

b) How evaluation is linguistically expressed in feminist media discourse?

c) How do media writers represent their presence in the selected texts? To what extent are they subjective or objective? How do they construct for themselves particular authorial identities in

relation to others? How do they approve/ disapprove, enthuse/abhor, and applaud/ criticize? How do they align or dis/align themselves with actual and potential respondents in discourse? How do they construct for their texts intended or ideal audience?

d) To what extent do they represent communities of shared feelings, attitudes, values and normative assessments?

5. Results:

Along the system of attitude, there is an extensive use of attitudinal meanings. Attitudinal clauses represent _47_ % in text no. 1, _58_ % in text no. 2 and, _88_ % in text no. 3. Negative attitudinal clauses represent _100_ % in text no. 1, _85_ % in text no. 2, and _91_ % in text no. 3.

Along the system of engagement, media writers make use of the speech act of assertion in order to impose their stance on readers. Monoglossic utterances represent _50_ % in text no. 1, _42_ % in text no. 2 and, _50.7_ % in text no. 3. Swaylam contracts rather than expands the space for other alternative views. Categories of dialogic contraction exceed categories of dialogic expansion. Categories of dialogic contraction represent _85_ % in text no. 1, _70_ % in text no. 2 and, _88_ % in text no. 3. With regard to categories of dialogic contraction, disclaim exceeds proclaim in all texts under analysis. Categories of disclaim represent _89.6_ % in text no. 1, _90_ % in text no. 2 and _76.6_ % in text no. 3. Negation is extensively used in comparison with concession/ counter-expectation devices. Negative devices represent _69_ % in text no. 1, _68_ % in text no. 2 and _60.8_ % in text no. 3. Swaylam makes use of concur and pronounce devices in order to limit the scope for other alternative views. Pronouncement devices represent _100_ % in text no. 1, _50_ % in text no. 2 and _57_ % in text no. 3. For categories of dialogic expansion, Swaylam dominates her discourse by reading and investigating different phenomena with a limited reference to other alternative stance. Categories of

attribute is limited in comparison with categories of entertain. Moreover, all instances of attribute are of the distance type. Entertainment devices represent *60* % in text no. 1, *100* % in text no. 2 and *75* % in text no. 3.

Along the system of Gradability, up-scaling devices are extensively used in comparison with down-scaling devices. Up-grading devices represent *100* % in text no. 1, 2, and 3.

6. Analysis:

6.1. The system of attitude:

Along the system of attitude, negative adjectives of affect (unhappiness, insecurity and dissatisfaction), judgment and appreciation are employed to indicate the negative attitudes of Swaylam towards the position of women and women's issues in Arab societies and culture. The image of man in general and the image of Arab men in particular are negatively judged by Swaylam as products of patriarchal societies that exercise all forms of discrimination against women.

The effect of women's work on the constitution of the Arab family is an important subject of concern. Swaylam believes that there is no contradiction between women's work and success in the public spheres of life and their success in private spheres of life represented in the form of the family. She adopts a negative attitude of unhappiness towards those who believe that women's independence destroys the family institution.

She adopts a negative attitude of dissatisfaction towards the Arab culture, the Arab society and its legal system that are believed to discriminate against women.

Examples:

ـهذا الأب *المتسلط* الحاكم في بيته علي نسائه و أبنائه (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر ٨ ـ ٩).

'This authoritative father who controls his wives and children at home'

/haaða l?abu lmutasalliṯu lħaakimu fi baytihi ʕala nisaa?ihi wa ?abnaa?ih/

[The system of attitude: negative judgment: social sanction: propriety: authoritative]

ـ ليس هناك أشد بؤسآ من اعتبار استقلال المرأة... اعتبارآ فاسدآ يهدم الأسرة(سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر٣٢).

'There is nothing more miserable than considering the independence of women… a corrupt issue that destroys the family'

/laysa hunaaka ?aŠaddu bu?san min iʕtibaari stiqlaali lmar?ati … iʕtibaaran faasidan yahdimu l?usrata/

[The system of attitude: negative affect: unhappiness: / bu?san/ 'misery']

6.2. The system of engagement:

6.2.1. <u>Monoglossic utterances and the miss use of the speech act of assertion:</u>

Along the system of engagement, monoglossic utterances in Swaylam's discourse are expressed by unmodified equational, verbal, topic-comment sentences (Badawi et al., 2004, p. 306). Swaylam takes for granted a set or propositions that leave no space for discussion but to accuse Arab culture and Arab societies of all forms of discrimination against women. Moreover, she accuses religion of being the main obstacle in the way of the achievement of women's equality, freedom and progress. The relationship between men and women in Arab societies is set around a group of images where men are associated with all vices and sins, and women are associated with all kinds of submission and weakness. Swaylam goes further to criticize the role of men in

the destruction of family life and in issuing discriminatory family laws (e.g. divorce, custody, and marriage).

Examples:

ـفي نظام مستبد يميز الفرد ضد نفسه و ضد الجميع (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر٣٩).

'an authoritative system that discriminates between the individual and himself and the individual and others'

/fii niẓaamin mustabiddin yumayyizu lfarddu ḍidda nafsihi wa ḍidda lgamiiʕ/

[a topic comment sentence: the topic is / niẓaamin mustabiddin/ 'an authoritative system' and the comment is a verbal sentence in an imperfect tense / yumayyizu/ 'discriminates']

ـالمجتمعات الإسلامية جميعها مجتمعات أبوية (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر ٨).

'Islamic societies as a whole are fatherly societies'

/ʔalmugtamaaʕatu lislaamiyyatu gamiiʕuha mugtamaaʕatun ʔabawiyyatun/

[an equational sentence (noun + noun): the subject is /ʔalmugtamaʕaatu lʔislaamiyyatu/ 'Islamic societies' and the predicate is /mugtamaʕaatun ʔabawiyyatun/ 'fatherly societies']

ـالتسلط علي جسد المرأة عبادة الرجل (سويلم، النص الأول، سطر ١).

'the authoritativeness on women's flesh is a man's means to worship God'

/ʔattasalluṭu ʕala gasadi lmarʔati ʕibaadatu rraguli/

[an equational sentence: the subject is a noun /ʔattasalluṭu/ 'authoritativeness' and the predicate is a noun /ʕibaadatu/ 'worship']

Examples:

ـ فكل أحكام الزواج و الطلاق و الحضانة التي *تظلم* المرأة و تتعامل معها كقاصرة (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر٤).

'for all marriage, divorce and nursery laws that do injustice towards women and deal with them as minors'

/fa kullu ?aħkaami zzawaagi wa ṭṭalaaqi wa lħaḍaanati llati taẓlimu lmar?ata wa tataʕaamalu maʕaha kaqaṣiratin/

[The system of engagement: monoglossic utterance: relative clause with an imperfect tense: /taẓlimu lmar?ata wa tataʕaamalu maʕaha kaqaṣiratin/ 'do injustice towards women and deal with them as minors']

6.2.2. Negation:

   Swaylam makes an extensive use of negation and negative devices in order to reject, deny and object to a list of propositions that are related to the position of men and women in Arab societies, women's oppression by men in the name of religion, the control of the masculine authority on the social system in Arab societies, the divorce and marriage laws which discriminate against women, underage marriage and the family and family life. Negation is expressed by a set of negative particles such as /laa/ لا 'not'; /laa wa laa/ لا و لا 'neither-nor'; /lam/ لم 'not'; /laysa/ ليس 'not'; /kana wa lazala/ كان و لازال 'was and still'; /layazalu/ لا يزال 'still'.

   Swaylam objects to the kind of treatment and performance of Arab men towards women. She uses negation in order to criticize men for unfairness in imposing religious restrictions on women while setting themselves free from religious constraints. She objects to the tendency of Arab culture to discriminate against women. Underage marriage is one of these restrictions. Women in such Arab societies are considered in Swaylam's perspective as dependent participants who lack the essential qualifications for individual independence and who lack the important abilities to make their own decisions. She objects to the laws that are produced by patriarchal societies to oppress women. Swaylam

objects to the claimed contradiction between women's equality and the stability of the family. Feminists including Swaylam perceive the family as a source of oppression and discrimination against women. She objects to using the family as a justification of depriving women of equality.

Examples:

ـ يفرض عليها الحجاب ولا يفرض على نفسه صلاة الجماعة، يفرض عليها عدم العمل في قطاع مختلط، ويدير هو قسمًا نسائيًا، (سويلم، النص الأول، سطر٢٤ـ ٢٥).

'he imposes on her wearing the veil and he does not impose on oneself congregational prayers; he imposes on her not to work in a mixed sector and he heads a women's department'

/yafri<u>d</u>u ʕalayha l<u>ħ</u>igaaba wa laa yafri<u>d</u>u ʔala nafsihi <u>s</u>alaata lgamaaʕati, yafri<u>d</u>u ʕalayha ʕadama lʕamali fi qi<u>t</u>aaʕin muxtala<u>t</u>in wa yudiiru huwa qisman nisaaʔiyyan/

ـ فكل أحكام الزواج والطلاق والحضانة التي ... تتعامل معها كقاصرة لا كراشدة (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر٤).

'for all marriage, divorce, and nursery laws that … deal with women as female minors, and not mature

/fa kullu ʔa<u>ħ</u>kaami zzawaagi wa <u>t</u>talaaqi wa l<u>ħ</u>a<u>d</u>aanati allati … tataʕaamalu maʕaha kaqaa<u>s</u>iratin laa karaŠidatin/

6.2. 3. <u>Concession/ counter/expectation devices:</u>

A set of concession/ counter-expectation devices is used for 'countering' a group of expectations and propositions in Arab societies towards women and women's related issues. Conjunctions and connectives are represented by /laakin/ لكن and /laakinna/ لكنَّ 'but' and /bal/ بل 'rather, and exceptives such as /laa-illa/ إلا -لا 'not-but' or 'not- except'. These conjunctions and connectives are used in order to contradict a set of propositions.

Contrary to expectation, Swaylam contradicts the proposition that religious societies guarantee a normal course of relationship between man and his God and that there is no gender distinction in performing religious duties on men's and women's part.

Conjunctions with denials /laysa ?illa/ 'nothing but' ليس إلا and /laa…?illa/ 'not… but' لا…إلا are used to stress the proposition that rigidity in religious matters and the construction of Arab family laws are two forms of the exploitation of women by the masculine authority. The exceptive particle /laa…?illa/ لا…إلا is used to support the proposition that the family represents a form of women's exploitation and degradation. The conjunction *but* is used to stress the Arab feminist preferred conclusion that women's independence is a real challenge for masculine patriarchal societies.

Examples:

ـ إنّ التصلب في المواقف الدينية *ليس إلا* شكلاً من أشكال السلطة الذكورية المستحكمة بالجميع (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر ٢٤ـ ٢٥).

'Indeed the rigidity in religious stances is nothing but a form of persistent masculine authority over all'

/?inna ttasalluba fi lmawaaqifi ddiiniyyati laysa ?illa Šaklan min ?aŠkaali ssultati aòòukuuriyyati lmustaħkimati bi lgamiiʕi/

ـ الأسرة التي *لا تبدو قائمة إلا* على اضطهاد المرأة ووضعها تحت أدنى شروط العيش الكريم (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر ٣٦).

'the family that seems to stand <u>only</u> on the oppression of women and on making them under the minimum requirements of decent living'

/?al?usrata llati laa tabduu qaa?imatan ?illa ʕala idtihaadi lmar?ati wa wadʕihaa taħta ?adnaa Šuruuti lʕayŠi lkariii/

6.2.4. <u>Concurrence and Concur devices:</u>

Swaylam uses rhetorical questions to criticize women's position in family life in the Arab world. Rhetorical questions are introduced by interrogative particles such as /hal/ هل'is; does', /limaaða/ 'why' لماذا, and /lima/ 'why'لم. Concur is used in order to create a presupposed ideological space of agreement between the writer and his readers on a set of propositions.

Examples:

ـ *فلماذا* تبدو المرأة فقط هي المسؤولة عن هذه الأسرة (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر ٥).

'so why do only women seem responsible for a family'

/fa limaaòa tabdu lmar?atu faqaṯ hiya lmas?uulatu ʕan haaðihi l?usrati/

ـ وبالأصح *لماذا* تبدو مسؤوليتها مجرد واجبات دون حقوق (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر٦).

'and properly speaking, why do their responsibilities seem to involve just duties without rights'

/wa bi l?aṣaħħi limaaða tabdu mas?uuliyyatuha mugarrada waagibaatin duuna ħuquuqin/

6.2.5. <u>Pronouncement and pronounce devices</u>:

Swaylam uses intensifiers with clausal scope such as /?inna/ 'indeed' إنّ and /?anna/ 'indeed' أنّ to emphasize the proposition that the masculine power in Arab societies exploits their authority, control and power over women in the name of religion. She emphasizes the proposition that men instead of women can be the main reason for the destruction of a family and that cultural change is an effective method for improving the position of women in Arab societies and for modifying discriminatory laws

Examples:

ـ *إنَّه يعجز عن ممارسة العبادة، فيأمر النساء تحت وصايته وولايته على تعبد الله* (سويلم، النص الأول، سطر ٣٥).

'indeed he is unable to worship God and so he orders women under his guardianship and government to worship God'

/ʔinnahu yaʕgazu ʕan mumaarasati lʕibaadati fayaʔmuru nnisaʔa taħta wiṣaayatihi wa wilaayatihi ʕala taʕabbudi llaahi/

6.2.6. <u>Entertainment and entertain devices:</u>

   Categories of entertain are linguistically expressed by modal auxiliaries. Modal auxiliaries include modals such as /laa yagibu/ لا يجب 'does not have to' and the tense operator */li/ 'have to'*). Swaylam uses the modal /laa yagibu/ 'does not have to' لا يجب in order to express the strong recommendation that cultural change is to be coupled with legal change in order to eliminate discrimination against women. She uses the tense operator /li/ 'have to' لـ in order to express the necessity of destroying the family institution because it is a form of women's exploitation and patriarchal control.

<u>Examples:</u>

ـنعم *لنهدم* الأسرة (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر٣٦).

'yes, we have to destroy the family'

/naʕam linahdima lʔusrata/

ـ*ولنكسر* كل قيود الأبوية (سويلم، النص الثالث، سطر ٣٧).

'and we have to break all fatherly chains'

/walinaksira kulla quyuudi lʔabawiyyata/

6.3.Gradability:

Swaylam tends to up-grade her evaluation of qualities, processes, amounts and different categories in discourse.

Example:

ـ الشرف الإسلامي والعربي الملقى على أجساد النساء، هو تاريخ *طويل* من اضطهاد الرجل للمرأة، ومن سيطرة السلطة الذكورية على النظام الاجتماعي لدينا **(سويلم، النص الأول، سطر٣ـ ٤).**

'the Arab and Islamic honor placed on women's bodies is a long history of oppression on the part of men towards women and of control of the masculine authority on the social system on our country'

/aŠŠarafu alislamiyyu wa alʕarabiyyu almulqa ʕala ʔgsadi annisaʔi huwa tariyxun ṭawiylun min idṯihadi arraguli lilmarʔati wa min sayṯarati assulṯati aððukuwriyati ʕala anniẓami aligtimaʕi ladayna/

[Gradability: force: quantification: extent: how long lasting: /ṯawiylun/ 'long']

7. Discussion & Conclusion:

Along the system of attitude, it is fair to stress the huge effect played by attitudinal meanings in emotionally blocking all trials of reconciliation between feminist and anti-feminist advocates. Such attitudinally over-loaded language used in media discourse incites rather than unite different directions and attitudes. And thus expressing attitudes in media discourse is purposeful. The extensive use of attitudinal meanings in media discourse is used as a strategy to influence and affect addresses to adopt positive and/or negative positions towards the different objects discussed in discourse. Heightening certain emotional responses, judgments and appreciations and suppressing other possible reactions leaves a restricted space for the addresses to hold other alternative evaluations as valid and justifiable (Jovanović-Krstić, 2005, p.

248). To put it another way, the extensive use of attitudinal meanings is attributed to the desirability of Swaylam to use language effectively in order to position their readers attitudinally to adopt a predetermined set of evaluative meanings. This confirms Katz's (1989) view that "Attitudes were seen as a means for meeting some need of the individual" (p. XII). Musgrove (1998) adds that attitude is not only an expression of a 'state of mind' but also a "preparation for action" (p. 85). He also concludes that our attitudes do not only reflect our "disposition or stance *of* an object or event, but one's routine predisposition *toward* an object or event" (p. 85). In such a way, it is highly recommended that in carrying out the act of evaluation media writers be aware of the negative effects of the extensive use of attitudinal meanings in widening the gap between those who support feminism and those who reject their values and ideals. At least, they have to be balanced in their expressions of negative and positive attitudinal meanings in order to seem objective in their expression of media messages.

Along the system of engagement, it is fair to stress that language is intentionally manipulated to achieve certain communicative purposes in media discourse. Media language does not only transmit facts and information about the real world, but it also makes use of the linguistic system of a language in order to communicate opinions, beliefs and views that reflect a *possible* representation of the world around us or part of an expected possible representation. The linguistic tools (lexical and structural) act as moulds chosen by language users to pour their ideological estimations and socio-cultural values.

In media discourse, the speech act of assertion is strategically used to convey other communicative functions. Linguistically, an assertion is defined as "full telling of full knowledge" (Davies, 2006, p. 151). According to Weiner (2007), an assertion is proper if and only if the asserted proposition is true in the real world (p. 190). Since language is used and even manipulated to fulfill certain communicative targets in the selected situational context,

media writers violate the main rule of the speech act of assertion and use it in order to convey their ideological orientations towards different propositions involved in discourse. Instead of reflecting propositions that represent the real world, the speech act of assertion is used to echo the writers' ideological assumptions and estimations. In other words, the use of the linguistic structure of the speech act of assertion shifts a proposition from a presupposed/ possible world into a truth value proposition that is supposed to represent the real world (see, Stalnaker, 1999, p. 79). In such a way, media writers direct their readers to adopt such propositions as facts that are not open for discussion or argument. Through the violation of the main rule of the speech act of assertion, media writers exclude those of other ideological orientations and dominate the whole interaction. They incite rather than reconcile different views among the opposing camps. So, assertions are liable to praise or criticism (Williamson, 1996, p. 489). Consequently, it is recommended that media writers make a careful use of the speech act of assertion and verify, if possible, the content of a proposition before asserting it because making assertions puts a responsibility on the part of media writers for the truth or at least knowledge of their assertions (see, Williamson, 1996, p. 522).

Media writers resort to the use of other linguistic structures other than monoglossic utterances in order to impose their ideological orientations on their addressees. They make use of the linguistic tools of dialogic contraction in order to contract the space for other dialogic alternatives. One of these linguistic tools is the use of categories of disclaim (concession/ counter-expectation devices and negation) and categories of proclaim (e.g. rhetorical questions, emphatic words and results of verifiable studies).

Directness in contracting the space for other alternative views is used as a strategy of coercion. It is conveyed through the extensive use of categories of disclaim including concession/ counter-expectation devices and negation. Media writers dominate

the whole scene of discourse and the whole process of interaction with other participants. Negation is used as a strategy of rejection and exclusion of other alternative stances, while concession/ counter-expectation devices are employed as direct means of countering expected propositions.

Other indirect strategies of imposition are reflected through the use of categories of proclaim that limit the scope for other alternative views and stances. Concur (e.g. rhetorical questions) is one of these strategies used by media writers in order to build a sense of a presupposed agreement with readers on a set of prepositions. Such presupposed agreement is imposed on participants and they are expected to respond positively to these propositions. Pronounce is another strategy where media writers use a set of emphatic words to strengthen their authorial stance and leave a narrow space for doubt and uncertainty on the addresses' part. Media writers draw on concur devices (represented mainly be rhetorical questions) more than on endorsement devices because they seek to affect their readers emotionally by the extensive use of rhetorical questions than mentally by citing credible data of verifiable studies. Such interpretation adds to the whole image that the evaluations of media writers are true reflections of their ideological subjective stances.

The study affirms the proposition that categories of dialogic contraction and categories of dialogic expansion differ in their "intersubjective functionality" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 102). Though limited in representation, categories of dialogic expansion indicate a positive constructive dimension in media discourse where readers are seen as active participants in discourse. They are deprived from or restricted in diagnosing the problems but they are given the change to be involved as active interactants in determining the strategies that are to be taken to overcome these problems. Categories of entertain (e.g. modality) open a space for offering solutions that are related to the question of "what is the course of action that is to be taken in a certain context towards an

issue of concern". Modality is used as a strategy for offering solutions, expressing necessity, set obligations and/ or expressing other expectations towards an issue. Categories of dialogic expansion are also employed for mitigating criticism especially in the feminist criticism of the religious institution.

Media writers make a strategic use of the linguistic structure of attribution devices especially for those instances of the acknowledgment type. The inclusion of other non-authorial voices in discourse portrays a positive image of the authorial voice as an "informational fair trader" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 115). However, media writers in the selected texts of analysis seek to acknowledge non-authorial voices which confirm and support their authorial stances and distance non-authorial voices that are contradictory and inappropriate to their own authorial voices. To put it another way, attribution is intentionally used in order to convince readers of the main arguments and evaluations of the writers themselves. Thus, attribution of the distance type is restricted in media discourse. Attribution is also used to introduce a topic for comment and/ or criticism.

Along the system of graduation, Gradability is used as another tool for achieving strategic functions of communication. Media writers magnify propositional and attitudinal meanings through the linguistic devices of up-grading in order to have a direct and strong effect on readers. Up-grading devices contract and even close the space for contradiction and difference. The writers' strong commitment to the expressed meanings and propositions turn the role of addresses into a passive role where they are expected to hold the same ideological orientations of writers. In conclusion, the linguistic analysis of Gradability adds to the negative effect of inciting rather than the positive pole of achieving reconciliation among contradictory and opposing receivers.

In conclusion, all these strategies are employed by media writers in order to attract more readers towards adopting similar

ideological orientations. However, these strategies alienate those who adopt other contradictory ideological orientations and so a wide gap is created and the clash between opposing camps gets more and more heated.

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Transcription Conventions:

A. Consonants

/ʔ/	ء	Voiceless glottal stop
/b/	ب	Voiced bilabial stop
/t/	ت	Voiceless alveolar stop
/t̲/	ط	Voiceless velarized alveolar stop
/d/	د	Voiced alveolar stop
/d̲/	ض	Voiced velarized alveolar stop
/k/	ك	Voiceless velar stop
/g/	ج	Voiced velar stop
/q/	ق	Voiceless uvular stop
/ʕ/	ع	Voiced pharyngeal fricative
/f/	ف	Voiceless labio- dental fricative
/θ/	ث	Voiceless dental fricative
/ð/	ذ	Voiced dental fricative
/z̲/	ظ	Voiced velarized dental fricative
/s/	س	Voiceless alveolar fricative
/s̲/	ص	Voiceless velarized alveolar fricative
/z/	ز	Voiced alveolar fricative
/Š/	ش	Voiceless palato- alveolar fricative
/x/	خ	Voiceless velar fricative
/gh/	غ	Voiced uvular fricative
/h/	ه	Voiceless laryngeal fricative
/ħ/	ح	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative
/r/	ر	Voiced Flap/ trill
/l/	ل	Voiced lateral
/m/	م	Voiced Bilabial nasal
/n/	ن	Voiced Alveolar nasal
/w/	و	Voiced Bilabial glide
/y/	ى	Voiced Palatal glide

B. Vowels

/i/	ِ	Short close front vowel
/a/	َ	Short open central vowel
/u/	ُ	Short close back vowel
/ii/	ي	Long close front vowel
/aa/	آ	Long open central vowel
/uu/	و	Long close back vowel

Appendices:

Appendix A: (Text no. 1)

التسلط على جسد المرأة ... عبادة الرجل !

يبدأ الرجل في تعبد ربه من خلال المرأة، يفرض عليها الحجاب ولا يفرض على نفسه صلاة الجماعة

الشرف الإسلامي والعربي الملقى على أجساد النساء، هو تاريخ طويل من اضطهاد الرجل للمرأة، ومن سيطرة السلطة الذكورية على النظام الاجتماعي لدينا، فعبارة ''أنتِ شرفي'' التي يرددها كل رجل لكل امرأة تربطه علاقة بها، هي مفتاح فهم هذا الإشكال التاريخي العميق في ثقافتنا، وهي العبارة التي توجز المغزى في أن يلقي الرجل بكلمة الشرف على عاتق جسد المرأة، بكل ما تحمله كلمة الشرف من إرث تاريخي ثقيل ومشوه ومليء بالذنوب والهزائم، هذه الكلمة التي تحمل معاني عُصابية وشديدة التعقيد النفسي عن مجال الجسد والمتعة.

والتفكير بمسألة الشرف لا يمكن أن ينجز بمعزل عن الدين، وعن مفاهيم مثل الحلال والحرام والطهارة والنجاسة، وعن مفهومي القوامة والوصاية تحديدًا، فالدين –بوصفه مكون ثقافي رئيس في المجتمعات العربية– يشكِّل القاعدة الأساس في تحمل المرأة وحيدة عبء الشرف، وإذا كانت ثقافة بعض المجتمعات العربية قبل الإسلام تحمل أجساد النساء مسؤولية شرف الرجال، فإننا اليوم أمام تشريع ديني لهذه المسؤولية لا يختلف فيه مجتمع عربي عن آخر.

في المجتمع السعودي اليوم من السائغ جدًا أن يشترط الرجل على زوجته الحجاب، أو التزام العمل في قطاعات نسائية منفصلة؛ وذلك لأنه رجل متدين يسعى لطاعة

الله، بينما لا يجد هذا الرجل في نفسه مسؤولية التزام هذه الطاعة كما يشترطها في زوجته، أو أخواته؛ ذلك لأن الرجل العربي ينشأ على فكرة الوصاية تجاه النساء في عائلته، والدته مثل بناته تنزل في ذات المنزلة من شعوره بالوصاية عليهن، تلك الوصاية التي تخوله ليفرض عليها ما يخص علاقته بربه، ما يظنه هو معصية سيمنعها منه بسلطته عليها، وما يعتقده حسنة سيفرضها بذات السلطة، سواء كانت قوامة أو ولاية.

العلاقة بين الإنسان وربه يفترض أن تكون علاقة عامودية بلا وساطات أفقية، بمعنى أنها علاقة مباشرة لا تمر عبر وسائط أيما كانت هذه الوسائط، هذا هو جوهر فكرة التوحيد في الأديان السماوية الثلاثة، لكن تاريخ المجتمعات المتدينة شهدت دائمًا انحرافات مختلفة في عامودية هذا العلاقة، ومن أهم هذه الانحرافات تراتبية العلاقة بين الرجل والمرأة، وما يحدث في المجتمع السعودي اليوم هو صورة أخرى لهذا الانحراف، يبدأ الرجل في تعبد ربه من خلال المرأة، يفرض عليها الحجاب ولا يفرض على نفسه صلاة الجماعة، يفرض عليها عدم العمل في قطاع مختلط، ويدير هو قسمًا نسائيًّا، هذه الحالات ليست ازدواجية بالنسبة لتفكير الرجل، فهو يشعر أن من مسؤوليته علاقة المرأة بربها، هو لا يتعدى على شيء، بل يؤمن في قرارة نفسه أنه واجبه الديني قبل أن يكون واجبه الاجتماعي.

الارتباط بين الديني والاجتماعي يصعب فصله في المجتمع السعودي، فالرجل الذي يتعبد الله من خلال النساء حوله، لا يجد حرجًا في الاستشهاد بالآيات القرآنية أو الأحاديث النبوية التي تؤكد وجهة نظر سلطته على المرأة في أن تحتجب أو أن تنعزل في العمل المختلط، هو يجد في الدين ما يسوغ سلطته الذكورية على المرأة، فرغم عدم التزامه بالأوامر الدينية الأخرى المفروضة عليه كرجل، إلا أنه لا يثور ولا يغضب لحق الله وحرمة أوامر الدين في نفسه، بل سينجرح قلبه وسيفور دمه لأجل حرمة أوامر الدين في المرأة، إنه يعلم يقينًا أن لا تزر وازرة وزر أخرى، لكنه يمارس سلطته على النساء ليتعبدوا الله عنه، ويكفروا عن وزره هو.

الرجل الذي يكسل في تعبد الله، يعين من المرأة وسيطًا له، فيحملها تنفيذ الأوامر الدينية ليرضي ضميره تجاه ربه، إنه يعجز عن ممارسة العبادة، فيأمر النساء تحت وصايته وولايته على تعبد الله، هو لا يضيره أن يحلق لحيته على عكس الأمر الديني، لكنه يتألم ويبكي ويجزع على المرأة التي لا تحتجب، لا لشيء إلا حرمة لأمر الله.

هذه الصور من تعبد الرجل بوسيط المرأة، هي من يردف بكل قوة تحمل أجساد النساء وحيدات لمعاني الشرف، الثقافة الاجتماعية العربية التي تحفل بالآلاف من جرائم الشرف يوميًّا، يعرف الناس فيها أن المرأة لا تملك أمر كشف وجهها أو شعرها، لكنها تحمل كل أوزار الرجال وضمائرهم المذنبة في جسدها الأنثوي.

Appendix B: (Text no. 2)

من يصنع القانون الذي يميز ضد المرأة؟

من ينتج القانون الدولة أم المجتمع .. ومن أين جاءت الدولة؟

القانون الذي يميز ضد النساء لم يتم تشريعه من قبل ثقافة أجنبية، ورجال من خارج المجتمع، تمامًا كما أن الرجال أولياء المرأة لا يتعسفون في حكمهم في النساء إلا بصلاحية كاملة من القانون، فهل يعني هذا أننا ندور في حلقة مفرغة عند حديثنا عن كيفية تحسين وضع المرأة؟ هذا التساؤل يبدو واقعيًّا لفهم الأسباب، لكنه في الحقيقة يتجاهل الواقع وينحاز للتحليل والتنظير عند الرغبة في العمل وبذل الجهود؛ ذلك لأن مواجهة التمييز ضد المرأة تاريخيًّا لم تنفذ تحت خطط مرسومة مسبقًا، كانت الجهود تختلف حسب الزمان والمكان، فوضع المرأة كان ولم يزل يخضع بشكل كامل لثقافة المجتمع الذي تعيش فيه، تمامًا كما أن السلطات التي تحكم المجتمع تتولى ترسيخ هذه الثقافة وتطبيق مفاهيمها المختلفة.

الجهود التي تبذل واقعيًّا في تحسين أوضاع النساء تتفاوت في درجة وعيها وقوة تأثيرها، لكنها تتراكم في مسار واحد، الاختلاف في تحليل السبب وراء التمييز ضد المرأة لا يجب أن ينعكس على الجهود العملية في هذا الاتجاه، ولهذا العمل على تغيير القانون من خلال الاحتكاك المباشر مع السلطة السياسية لا يجب أن يرفض العمل الثقافي في تغيير القناعات الاجتماعية السلبية، تمامًا كما أن الإيمان بأن التغيير الثقافي كفيل بتعديل القانون والقناعات على ذات المستوى، لا يجب أن يرفض العمل الجاد في تغيير القوانين مع السلطة السياسية.

الاختلاف في التحليل قد يصل إلى نقاط تقاطع حادة إذا ما تم إغفال الواقع وحتمية التغيير التي لا تخضع لنتائج التحليل مهما قاربت الصواب، تمامًا كما أن تحويل وجهات النظر المختلفة إلى مساحة للصراع وتقويض الجهود هو عمل من لا يعنى بقضية المرأة كمكتسبات واقعية، بل يهتم بها كمادة للكلام الذي لا يصل لكونه تنظيرًا ولا فكرًا، المؤمنون بالقضية لا يمكن أن يصطفوا ضد الجهود المختلفة بالتسفيه والسخرية فقط لأنها لا تخضع للسقف الذي يريدونه، الإيمان بأن وضع

المرأة المتردي بحاجة لكل الجهود لتحسينه لا يمكن أن يتفرغ لمحاولات التذاكي أو التغابي من أجل الانتصار لوجهة نظر محدودة في تفسير الوضع كاملاً.

ولتفادي هذا النوع من المحاولات يمكن أن يدمج التساؤل الأساسي عن تردي وضع المرأة في استفهام آخر، هو: هل يمكن اعتبار القانون يمثل وجهة نظر الدولة في المرأة فعلاً أم هو انعكاس آخر لثقافة المجتمع، وللإجابة سيكون من المفيد استحضار القوانين العربية المختلفة في هذا الاتجاه؛ للتثبت من أن الدولة يمكن أن تسبق ثقافة المجتمع في مواجهة التمييز ضد النساء تمامًا كما يمكن التثبت بأن تغيير القوانين لا يؤدي مباشرة إلى تحسين وضع المرأة طالما ظلت الثقافة الاجتماعية واحدة، ففي تونس –الدولة التي منحت المرأة أفضل وضع قانوني مقارنة ببقية القوانين العربية– فالمرأة التونسية لا يمكن أن يتم طلاقها دون قبول منها مما يمكن الاعتبار به كمثال جيد لدور الدولة في تشريع القانون، وتحسين وضع المرأة، بالرغم مما يمكن المحاججة به من أن الجهود التنويرية والعمل الثقافي الكبير السابق لعهد الرئيس بورقيبة هي التي مهدت لمدونة الأحوال الشخصية، كجهود المنظر الكبير الطاهر بن حداد.

وفي مثال آخر يمكن التثبت من أن تغيير القوانين لا يكفل تحسن وضع المرأة طالما ظلت تعيش في ثقافة اجتماعية تميز ضد النساء، فبين السعودية التي لم تحدد عمرًا معينًا للزواج، وبين مصر التي رفعت سن قانون الزواج إلى الثامنة عشرة، لا يزال زواج القاصرات جزءًا من الواقع في كلا الدولتين، فبالرغم من اختلاف القوانين لا زالت ثقافة المجتمعين المتشابهة تسوغ هذا الجرم دون أن يكون للقانون فاعلية هنا.

إذن لا يجب التوقف عند التساؤل حول من هو صاحب المسؤولية في تردي أوضاع النساء؛ لأن الإجابة لا تنحصر في الدولة أو المجتمع، بل تتسع للاثنين، وتفتح الأفق للجهود على كل المستويات بذات الدرجة من الإيمان والحماسة، أما الاصطفاف مع وجهة نظر ضد أخرى فهو فعل مشين للمتطفلين على القضية، فالاصطفاف ضد أي جهد نسوي هو ملامح للعجز من قضية المرأة؛ عجزًا نفسيًّا وثقافيًّا على السواء.

Appendix C: (Text no. 3)

اتفاقية السيداو.. تهديد السلطة الذكورية !

مظاهرة تناصر حقوق المرأة

عند النظر إلى القوانين العربية اليوم بمرجعيتها الدينية تكون الأسرة هي الذريعة في الأحكام التمييزية ضد النساء، فكل أحكام الزواج والطلاق والحضانة التي تظلم المرأة وتتعامل معها كقاصرة لا كراشدة تتذرع بأن الهدف والغاية الأسمى هي الحفاظ على تكوين الأسرة، فلماذا تبدو المرأة فقط هي المسؤولة عن هذه الأسرة، وبالأصح لماذا تبدو مسؤوليتها مجرد واجبات دون حقوق، لِمَ هي المرأة كاملة الأهلية عند واجبتها وهي قاصرة عند نيل حقوقها؟!

المجتمعات الإسلامية جميعها مجتمعات أبويَّة، تحكم السلطة الأبوية فيها كل شيء، والأبوية ليست مجرد هذا الأب المتسلط الحاكم في بيته على نسائه وأبنائه، بل هي نظام يحكم كل مجموعة بأب رمزي أو حقيقي، فالأخ والزوج والابن جميعهم يحكم المرأة وليس أباها الشرعي فقط، هذه الأبوية سلطة مركزية تلغي أي طرف آخر في الحياة، تتحكم في حياته وكامل شؤونه دون أي اعتبار لكونه فردًا راشدًا وحرًّا، ومن هذا النظام الاجتماعي القاسي والمتعسف انبثقت مختلف القوانين التي تميز ضد المرأة وتتعامل معها كطرف تابع لرجل أي رجل، فهي دائمًا بحكم التابعة التي لا تملك قرارها الشخصي، وليست مؤهلة للاستقلال الذاتي.

لكن الاستقلال الذاتي الذي تتقدم نحوه النساء اليوم، ويحققن نجاحًا كاملاً فيه أصبح شكلاً من أشكال التهديد لهذا النظام الأبوي، ولأن البعض يتردد في التصريح بأن المسألة تمييز ضد النساء وتعصب للذكورية، أصبح يتذرع بالأسرة، أي أن استقلال المرأة هو تهديد لهذه الكيان، بينما في واقع الأمر المسألة لا تتعدى كونها كسرًا للأنظمة الأبوية وتحديًا لسلطاتها المركزية، هي مجرد محاولات جسورة لتغيير نظام تاريخي كامل يحكم الدولة والمجتمع على السواء.

إن مجرد التفكير بهذه الهستيريا البكائية من جهات عديدة حول اتفاقية "السيداو" أو أي قوانين تحفظ للمرأة حقوقها وتخرجها من عباءة هذا النظام الأبوي، دليل كافٍ على أن الخوف هو على ضياع السلطة الأبوية الذكورية لا خوفًا على الأسرة ولا عناية بها؛ ذلك لأنها هستيريا تفوق في عصابها أي رفض لنشاط آخر لا يخص المرأة، فلا الإرهاب ولا الجرائم البشعة تجد من الرفض شيئًا مما تجده هذه الاتفاقية.

وفي المجتمع السعودي تحديدًا يشكل الجمود الفكري في الأمور الدينية سيفًا حادًّا على كل المحاولات النسوية لتغيير وضع النساء ورفع التمييز عنهن، إن التصلب في المواقف الدينية ليس إلا شكلاً من أشكال السلطة الذكورية المستحكمة بالجميع، لقد قوبلت بالرفض والتكفير كل محاولات الانتصار للاتفاقية ولكل الاجتهادات الدينية لتفسير مفهوم القوامة مثلاً، تفسيرًا يختلف عن التفكير الذكوري المتصلب، تمامًا كما بادرت الأكاديميات في التيار المتشدد في الالتفاف حول المفهوم للخروج به من أي معنى أبوي.

إن من السهل استحضار آلاف الأمثلة لكيف يمكن للرجل الزوج والأب أن يكون السبب الرئيس والمباشر في هدم الأسرة وزعزعة أركانها، لكن كل ذلك لن يكون مجديًا كما لم يكن يومًا، فالمسألة في حقيقتها لا تعنى ولا تهتم بالأسرة، وإلا كانت الأسئلة ليست عن هدم بيوت هي في الأساس مجرد أقنعة لاضطهاد النساء والأطفال، بل كانت عن كيف يمكن أن نبني الأسرة ككيان اجتماعي يخلقه الحب والانسجام والأدوار المتكافئة، ليس هنالك أشد بؤسًا من اعتبار استقلال المرأة الأم كإنسانة كاملة الأهلية قادرة على التحكم بشؤونها وتدبير حياتها دون الرجوع لأي رجل، اعتبارًا فاسدًا يهدم الأسرة، تمامًا كما ليس هنالك ما هو أسوأ وأرخص من هذه الذريعة التي تترك للرجل بكل أهوائه وأمراضه النفسية والشخصية حق التحكم بمصير عائلة كاملة بكل أفرادها الراشدين من الزوجة والأبناء وحتى العمالة المنزلية.

نعم لنهدم الأسرة التي لا تبدو قائمة إلا على اضطهاد المرأة ووضعها تحت أدنى شروط العيش الكريم، لنهدم هذه الكيانات الهشة والمليئة بالمخاوف والظلم، ولنكسر كل قيود الأبوية التي عطّلت الحياة الإنسانية الكريمة ليس للنساء فقط، ليس للزوجة والبنات والأخوات، بل لمجتمع كامل، يبدأ خطواته البكر، ويتعلم كلماته الأولى في نظام مستبد يميز الفرد ضد نفسه، وضد الجميع.