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السنة



Literary Texts

1ST Semester – 9th Lecture

د. هلا دقوري

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نصوص أدبية س3 ف1 م9

FROM A VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN, BY MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

Hello everyone...

If you still remember from last time, we talked about Mary Wollstonecraft, who was a woman poet, defending the rights of women, she was supported by her husband who published her works after her death, she was an educated woman, and she was the first to defend the rights of women in her age. **What age was she in?**

Student: The romantic period.

Professor: Yes, she was living in the romantic age, and she was really living at ease –during the romantic age we know that things have changed. During a pervious age people had wars; they were fighting over things, the puritans were just fighting people, the government was fighting the people, the people were just causing a kind of fight to revolutionize against a cause or more, so we had unstable phases, unsteady situations politically speaking, or socially speaking.

During the previous periods, the poetry just revealed the states of people, and it also showed that there was unsteadiness in their poetry. But later on, when people became more relieved and they just escaped the bars of the difficulties of life, they began to think in a better way, in a more romantic way, they cared for the format in addition to the content. But at previous stages they just cared for the content, because they had specific causes to speak about and the poetry had a great mission of revealing the situations that were just tightening the screws on people (تشديد الخناق على الناس), the political situations, the prosecution of people. All these issues were really revealed in poetry and it had an excessive mission just to be carried out, but later on all these strengths just softened a little bit, and people were freer than before. that's why they had enough time to think of the easiness of life, the beauty of life, the ornamentation that they can just add to their works. That's why we had that romantic period, it was a period full of relaxation, relief, and ornamentation, so they cared more for the format but this was not, again, at the expense of the content, like nowadays. Even though they consider it at the expense of the content, it was not, according to the criteria of our age. If you just have noticed, that Mary Wollstonecraft was a free lady.

Student: At the 17th and 18th century. Did we have a decorum and extravagance?

Professor: Yes, but that was not like the romanticism. Just notice that they cared for the format. But here (romantic period), format and just giving was for their emotions just to flow.

What do we mean by romanticism? Imagination, living your feelings, experiencing love and other emotions, and all that was revealed in the poetry. That was also a kind of relaxation and it was revealed in the format. But here, they have even more relaxation, because if you have no pressures, if you have no hardships of life, if you are living easily, if you don't have to work for your bread winning, then you have enough time to let your inner feelings out. You will have enough time just to live, to love, to express your love and emotions, and to have the result of everything in every part of your life; in writings and in real life. That's why, if you just notice, during the sixties of last century, we have the same period, and that was revealed in the white and black movies in the cinema, all of them tackle love and treason, but these are emotions at the end. So, they were talking about romanticism; two lovers loving each other, just hide from other people, they just meet, they love each other, they just make love, but not under the eyes of other people, just notice that was a period of relaxation, romanticism in the Arabic world.

But now we have a very excessively realistic period; there are no emotions right now, they only thing I feel is satisfying my hunger and my children's hunger, going to work, being strict, being on time, or whatever... . That's why we have become more logical, more realistic, and we have no place for emotions, maybe when we pass over this period, we will get back to the normal situation.

So, just notice that, in the romantic period we had enough time just to unleash our imagination نطلق العنان لخيالنا, now we have imagination, we have unleashing of feelings and emotions inside and that all was accompanied with good ornamented, decorated words revealed in format and in the content. Because they had enough time, women began just to be more educated, they began just to read, they began to be poets, writers, critics (like Virginia Woolf later on). But all this proved that they had a big mind, they had a cause, they open their eyes to the bitter reality they were living and they wanted to change their reality. And the beginning was with **Mary Wollstonecraft**.

This Mary was a hard defender of the rights of women, and because she had a very considering husband (open minded), he did not stop her, he supported her and even

published her works, because he was a believer in her works and ideas, that's why he published her works after her death.

A very good example of defending the rights of women is at text she has written, definitely there are a lot of articles she has written, she has a lot of books she has written (I don't mean 'a lot' tens, maybe less than tens, only a few, but actually for that period of time they were a big number). I'm just going to read just to give you notes of how open-minded she was.

From **A Vindication of the Rights of Woman**

Introduction

After considering the historic page, and viewing the living world with anxious solicitude, the most melancholy emotions of sorrowful indignation have depressed my spirits¹, and I have sighed when obliged to confess, that either nature has made a great difference between man and man², or that the civilization³ which has hitherto taken place in the world has been very partial⁴. I have turned over various books⁵ written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of school⁶; but what has been the result? - a profound conviction⁷ that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures⁸ is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion⁹. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state¹⁰; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty¹¹; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye¹², fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity¹³. -One cause of this barren¹⁴ blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men¹⁵ who considering females rather as women than human creatures¹⁶, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses¹⁷ than affectionate wives and rational mothers¹⁸; and the understanding of the sex has been so bubbled¹⁹ by this specious homage, that the civilized woman of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love²⁰, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect.

In a treatise, therefore, on female rights and manners, the works which have been particularly written for their improvement²¹ must not be overlooked²²; especially when it is asserted, in direct terms, that the books of instruction, written by men of genius, have had the same

tendency as more frivolous productions, and that, in the true style of Mahometanism²³, they are treated as a kind of subordinate beings²⁴, and not as a part of the human species, when improvable reason is allowed to be the dignified distinction which raises men above the brute creation, and puts a natural sceptre in a feeble land²⁵.

²⁶Yet, because I am a woman, I would not lead my readers to suppose that I mean violently to agitate²⁷ the contested question respecting the equality or inferiority of the sex; but as the subject lies in my way, and I cannot pass it over without subjecting the main tendency of my reasoning to misconstruction, I shall stop a moment to deliver, in a few words, my opinion²⁸. -In the government of the physical world it is observable that the female in point of strength is, in general, inferior to the male²⁹. This is the law of nature; and if it doesn't appear to be suspended or abrogated in favour of woman³⁰. A degree of physical superiority cannot, therefore, be denied³¹ –and it is noble prerogative! But not content with this natural pre-eminence, men endeavor to sink us still lower, merely to render us alluring objects³² for a moment; and women, intoxicated³³ by the adoration which men, under the influence of their senses, pay them, do not seek to obtain a durable in their hearts, or to become the friends of the fellow creatures who find amusement in their society³⁴.

1. Not only Mary, but a lot of her female counterparts felt that they were depressed.
2. There were a lot of fighting over the rights of men themselves, so how about the rights of women? but here they mean the **human beings**.
3. Just notice, when we say “man” we don't mean a male, because a male cannot be just combined with civilization, but human beings can be linked to civilization. That's why here we mean the human being.
4. Partial means not objective, siding with one part at the expense of the other.
5. She has read some books.
6. She was reading book with the aim of finding the cause of the present situation that is based on differentiating between man and woman. So, she read something about her age, but she focused on education and how parents behaved with either sex of their children, and how schools managed the little male children and the little female children. So, she focused on that issue.
7. Profound conviction: قناعة عميقة.
8. Fellow-creatures: female.

9. She found out that education was not enough, it was not objective, it was really partial, it was just giving rights to some kids at the expense of the other, some learners at the expense of the other learners. That's why there was no equality in education itself, and that the society was looking down at females, the whole society considered women just to be weak creatures. Ok, we are physically weak (as women), but we are not weak creatures, we are really strong creatures, but they could not understand that a woman is a strong creature, but she was just born to be physically weak or not as strong as a man. That was the point, so she discovered that women were looked upon as weak creatures and wretched creatures, just to be looked at with misery. Why? If I cry, then do I have just to be looked at in a very miserable way, or to be miserable person? –no, I'm just expressing my emotions. (in a very recent study, in English, they say that crying is not a sign of weakness, crying is a sign of strength and it's only a kind of discharging emotionally) you discharge your negative emotions, and you are going back and restoring your psychological balance, so this is according to a recent study, but according to that age, crying was a kind of weakness, so if a woman was to cry, then she was a symbol of weakness. That's why she is weak and miserable creature.
10. Yes, their minds were not in a healthy state, because when I just say “oh my god, my baby, you are so weak, you are so miserable” I will just be convinced my inner mind, my unconscious will just get all these ideas, and will turn my whole body just to be weak, I will just be convinced that I'm a really weak person. So, they were convinced that they were weak, but Mary was not convinced and she stepped over this, and she just got out of the scene, she wanted to read more just to be more educated to know how people were looking at things. She wanted to have a greater image, she was looking from outside the box that's why she could see a different reality from the one that she was living or most of her counterparts were living in.
11. This just tells us that women were looked at as beautiful creatures, they were just utilized for a specific purpose; satisfying desires. “I have to be beautiful”, we even have these same ideas right-now; I have to be beautiful in his eyes. So, she has to be beautiful just to convince her man or just getting married to her. But at that period, they just beautified themselves for men, because they were symbol of beauty.
- 12.

13. **Fastidious:** when we say a fastidious person, we mean (إنسان نيق (نيقة, مايبعبو العجب) a person who likes perfectionism, not easily satisfied with anything.

14. This means they were exploited; they were exhausted before their age.

15. **Barren:** this is a very negative word; when a person cannot give birth to children, they say he/she is barren. عقيم.

Student: “barren blooming”؟ هل هما كلمتان متعاكستان؟

Professor:

ليستا كذلك، المقصود أنه هناك فترة إزدهار لدى المرأة ولكن إلى حد معين، يقضى فيما بعد على المرأة لأنها استهلكت قبل سن النضوج الطبيعي للمرأة.

She can just feel her youth and it can just go so fast, but when she arrives at the age of maturity, you will never say that she looks like 35, but she looks like 55, because she was consumed all her age long.

16. So even education was in the hands of men.

17. This is the patriarchal society, the patriarchal system of education, it's the same all over the world.

18. This is what we were talking about; woman beautifying herself, just to satisfied desires of her man.

19. Rational mothers, they never trusted the minds of women, they don't have just to deal with politics, they cannot, their minds will not be able just to understand politics, they will not be able to understand various business issues, and how are they going to teach their children? How are they just going to be better? –no, only men have those big minds. So, they are never rational according to men.

20. **Bubbled:** it means **confused** by this specious home image. I mean the image that they have at home.

21. This is their mission.

22. Something was written for the improvement of women.

23. **Over looked:** skip.

24. Mahometanism: it refers to Islam.

25. subordinate beings: follow other beings, treated as less important creatures (تابع) That's why they say here that females are subordinate creatures.

26. Here they are just talking about the role of woman in society. So, they raise other creatures and they are responsible, and they just turn them from feeble (weak) people into strong men.
27. Now she is just appearing as the narrator and as a person responsible for this article.
28. **To agitate:** to feel this anger.
29. She has to give her opinion about the issue (the cause of women).
30. Yes, in government this is correct.
31. This may just look like it's not in the favour of woman, when we say that a woman is, according to nature, inferior to a man, this is correct nature, because my nature is not as we, I don't have that strong nature or miniature like a man. I have to be physically inferior to man, but mentally there is something else. So, in general, according to nature, this is correct.
32. This is reality, I can't deny. if I just get into a fight with Karam, even though he is years younger to me, he might just win over me because he is physically stronger than me. Don't say that she is taller or older. No, this has nothing to do with his nature and my own nature.
33. It means, men are just minimizing women's roles just to be beautiful creatures, no more no less.
34. **Intoxicated:** أصابهن النمل من اقتناعهن بتلك الأفكار.
35. Their roles are just minimized to satisfying men and being beautiful creature, no more no less. This is her opinion, but don't forget that being a stronger from the physical point of view doesn't mean that you are better.

نكتفي بهذا القدر، نراكم في المحاضرة القادمة بإذن الله ☺

عنوان مكتبة الكمال: ((كَلْبِيَّةُ الآداب - داخل الحرم الجامعي - بناء الصحافة/ جانب المدرج السابع))

The end ♥