

The Arab Women in Popular Proverbs - Injustice, Humiliation and Denial.

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Abstract: Proverbs about women in the human heritage in general and the Arab heritage in particular are considered of a special characteristics and remarkable in their being dynamic ones that move in all directions of life. Most of them carry the essence of the social issues and are distributed in such a way that they have become part of the private life of the general public. This distribution covers all periods and fields of the woman's life, the social, the economic and psychological ones.

The woman occupies a major space in the Popular Proverbs because she is the center of social life inside and outside the house. The woman's statuses and images in the proverbs are numerous and she is often described in parallel images but each one differs from the other. These images intertwine due to their varieties and multiplicity and ultimately, they constitute a general stereotypical image of the woman, which degrades her status as a woman, a mother and a wife. The study shows how Popular Proverbs in Arabic reflect the Arab woman's position and status in her society.

Key words: Popular proverbs, cultural position, Semantic Field Theory, stereotypical image, society.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Popular proverbs reflect the mentality of the people that creates it and describe its social life. In fact, they are the best evidence to its morals, culture, occupations, and concerns. Besides, they constitute a translation of the level of its language and the approach of its education and culture. Proverbs also include accurate registration of one of the aspects of the people's general history¹.

The term 'proverb' is an artistic short saying that describes a situation or an event that is based on a human experience that can be recalled on a similar occasion or condition. Proverbs are associated with inference, deduction of wisdom and morality. They are also connected to prevailing relations and values².

The term "popular" in language is a derived adjective from the noun 'sha'b/ people' in Arabic. The Arab lexicographer, Ibn Mazur, who wrote the great dictionary *Lisan al-'Arab* defines the word 'sha'b' as follows: "The 'sha'b' (people) is the tribes that branches (tasha'aba)". Ibn al-Kalbi quoted from his father that: "al-sha'b (people) is larger than a 'tribe', followed by 'fassila' (group/ faction), 'amara' (division of a tribe), batn (subdivision of a tribe), and fakhz (smaller subdivision of a tribe). The people is greater than these classes and the word 'sha'b' is derived from the 'branches' of opinion. Al-Sha'b: gathering and separation, reformation and ruining are their opposites. A tradition by Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab, says: a small branch /people comes from a large branch/people, i.e. little good comes from large corruption. The people is the father of tribes and they are attributed to it. The 'people' is the Father of the tribes, who are attributed to it. The plural is 'shu'oub/ peoples. Each generation is a people³. God says in his Holy Book: "We have made you nations and tribes so that you will know one another"⁴.

In short, it is possible to say that the term 'sha'bi/popular' indicates everything that has close contact with the 'sha'b/people, either in form or content. Any practice that is characterized by 'popularity' means that it is the product of the people and it is its own property"⁵. Popular literature of any human society is the literature of

¹ *Al-Mawsu'a al-'Arabiya Online* (2001), Vol.3, p. 486.

² Abd al-'Aziz, Muhammad Rif'at (1999). *Al-Amthal Masdaran li Dirasat al-Tarikh: Qira'a fi al-Tarikh al-Su'udi wa al-Tarikh al-Masri*. Misr; A'yn li al-Dirasat wa al-Buhuth al-Insaniya al-Ijtima'iya, p. 8.

³ Ibn Manzur, Abu al-Fadhl Jamal al-Din Muhammad bin Mukaram bin Manzur al-Ifriqi al-Masri (1968), *Lisan al-'Arab*, Vol. 1, (n.d.). Beirut: Dar Sader, p. 497-500.

⁴ The Holt Koran, Surat al-Hujur, Verse 13.

⁵ Sa'idi, Muhammad (1998). *al-Adab al-Sha'bi bayn al-Nazariya wa al-Tatbiq: Diwan al-Matbu'at al-Jami'iya*, p. 9.

its traditional spoken vernacular (Amiyya), whose author is anonymous, and is inherited a generation from ageneration.⁶ Popular Proverbs constitute a recording of oral speech in short sentences of events from which the person has inferred good deeds and moral lessons. We rarely find a proverb that does not carry a revealing explanation of the course of events of the story and its characters. The people never ignored or forgot the events and always recorded them in the words of the proverb that the people circulated and passed a generation after another, which made the proverbs assume a special type of utterances that make the strongest impact on the human issues and behavior, unlike wisdoms that remain as they are - words that do not have this revealing interpretation⁷.

The discourse of the Popular Proverbs is characterized by its easy absorption, its structural form, and its expressive capability that make it reflect different kinds of human behavioral types, in addition to its nature that is characterized by its intensity and metaphorical power and fast spread among different social groups.⁸

The Proverb has stronger impact in social relations and is closer to people's life till the present time. According to al-Talli bin al-Sheikh, the cause of this phenomenon is attributed to the fact that the proverb does not deal with social issues that are connected to specific circumstances that are connected to a specific period of time like the popular folk tale, but it focuses on the human behavior in changing circumstances, whether that behavior is individual or collective. The connection of the proverb with the human behavior means taking into consideration the individual differences between persons and communities⁹. Since the Proverbs belong to one of the living popular literary arts, they are connected to everything and deal with everything that is connected to human life. Consequently, we see that they deal with morals, wisdom, education and guidance, satire and irony, joke and humor, moral messages and lessons, love and hatred, confusion and security, fear and safety, happiness and misery, fertility and barrenness, war and peace, life and death¹⁰.

Even if the Popular Proverbs appear to be unconnected to a specific period of time, and that they belong to the past, centuries ago, as the case is with proverbs and common saying of Abd al-Rahman Majdoub, which belong to the eleventh century, that does not mean that they no more affect the Present or the Future. On the contrary, maybe just because they belong to the past, they exert some serious magic and impact on the people's mentalities and manners from the viewpoint that they represent the wisdom of the ancestors¹¹.

In my opinion, Proverbs about women have introduced deep problems and revealed lots of facts and aroused people's emotions and sympathy about her reality as the woman has lived a historical feeling that represents her as inferior to the man and unequal to him in rights. Actually, she lives in discrepancy between her biological nature of life and society's look at her.

The discourse of proverbs expresses the reality and stores different images of about the human reality including the image of the woman.¹² Popular Proverbs still describe the woman through focusing on her moral and physical characteristics on the one hand, and on what characterizes her on the social and cultural position besides the level of her roles and activities inside and outside the house. The meanings and subjects that the proverbs about women produced represent a lively image that still interacts with society. In spite of that, these proverbs do not deviate from the ordinary or the familiar, as most proverbs were not to the advantage of the

⁶Ibid. p. 10.

⁷Rashwan, Hussein Abd al-Hamid Ahmad (1990). *Al-Folklore wa al-Funun al-Sha'biya min Manzour 'Ilm al-'Ijtima'*. Alexandria: al-Maktab al-Jami'i al-Hadith, p. 41.

⁸Ali, Afarfar (1996). *Surat al-Mar'a bay al-Manzour al-Dini wa al-Sha'bi wa al-'Ilmani*. Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, p. 57-58.

⁹Al-Talli, bin al-Sheikh (1990). *Muntalaqat al-Tafkir fi al-Adab al-Sha'bi al-Jaza'iri: al-Mu'asasa al-Wataniya li al-Kitab*, p. 157.

¹⁰Murtadh, Abd al-Malik (1975). *Dalalat al-Amthal wa al-Hikam al-Sha'biya 'ala Naqawat Amiyyatiha. Majallat al-Thaqafa*. Ministry of Information and Culture. Algeria, p. 34.

¹¹Muhammad, Jasous. "Silsilat Maqalat hawl al-Thaqafa al-Sha'biya. Jaridat al-Ittihad al-Ishtiraki. Ramadan Month.

¹²We mean by the word "image" here that intellectual structure that is completed on the subjective symbolic and imaginative level, which is connected to the human reality, from the point of view that the human being's value is connected to the amount that he knows about his environment directly through the presence of things inside his mind. He is aware of it in an indirect way as things exist in the feelings through 'images'. When we talk about images, we talk about metaphorical beings of creatures that we "live by" and frame our life and behavior in the frame of society; "the metaphor represents a type of thought, actually, it symbolizes our conscious or unconscious "facts", especially if the metaphor is a semi-fixed metaphor" as the case is in popular proverbs. For example, see: Abd al-Majid, Jahfa (1999). *Sawat al-Nahar wa Sihir al-Lail: al-Fuhula wa man Yuwazeaha fi al-tasawur al-'Arabi*. Al-Dar al-Baydha': Dar Topqal li al-Nashr, p. 9-11.

woman or the ordinary line she adopts, which is represented in the proverbs that are established on conflict between the two sexes and focus on their conflicts and scandals and the attitude of each side towards the other.

Consequently, the proverbs do not give accomplished definitions that have unrealistic indications. Actually, they dive deeply to reach the most precise and accurate human feelings. They deal with such feelings as if they were still open issues or infinite end because their fundamental function is to deal with the facts that society feels and cares about.

Therefore, the 'specific weight' of woman appeared to be 'heavy' due to the courage that the woman has in her unfamiliar way of introducing issues and problems, though these proverbs are not free of the heritage and the historical viewpoint that committed to preserve the heritage and avoid working on its substitution or change. Therefore, the proverbs about women raise obvious problem that is represented in their stay and continuity in the popular consciousness. In fact, there are old fashioned proverbs that have been kept since old times in a noticeable way whether by men or women in order to use them against each other.

It is worthwhile mentioning that it is impossible to analyze the popular proverbs that are related to women far from the religion and superstition as a source from which the proverb-creator chooses tools and instruments that correspond with his tendency that is affected by the social environment that he grew in, and which represent his traditions, values and norms, besides the economic systems and tyrannical circumstances that he lived through in order to coin proverbs in an expressive definite mold and as an intellectual attempt that plays a main role in the formation of the popular culture.

Popular Proverbs and Married Woman

The subject of the woman's image in Arabic popular proverbs has not been dealt sufficiently with in modern Arabic critical studies. Therefore, this study tries to give answers to questions that are important in this field such as: What is the image that the popular proverbs draw about the woman in the institution of marriage? Is the image true and fair or prejudiced against her? Does the fact that the creator of the proverb is often a male affect that image? Is the image characterized by domination and sovereignty of the collective male voice? Is the image that the male group has introduced about the woman the most common one or is there another image that murmurs about these supposed positions? Is the woman satisfied with this image or complains about it and seeks to change it? What are the indications of this image and its reflections on the reality of the woman in her family and society? Does this image differ according to the status of the woman and her age? Or is it a general image that accompanies the woman and apply to all women, irrespective of the differences that exist among them?

Since marriage constitutes a distinctive sign in the image of the woman's life from the popular perspective, and since the woman's destiny, in my view, is determined by analogy with the stage of marriage, I found it appropriate from this perspective to introduce the woman's image through focusing on her position within the institution of marriage and outside it through observing a group of popular proverbs that are current among the Arab societies and finding out the points of weakness and power in their description of the woman's condition.

This study aims to deal with the image that popular proverbs draw of the woman, specifically in the institution of marriage, and explore their indications and reflections on the woman's position through uncovering of the effect of popular proverbs and popular education in general on society and social development. Popular proverbs, as it is known, do not only reveal the hidden psychological aspects of every people, but they are also semi-obligatory social rules that put down the standards to which the whole society submits.

The study adopts the Semantic Field Theory¹³, which is, in my view, the best theory for semantic analysis. Therefore, the study relies on the methodology of analysis of content, determination of the social indications of the selected proverbs. Besides, the study variates the types and themes of the proverbs.

¹³The theory of semantic fields is concerned with the semantic and lexicological field of a group of words which have a specific indication in a certain way. These words are connected to one general term. The semantic connection joins these words together lexicologically. Semanticists maintain that each word or semantic unit must belong to one specific and definite field, which is known as a complete segment of a linguistic material that expresses a specific area of experience such as attributes or relations. The semantic field is like a family in social life from the perspective of the affiliation to its members to it, even if they are different in their gender, color, age, temper and thought. See for example, Klinten, Haifa Abd al-Hamid (2001). *Nazariyat al-Huqoul al-Dalaliya-Dirasa Tatbiqiya fi al-Mukhassas* by Ibn Sideh. A Ph.D. dissertation in Arabic. Um al-Qura University. Department of Arabic. Saudi Arabia, p. 19-21.

The Marriage from the Popular Perspective

The issue of marriage is often looked at as a mainly masculine issue that concerns the man more than the woman, and consequently, the final word in it is for the man. Therefore, the proverb advises the man to do the following: " حَلِّ عَيْنِكَ قَبْلَ الزَّوْجِ أَمَا بَعْدَهُ غَضْمِهِم / untie your eyes before marriage, but after it, close them". Implicitly, marriage seems to be a 'privilege' that is given to the woman. The man only has the right to choose his life-partner while the woman has to accept the man whatever he is because the man, from the popular perspective, cannot be shamed. Moreover, some proverbs describe the woman in an image that demeans her dignity. Some proverbs consider her as an unnecessary marginal helpless creature that causes problems to the man and offends him more than she benefits him. In addition, she has no choice but to be submissive and under his control. If he likes, he can even give her up and do without her.

Marriage in the popular perspective is a distinctive sign in the life of the woman. Her education and bringing up are based in some traditional sectors on preparing her to take the role of the wife and the housewife. This role is considered a 'privilege' to her if she wins it, because her fate is decided by her success in the station of marriage. The first goal in the girl's life, from the point of view of the parents, is 'marriage' itself: *ستر البنت* / protection of the girl's honor is her marriage". This is a depressive look because the parents' concern and anxiety increase if their daughter does not get married early. Their anxiety applies to the woman in any way, whether married or unmarried. The proverb says " *هَمُّ الْبَنَاتِ لِلْمَمَاتِ* / the parents' anxiety about the girls (daughters) continues till their death". On the other hand, strangely, the proverbs warn the woman against 'marriage', e.g. " *وَجَدْتُ الْعَازِبَةَ تَشْكِي لَقَّتِ الْمَتَّجِرَةَ بِتَبْكِي* / When the unmarried started to complain, she found the married one crying". Also: " *يَا بَخْتٌ مَنْ رَضِيَ عَنْهَا زَوْجَهَا* / How lucky the one whose husband is satisfied with her is".

The Popular Proverbs that were said about the woman before marriage are sometimes positive and other times negative. Positive proverbs describe the woman as a source of affection and sympathy: " *اللِّي مَا عِنْدُو شِ* / The one who has no daughter, was not known when he died"; " *اللِّي خَلَفَ بَنَاتٍ مَا مَاتَ* / The one who gives birth to daughters does not die"; " *اللِّي مَا عِنْدُو أَنْتِي مَا بَكَوْا عَلَيْهِ* / No one weeps about the one who has no females". All these proverbs imply that the 'female' (daughter) is more affectionate than the 'male' (son) to their father. She remembers him for a long time. Besides, her weeping and feeling about her father's death arouses sympathy towards her and arouses the feelings of the mourners and motivates the hearers to about the dead person.

The proverbs emphasize the fact that the daughter bears responsibility for her family's home, e.g. " *الْبِنْتُ عِمَارَةُ الدَّارِ* / The daughter is the one who builds the house"; " *اللَّهُ يَجْعَلُ لِي فِي كُلِّ اثْنَيْهِ وَلِيَّهُ* / May God give me a daughter in every other delivery a daughter". In addition to the home responsibilities that the daughter bears, she is the one who builds the house " *الْبَنَاتُ عِمَارَةُ الدَّارِ* / The daughters are the ones who build the house".

However, the Proverbs sometimes draw a contradictory image of the daughter, though she is "the one who builds the house" and bears all the responsibility about it. Some proverbs describe her as insatiable, e.g. " *الْبِنْتُ تَأْكُلُ مَا تَشْبَعُ وَتَخْدُمُ مَا تَقْنَعُ* / The daughter eats and remains hungry; works and remains unconvincing".

In addition, the popular perspective implies that the bet on the daughter is an empty one: " *دَارُ الْبِنْتِ خَاوِيَةٌ* / The house of the daughter is empty" because she will leave her family's home to the home of her husband, leaving her parents' home vacant.

Popular Proverbs also deal with the necessity of 'early marriage,' e.g. " *الْحَرْثُ بَكْرِي وَالزَّوْجُ بَكْرِي* / Plowing the land should be early and getting married should be early". From the popular perspective, there is no choice for the daughter but 'marriage'. In order to get rid of her, there is no way except 'marriage' as a social relationship that guarantees the protection of her honor. " *الْبِنْتُ إِمَّا رَجُلُهَا وَإِمَّا قَبْرُهَا* / the daughter is either with her husband or in her grave".

The Popular Proverbs also introduces the issue of "Spinsterhood" and describes it as a more serious problem for the girl than for the boy. The girl starts to be called "spinster" or "unwanted" if she passes the commonly accepted age of getting married; " *طَلَبُوهَا اتْعَزَزْتُ، فَاتَوْهَا اتْتَدَمْتُ* / When they (men) asked for her hand, she hesitated; when they left her, she regretted it". The popular proverb reminds the young woman to get married in order to avoid people's gossip about her and their malicious gloating: " *تَزَوَّجِي لِي يَقُولُوا 'بَابِرْه'*، أولدي ل / Get married, so that they will not say about you: "unwanted"; give birth to a baby so that they will not say about you: "barren". People will call the girl 'names' such as 'spinster' or 'unwanted' if she does not get married, and if she gets married when she is an adult and could not give birth, they will call her bad names and accuse her of 'barrenness'. The previous proverb is emphasized by another proverb saying: " *الْبِنْتُ إِذَا بَارَتْ، عَلِي* / If the daughter becomes unwanted, she starts looking for a her *Sa'd* (a man)", which means that if she becomes a spinster, she starts looking for a man". In other words, the spinster's condition is likely to change and she might find her 'Sa'd' and her future – her man.

As a result, the girl who does not get married in time, is likely to face serious social problems. Society will start looking at her in a negative unfriendly way and starts blaming her for her spinsterhood. Her family and society blame her strongly and finally she accepts anyone who is not equal to her. The proverb urges her to accept reality: " *أَجُوزُ مِنْ عَوْدٍ وَلَا الْقَعُودُ* / a husband like a piece of wood is better than staying at home without a

husband". In this case, she is expected to accept the consequences including distress, need and poverty: البيت بالبیت / الرجل رحمة، لو يجيب فحمه" الرجل / The man at home is a mercy, even if he brings just a piece of coal".

Simone de Beauvoir says that getting a husband becomes a vital issue for all girls of all tendencies. People often feel surprised how simply the girl gives up her friends, parents, music, studies and profession when she finds a suitable husband¹⁴.

The natural place for the girl who reaches the marriage age is the house of her husband as her stay at her parents' home is a big shame: "العائق في الدار عار" / The girl's stay at her parents' home is shame" and "شدوا علينا" / "Send your sons, our daughter has outraged us". The daughter who has reached the age of marriage is seen as an ordeal and it is necessary to get her out of it: "البنت وصلات عنقوها بالزواج" / the daughter is a link and she is freed by marriage". The daughter can also be a threat because she can burst at any moment. The female is like a bomb that can explode and cause a scandal and disgrace to her family: "اللي عنده بنته في الدار، عنده" / "He who has a girl at home has a bomb!".

The Popular Proverbs stress the issue of motivating the girl to get married as soon as possible. The parents should choose the suitable husband who will not divorce her and will not return her to her parents. The proverb says: "دور لبنتك قبل ما تدور لابنك" / Look for a husband for your daughter before you look for a wife for your son".

The proverb also encourages the girl to stick to her husband and keep her marriage فرحت بالجوز قالت / "أعور" / She was pleased to find a husband; then she said 'he's one-eyed"! In other words, after she got a husband, she started complaining that he had defects and she hesitated to accept him. In this way, the situation slips from her fingers; she loses the opportunity and she regrets.

As we see, the Popular Proverb reveals a low social status of the woman who has no husband: "ظل راجل" / "A shadow of a man is better than a shadow of a wall"; "أخرمه من غير راجل زي الطربوش من غير زر" / "A woman without a man is like a fez (tarboush) without a button"; "اسم الزوج ولا طعم الترمل" / "Having the name of the husband is better than having the name of widowhood".

If the discourse of the Popular Proverb is essentially a metaphorical one, it sometimes sounds closer to a direct and reporting style than metaphor because it sometimes exerts direct symbolical violence against the rights of the girl as we see in this proverb that openly urges the idea of depriving her from her right for education and her right for an independent space, even if between the walls of her home: "بنتك لا تعلمها حروف ولا" / "Don't teach your daughter letters (how to write), and don't let her live (alone) in (good) rooms". This proverb reveals the male's mentality and its desire to dominate and exploit her space by emphasizing the necessity to limit the girl's independence on the personal level and the level of possessing and exploiting her space. This is so because 'education', from the popular perspective, is likely to constitute a danger for the girls due to its strong effect on their personality. The proverb says: "الفكوسة تتعوج من الصغر" / The (Egyptian) cucumber should be bent at an early age". In other words, she should be broken at an early age. If she grows up unbroken, she will become hard.

The Popular Proverb looks at the young woman as easy going and submissive to the authority of the man and consequently, she is a source of goodness and benefit to him: "اللي يتزوج المره صغيرة يحوز الخير والتبيرة" / "The one who gets married to a young lady, wins goodness and good management".

However, the adult woman is not desired even if she has financial privileges: "لا تعبي المره كبيرة، ولو تأكل" / "Don't take (marry) the adult woman, even if you eat chicken and meat with her", which means "don't marry the grown-up woman even if she has some financial privileges. Besides, if the woman becomes a spinster, she will suffer from deprivation and suppression, which makes her lose her self-confidence البايبة ما تصدق" / "The grown-up unmarried girl, becomes untrue, unconfident and suspicious of her environment. حتى تعنق".

However, the unmarried girl prefers staying unmarried rather than choosing a failing marriage: "بقاي في العار" / "بعد أختي عني وخذ غلتها مني" / "Keep my sister away from me, and take her grudge from me". Despite the admission that the daughter brings prosperity to the family, "أب البنات مرزوق" / "The daughters' father is prosperous", there is some fear of her return to her home after marriage, "زوج بنتك وبعد دارها ما يجيبك غير أخبارها" / "Get your daughter married and keep her home away from you; nothing will return to you except her news."

The Popular Proverb draws attention to the issue of social equality as a precondition for reconciliation and happiness in marriage. The popular proverbs make that clear, e.g. "اتجوز بنت اللي يربط حمارك" / "Get your daughter married to the one who ties your donkey", which means that the one who comes from the same class as you". Choosing the right social class is an urgent necessity that enables the individual to deal with its members and be in harmony with its values and lifestyle. Another proverb that focuses on the result of marrying someone

¹⁴ De Beauvoir, Simone (1979). *Le Deuxième Sexe/ al-Jins al-Akhar*, Trans. By Muhammad Ali Sharaff al-Din. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Haditha li al-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, p. 139-140.

who is above his social class says: "اللي يتطلع لفوق بتتكسر رقبتيه" / The one who looks high breaks his neck" and, قال "ابنت المودن مين بتوخذ. قال امودن مثل ابرها" / He asked: "who does the Mu'azin's daughter marry?" The other replied. "A mu'azin like her father".

Popular Proverbs emphasize the importance of originality of descent bloodline such as: صهرك بشد / "ظهرتك" / Your son-in-law supports your back"; "كون نسيب ولا تكون ابن عم" / Being a son-in-law is better than being a cousin"; and "I will take my cousin and cover myself by my sleeve". The indication here is the preference of one's son-in-law to one's cousin or nephew. This is connected to considerations of social and economic life and solidarity, support and protection in hard times and need.

The image of the wife is determined before marriage especially by the man who is granted by society the right to define the specifications of his life partner. Among the attributes that are strongly emphasized is the question of 'high-birth', 'honorable descent' and family 'lineage'. Marriage is not considered as a relationship between the couple only but between two families. In order to avoid problems, reduce them and solve them quickly, the Popular Proverb says: "خذ المرءة الاصبيلة ونام على الحصيرة" / Take the honorable wife and sleep on the mattress" because the honorable woman is a support to her husband in hard times and a source of pride in front of others: "إذا يدك تتزوج الأصول ما يعرف العدو ما يقول" / If you want to marry, marry one with honorable origins, the enemy will not have what to say".

Emphasis is generally put on the mother's lineage. If you cannot determine the behavior and morals of the young girl and expect her deeds, the mother's behavior and deeds will tell you about her daughter's behavior in the future. Therefore, the popular proverb does not ignore talking about the way to know about the qualities of the daughter. The proverb guides the man how to choose a wife: "خوذ البنات على الامهات" / Judge the daughters by their mothers' behavior". The girl is chosen by the good name of her mother, specifically, "قبل ما تلم سول على الام" / Before you take a girl, ask about her mother" because the daughter will certainly be the image of her mother; "طب الطنجرة على قمها تطلع البنت لامها" / Turn the pot on its face, and the daughter will take after her mother.

Proverbs in this aspect are clear in their hereditary indications. The daughter is considered an extension of her mother in manners, morals and reputation. She also carries with her some of her mother's behavior, which is likely to cause her bad name e.g. "ابنت الخواصة خواصة و بنت النساجه رقامه" / The daughter of the wader is a wader and the daughter of the weaver is a weaver, which implies that the daughter is similar to her mother. The proverb indicates that the daughter takes her mother's job, behavior, attributes and lifestyle.

The Woman after Marriage

Simone de Beauvoir maintains that instead of admitting his ignorance, the man looks for a puzzle outside himself. The truth is that the puzzle is mutual between the man and the woman. It is certain that there is a great difference between them regarding work and outlook at life and sexual activity. Both sexes agree that they exchange doubt. The woman admits her subordination to the man because she cannot do without him if she wants to explore the secrets of her body and he is the one who has the initiative in most cases. He starts with flirting, courting, wooing, and caressing while she receives his flirting and offerings with submission and negativity¹⁵, which means that the woman enjoys negative attitudes, while the man looks in the marriage institution for the assertion of his existence and not the right of his existence, as Sime de Beauvoir sees¹⁶. The inferiority status of the woman in the family and society is not reflected only in the Popular Proverbs but is also perpetuated by the social development.¹⁷

The discourse of Popular Proverb is essentially a male discourse par excellence, even when it talks about the woman or in her name. It is also directed by a man to a man, from a man with a long experienced in life to a man who is a beginner in life, offering to him – through proverbs, an image about the woman that either warns him of her or encourages him to love her¹⁸. The study of Popular Proverbs gives the opportunity to reveal the image of the woman in our society which is organized according to the principle of Androcentrism¹⁹, which is the practice of placing a masculine point of view at the center of one's world view, culture, and history, thereby culturally marginalizing femininity.

This image, which is passed from one generation to the other through the act of social upbringing, which includes the Popular Proverbs as one of its streams. The irony is that the woman is responsible for devoting her negative image being a fundamental actor in the field of socialization.²⁰ Therefore, the Popular Proverbs describe the woman as fully subordinate to the man: "جوزك شالك جوزك حطك جوزك بالخرا لئك" / Your husband

¹⁵Ibid. p. 72

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 164.

¹⁷Ali, Afarfar (1996). *Surat al-Mar'a bay al-Manzour al-Dini wa al-Sha'bi wa al-Ilmani*, p. 57-58.

¹⁸Ibid. p. 63

¹⁹Pierre, Bourdieu. *La domination masculine*. Paris: Seuil, Coll. Liber. 1998. P. 150.

²⁰Guy, Rocher (1968). *L'action sociale*. Paris: Seuil, coll. le point, p.132.

carried you, your husband put you down, he remains your husband even if he hits you with shit, which implies that he has the right and authority to do whatever he likes and you, the woman, has to accept it.

To emphasize that subordination, the husband is the one who imposes his wife's respect on others because he is the source of her respect: *اللي بقولها جوزها يا عورة الكل يلعب فيها الكورة واللي بقولها يا هانم يقولها على السلام* / The wife whose husband calls her 'one-eyed' becomes like a ball that everyone kicks; the wife whose husband calls her 'madam' is raised on ladders (as a sign of respect); *اللي جوزها يحبها الشمس تطلع لها* / The Sun rises for the one who is loved by her husband."

All these proverbs are strongly serious and are concerned with the details of the woman's life. They do not ignore any of her attributes, whether positive or negative. The Popular Proverb emphasizes the necessity of loyalty to the home and family of the husband as evidence to her subordination and belonging to the man: *قوم شروك ولا قوم باعوك* / You belong to people who bought you, not people who sold you. (The proverb has another version which is: *أهلك اللي شروكي مش اللي باعوكي* which means: Your family is the family that bought you, not the family that sold you. From the point of view of the wife, the proverb says: *نار جوزي ولا جنة أهلي* / My husband's fire is better than my parents' paradise.

For the first second, we see that the woman's reaction to her family and look at her parents is this: *أبوي باعني الله يسهل عليه، وجوزي اشتراني الله يرضى عليه* / My father sold me, God be with him; my husband bought me, God bless him, but this look does not cancel the presence of the parents in her life, and she says: *بيت رباني ما هرب* / The home that brought me up did not escape and leave me. However, the popular proverb also points out that the difference between the parents' attitude and the husband's attitude is: *أهلك بحبوك غنيه وجوزك بحبك قوي* / Your parents love you if you are 'rich', and your husband loves you if you are 'strong'! The parents want her to be rich so that she will not need them!

The popular perspective urges and encourages 'family marriage', namely, marrying a relative in blood, or, as Levi Strauss puts it, "Exchange of women within the tribe and cousins"²¹. The popular proverb says about this tradition: *اللي يتزوج من بنات عمو بحال اللي ذبح من غنمه* / The condition of the one who marries his cousin (his uncle's daughters) is like the condition of the one who slays one of his sheep.

There are several proverbs that stress the advantage of marriage in the family such as: *ملس من طينك يسجي* / put clay and smooth it on your face, it sticks; *بنيت عمك ترفد همك* / Your cousin shares you your concerns; *خوذ بنت عمك ولو كانت بارت، وخوذ الطريق ولو كانت دارت* / Marry your cousin even if she is beyond the marriage age (unwanted), and take this road even if it is winding; *زيتنا في بيتنا وماعنا في دقيقنا* / Our oil is in our home and our water is in our wheat. However, some proverbs warn against relatives, *الأقارب عقارب* / Relatives are scorpions.

In addition, the popular proverb deals with the issue of the parents' financial status as this aspect plays a very important role in upbringing the daughter: *بنت الشبعان اذا شبعتم همدت وبنات الجوعان اذا شبعتم ضبعت* / If the daughter of a rich father is fed up (becomes rich), she becomes calm and satisfied but if the daughter of the poor father is fed up (becomes rich), she becomes like a hyena! The one who lives in a rich family is comfortable because she is always fed up and satisfied but the one who lives in a poor family is never fed up and is always unsatisfied. Thus, she becomes violent and unfair. In other words, she behaves like a 'hyena' or a wolf.

The Popular Proverbs introduce a number of instructions to the husband regarding his behavior with his wife after the wedding ceremony is over and his 'bride' is at his home. The proverbs stress the idea that the man has to prove his manliness, his sovereignty and control of his wife so that she will fear him all her life: *الفرس على فارسها والمره على راجلها* / The mare is as her knight is and the woman is as her man is, which means that the knight is the one who tames his mare and controls its movement and speed, and the husband is the one who accustoms his wife to behave according to his desires from the beginning of their marriage. The Proverb guides the man how to 'tame' and 'control' his wife – either by threatening her by marrying another one or actually marrying another one, which makes the woman do her best to please him and satisfy his needs. The proverb says: *بط النساء* / Hit the bitch, the bride will fear you. In short, the man/ husband has to show his power and strictness including hitting his dog if it makes a mistake in front of his wife so that she will know that anyone who makes mistakes at his home will be punished.

The Popular Proverb advises the woman to bridge over everything that the man does if she wants to get married. She should not call him to account for everything that she considers unfair or unjust: *المرأة اللي ما تجوز ما تتجوز* / The woman who does not let go and forgive, will not get married. The woman should bridge over the mistakes of her husband and his family and should not treat them in the same way (wrong) way as they do. If she cannot bear and be patient, she cannot get married or protect her marriage. If she cannot be patient and forgive, her marriage will not be safe.

²¹Strauss-Levi, Claude (1977). *Structural Anthropology/ al-Anthropologia al-Bunyawiya*. Trans. By Mustafa Saleh. Damascus: Publications of The Ministry of Culture and National Guidance.

In my view, the theory of femicide is still valid and many Arabic popular proverbs still consider the woman as 'awrah' (عورة) which means 'defectiveness', 'imperfection', 'blemish', 'weakness', 'nakedness' or 'shame'. Many popular proverbs consider the woman to be a 'disaster' and the source of every evil. Therefore, the proverbs observe the woman in every activity and considers her behavior the cause of happiness and unhappiness of her husband: المرّة مرّة أو مرمرة أو مسمار في العنطرة / The woman is either a woman, or a bitterness or a nail in the neck; في مره، وفي مرمرة، وفي داهية مصبره / Good is a woman and evil is a woman; في نسوان هبي وجوزها على الزمان وفي نسوان هبي / There is a woman, or a bitter one, or a stuffed and canned calamity! / الزمان على جوزها / There are women who stand with their husband in the face of time, and there are women who stand with the time against their husbands.

Simone de Beauvoir maintains that humanity is divided into two types: a type who stands beside the woman, and they are few, and a type who stands opposite the woman, and they are the greater majority. The women in concrete reality appear in different images types, and each type claims that she is unique. The result is that there are several typical images of women that cannot coexist together²². This indicates that there are several proverbs that have reached us in their complete form a long time ago. Some of them show that the image of the woman has been deteriorated throughout the centuries. Some of them are also to the advantage of the woman.

The Popular Proverb draws the woman's attention to the necessity that the woman should respect the man: العين ما بتعلي على الحاجب / The eye cannot be above the eyebrow. The proverb emphasizes the woman's obligation to respect the man, as if the man were the 'eyebrow' that protects her from evil doings. As said before, there are many proverbs that stress the idea that the wife belongs to the man in general and her husband in particular; الفرس تتبع الفارس, which means that the wife should obey her husband in anything that he likes, exactly as the mare obeys her knight, who leads her into the direction that he likes. Another proverb implies that the wife should prefer her husband to her family: المره خيرها لجوزها وشرها لأهلها / which means that the results of the woman's good deeds go to her husband, but the results of her bad deeds go to her family, who can stop her and punish her if necessary.

The Popular Proverb also asks the woman to be clever and tactful and behave elegantly with the man: وري / جوزك دمعتك ولا توريه لقميتك / Show your tear to your husband and not your bite of food. The Proverb also criticizes the woman who neglects her husband and cares for her neighbors; تركت جوزها ممدود وراحت تنعي أبو عبود / She left her husband stretched (dead) and went to tell about the death of Abu Abboud, as if he were more important than her husband!

On the other hand, the Popular Proverbs implies that "wealth" is not necessarily a good quality in the wife: لا تعبي المرا بدرهمها، تعمل لك النفخة وتقول لك اسق الماء / Don't take the woman for her dirham (money), she will cause you a flatulence in the abdomen and will say: water the water!" Besides, her wealth might lose your authority because you will not be responsible for her financially. This means that it is better for the man to marry a poor girl, if he wants to protect his authority. The man is advised to marry the simple poor woman who does not request a lot of things from her husband: اللي تعبي عب المسكينه ولو تجيب لها غير الخبز والسردينا / Marry the one who is satisfied with bread and sardine".

Sometimes, the Popular Proverb advises to choose a wife from a family of power and authority even if she is foolish! Thus, the marriage becomes a marriage of benefit and interest: خوذ بنت الخيمه الكبيره ولو هبيله / Take the daughter of the big tent (big powerful family) even if she is idiot, because you will benefit from her family.

The Popular Proverb also deals with the issue of polygamy and its disadvantages: أول بختك كرسي تحتك، / وتاني بختك داري وقتك، وتالت بختك لا فوقك ولا تحتك / Your first luck is a seat beneath you; your second luck, take care of your time; your third luck – you will have nothing above you or beneath you! The Popular Proverb also expresses the evil that takes place between the sisters in law (wives of the brothers): مركب الضراير سار، ومركب / السلفات اختار / The boat of the fellow wives sailed and the boat of the brothers' wives is puzzled, and does not know how to sail.

The Popular Proverb warns the man against women's cunning and deception so that he will avoid having conjugal problems: إن حبوك يا ويلك وإن كرهوك يا ويلك / If they love you, you will be in a hell, if they hate you, you will be in a hell! كانت قاعده ومرتاحه جابت لها حاحه / Before she got pregnant she prepared cumin, and before she gave birth she called him Ma'moun; احذر عناد / فتلة العويلة ممدوده وطويله / Beware of the stubbornness of monks, the slyness of women and anger of Sultans; يا مامن للحريم يا مامن للمعزه وسط البرسيم / If you trust women, you are like trusting goats in a shamrock field. / ياما تحت السواهي دواهي / الله ينجينا من كيد النسوان وتلج نيسان / The husband is absent / الجوز غايب والحال سايب

²²De Beauvoir, Simone (1979). *Le Deuxième Sexe/ al-Jins al-Akhar*, p. 139-140.

and the wife is roaming about. البيت معمور وصاحبته دايره في الدور / The house is full of people and its owner is standing in queue; كيد النسوان كيد مقيم / Women cunningness is constant; طنجرتها على النار وعينها على طنجرة جاريتها / Her cooking pot is on fire and her eyes are on her neighbor's pot.

As we see, the woman in Popular Proverbs appears in different images. Generally, she is not trusted and cannot be confided to keep a secret: يا ويل من أعطى سره لمراته يا طول عذابه وشتاته / Woe unto someone who gives his secret to his wife, he will suffer for a long time. The clever man is the one who does not give significance to his wife's opinion: الرجل ابن الرجل اللي عمره ما يشاور مرته / The brave man is the one who never consults his wife; الشاور مرتك وخالف راياها / Consult your wife and do the opposite; ما تأخذ رأي المره / Don't take a woman's opinion. All these proverbs that degrade the woman's opinion express society's opinion about her inability to use her mind and experience.

The Popular Proverb also deals with the relationship of the daughter-in-law with her mother in law: نعصي الولادة في جال الوسادة / He disobeys his mother in order to please his wife because he sleeps with her on one pillow and she provides him with sexual pleasure and thus he forgets what his mother has already done to him.

Therefore, another proverb says: إملا فمه ينسى امه / Fill his mouth and he will forget his mother. This proverb is also used metaphorically to describe someone who gives up his principles and values in order to obtain transient financial benefits.

What is remarkable about the Popular Proverbs is that the Mother takes care of her daughter-in-law more than she takes care of her daughter, especially in the issue of family honor because it is her son's honor: كتنني دايمه وبنتي هايمة / My daughter-in-law is staying with me to another family. Therefore, the Mother prefers her daughter-in-law.

Zakia Iraqi-Sinaceur confirms that women use proverbs more than men.²³ Therefore, they know the discourse of the Popular Proverb thoroughly with all its values. They also acknowledge its legitimacy and believe in its suitability to spontaneity of nature. In fact, they defend it and transmit it to their children, males and females being a fundamental factor in their development²⁴. Thus, the woman becomes an enemy of herself and a main condition to reproduction of her inferiority in relation to the man because of her alienation²⁵.

Ahmad Abu Zeidan maintains that the social structure consists of units that constitute social positions and centers in an intertwined social texture. Besides, there are anthropological data for the roles that are represented in the limits or rights and duties that are connected to the image of the woman in proverbs²⁶.

To sum up, the married woman in popular proverbs is drawn as a social being who is excluded from the public space and the field of public authority into her natural space, which is the closed house as if she does not know to do perfectly except the role of the wife or housewife. When she goes beyond the threshold of her home, she is accused of breaking one of her duties: المره اللي تطوف ما تغزل صوف / The woman who wanders about does not weave wool, and deserves to be insulted for her entering a field that is a monopoly for the man: لا خير / لا خير / في المره اللي تجول، لا خير في الرجل اللي / There is nothing good about a woman who roams about, and there is no good of a man who does not roam about.

Nabila Ibrahim says that the woman in Popular Proverbs is the one who carries and bears all the positive and negative attributes with no exception, whether young or old. The proverbs moved in an easy way, far from philosophical theories, and described the human relations between the woman and the others clearly, frankly and transparently, in such a way that some proverbs included biting sparks while others included positive sparks. Proverbs aim to criticize life through summarizing individual experiences, which is nothing but a reflection of the moral defects that prevail our world as proverbs introduce samples of our life that is full of criticism and irony.²⁷

The divorced woman

The attitude towards the divorced woman is negative in general. She is marginalized because she is a woman and she is marginalized because she is divorced. Society looks at her failure in marriage as if it were the end of her life or her symbolical death. If society's look at her as a body that loses its liveliness and freshness under the impact of marriage, its validity will certainly expire after divorce: أتجوز معلقة ولا تتجوز مطلقة / Marry a hanged one and do not marry a divorced one.

The woman often bears responsibility solely for divorce. She is mostly accused of being the cause of separation from her husband. In all cases, divorce remains a disgrace for the woman that will chase her

²³Zakia, Iraqi Sinaceur (2002). Le proverbe et la femme. In: *langues et linguistique*. N0. 9.p. 11-27.

²⁴Abd al-Salam, Hemar (1999). Masarat al-Tahawul al-Sociologi fi al-Maghreb. Al-Ribat: *Kitab al-Jaib*. Manshurat al-Zaman. N0. 8, p. 87.

²⁵Ibid., p. 88.

²⁶Abu Zaid, Ahmad (1870). *Al-Bina' al-Ijtima'i: Madkhal li Dirasat al-Mujtama'*. 3rd. ed. Cairo. Al-Haya'a al-Massriya al-'Ammah, p. 88.

²⁷Ibrahim, Nabila (1981). *Ashkal al-Adab al-Sha'bi*. 3rd. ed. Cairo: Dar Gharib li al-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, p. 179.

constantly: الهجالة ربت عجل ما فلع ربت كلب ما نبح / al-Hajjala (deflowered deserted wife) brought up a calf but he did not succeed, and brought up a dog, but it did not bark". This shows that the popular logic is that the natural place for the woman is life under the protection of a man who will protect her and preserve her²⁸

We see that Popular Proverbs about women deal with groups of perception that surround the many attributes of the woman. Their relationship with the woman adopts two approaches: one approach is directed at the text itself with its components; the other is directed at the reader. Iser maintains that the relationship between the reader and the text is a continuous dialectic relationship that works on two axes: the time axis and the space axis. The intention, according to the traditional concept, includes the Cognitive Sciences and reflective knowledge.

This hypothesis depends on the notion that the human being cannot achieve high levels of coherence while he is absorbed in imaginary scenes, which means that Proverbs are not concerned with imaginary things and reality is always their main motivator. Polyphony (multiplicity of voices) in one proverb leads to the forms of awareness and requires an artistic concept that corresponds with the familiar.

The image that is imprinted in the reader's or hearer's mind for the first time seeks to actualize itself, though there are two poles in the artistic formation of the proverb. These two poles constitute double features of the proverb. Although some proverbs are full of infinite scenes, and others are limited scenes, the vision of proverbs about the soul of the woman, through the proverbs that have reached us, tells us about the position of the woman and her status and importance towards herself, towards the man and towards the members of the family²⁹

To sum up, our popular proverbs described every possible image of the woman. These proverbs expressed ancient experiences that we have inherited from our ancestors in the form of wisdoms, bits of advice, and warning or encouraging treatments. Sometimes they put the woman in a positive box and on other times in a negative one. Therefore, it is not appropriate to read a proverb that is about the woman without taking into consideration the essential circumstances that the woman has undergone because each experience is an indication of the space-time structure and the cultural historical structure, as William Ray says³⁰

According to Roman Ingarden (1893-1970), each proverb is a literary work and has a number of special classes of lexical items, sounds of words, semantic units and intentionality class. Therefore, the man and the woman choose, as it seems, the class that supports each other's beliefs and carries and bears their points of view³¹. Therefore, each proverb of the woman's proverbs has a special formation and limited words that tell us about an existing reality that can be seen and noticed. These proverbs, whether individually or collectively, draw people gradually to clash and argue when they seek meaning and its purpose. The result is real birth of the truth, as Bakhtin called it³².

In this way, the image of the woman appeared in proverbs and each proverb assumed an individual mental image on a background of a previous mental image, and consequently, it got justification to continue. The meanings that were not obvious became open and created new images that quickly harmonized with the age and adjusted to it.

The Woman as a Mother

The cultural structure often connects the woman with the role of bringing children, ignoring the fact that bringing children is a biological operation between man and woman. That image that accompanies the woman constantly is that she is a 'womb' that brings children to life. Therefore, there is no meaning or soul in the house without children that guarantee continuity: الله يعز البيت اللي يخرج منو بيت / God blesses the home (family) that produces another home (family). This means that the barren woman is a valueless being: المره بلا وُلاَد مثل الخيمة بلا وتد / The woman without children is like a tent without pegs. The guarantee of stability of marriage life is subject to giving birth.

In view of what has been said, it becomes clear that the existence of the woman in her matrimonial life does not mean anything without bringing children. As Du Berman says: "The woman cannot aspire to real integration except by having a baby"³³ and what we intend is having a male baby. However, giving birth is a two-sided sword. On the one hand, having a baby might serve as a rescue rope or a life boat for the woman towards a life of stability and integration. On the other, it might constitute a threat to her and as the proverb says:

²⁸Ibid. p. 65.

²⁹Ray, William (1987). *Ak-Ma'na al-Adabi min al-Zahiriya ila al-Tafkikiya*. Trans. By Yo'el Yoseph Aziz. Baghdad: Dar al-Ma'moun, p. 44.

³⁰Ibid. p. 183.

³¹Ibid. p. 37.

³²Bakhtin, Mikhail (1986). *Qadhaya al-Fan al-Ibda'a ind Dostoyevsky*, p. 160.

³³Ali, Afarfar (1996). *Surat al-Mar'a bay al-Manzour al-Dini wa al-Sha'bi wa al-'Ilmani*, p. 64.

أيام لوليدات / The days of cheek (kissing) pass and the days of children (responsibility) come. The proverb /يا اللي يعجبك في النسا الزين، دير في بالك لحباله ونفاس / You who admire beautiful women, remember the days of pregnancy and postpartum period. This contradictory attitude towards the woman-mother reflects the man's selfishness, who seeks to satisfy his desire of paternity.

Some proverbs discriminate between the boy and the girl: بيت البنات خراب / the house of girls is a ruin; إن مات اخوك / If your brother dies, your back will be broken, if your sister dies, your honor is preserved, if your son dies, your liver is burnt' /الأولاد بيحوا من بغداد والبنات من ورا الباب / the sons come from Baghdad, the daughters come from behind the door; بطن جاب البنية اضربوه بالعصيه واطعموه لحم بايت / the abdomen that brought a girl hit it with a stick and feed it with overnight meat and do not says 'pity'; البنت يا تسترها يا تقبرها / the daughter is like a door-stick, everyone sticks her; البنت مثل مدقة الباب مين ما كان بيدقها / the daughter should be either hidden or buried; خالف البنات يحوج لنسب الكلاب / giving birth to daughters, forces you to be related in marriage to dogs; بدلع بنتك بتعرك ودلع ابنك بعرك / spoil your daughter and she will bring shame to you, spoil your son and he will bring honor to you; صوت حية ولا صوت بنيه / a voice of a snake is better than a voice of a daughter; لما قالوا لي ولد اتشد ظهري وأستند ولما قالوا لي بنيه انهدت الحيطه علي / when they said 'you have a son', my back became strong, when they said 'you have a daughter' the wall fell on me; ما أحلى فرحتهم لو ماتوا بساعتهم / How great your pleasure is if they die when they are born.

Some proverbs describe the woman as a miserly and greedy one: ترميه بالحاره ولا تعطيه للجاره / She prefers to throw it to the street instead of giving it to a neighbor. She is also described as an aggressive one: لا أنا متيحة ولا الناس / I am not so good and I do not like people. In other proverbs she is described as jealous: لولا الغيرة ما حبلت / If they were not jealous, women would not get pregnant. Some proverbs deprive the woman of her freedom: إن خلوا البنت على خاطرها يا بتأخذ زمار يا طبال / If they let the daughter do as she likes, she would marry a piper or a drummer; اكسر للبنت ضلع يطلعها أربعة وعشرين / Break a limb of the daughter, twenty-four will grow instead.

The following proverbs are certainly composed by women who declare their protest against men's betrayal and disrespect to the feelings of their wives and their devaluation of their value;

المراه خزانه والزلمه بلا أمانه / The woman is a safe and the man is not trustworthy;
مرته حوريه وعينه عالنوري / His wife is a mermaid, and his eyes are on the gypsy;
المراه حرة مثل الذهب في الصرة / The free woman is like gold in the purse;
الحره حره ولو كانت دان جره / The free woman is free even if she is a jar-ear;
خذ الأصيله ولو أنها على الحصيره / Take the honest one even if she lives on a mattress;
بتقول للشمس غيبي تقعد مطرك / She says to the sun "set!" so that I sit in your place;
زينة الزين والحواجب والعينين / She is the best of the best with the eyebrows and the eyes;
خذ المليح واستريح / Take the good one, and rest
المراه الرزينة بتسوي مدينة / The sober-minded woman is worth a whole city
الزلمة جنى و المراه بنى / The man earns and the woman builds
المراه المليحه بتعمل من الهامل زلمه / The good woman turns the vagabond into a good man;
بعد الأم أحفر وطم / After the death of the mother, dig and bury yourself;

ثلاثة بتطول العمر: الدار الوسيعة و المراه المطيعة، والفرس السريعه / Three things elongate one's age: wide house, obedient wife, and fast mare;

المراه زي الحريقه بتنطفى بدقيقة / the woman's anger is like a fire that is extinguished in a moment;

خذ البيضة ولو مجنونه / Take the white girl, even if she is crazy.

المراه المربية ذهب مخيبه / The well-brought up woman is like hidden mine of gold.

It is clear from what is said above that the woman tries to achieve her dream in her proverbs and likes to believe their contents. The man, too, tries to achieve what he aspires to and what he thinks about himself, but cannot hear an argument that constitutes a challenge to his beliefs. However, even if ready to accept the possibility that his beliefs might be wrong, he is unable to make one step outside the traditions that define the directions of his thought. The collective attitude of society is stronger than his individual attitude. Thus, the man and woman remain in an endless clash. It seems that the man desires to exploit these proverbs to establish the woman's historical position: المراه لو طلعت للمريخ آخرتها للطبيخ / If the woman flies to Mars, she is finally for cooking. The man's repetition of such proverbs is nothing but exploitation to the model of man who likes to reconstruct the parts of his culture that is connected to history and he does his best not to lose it.

In view of this, it is possible to explain the man's suspicion of the woman from the perspective that he cannot see the truth unless it is turned upside down. Most probably, the man has made his proverbs say what they did not say, and brought the words that had the indication that he liked and closed the content on the meanings that he wanted. The man might have exploited the circumstances of the woman's isolation or separation outside the movement of history. He restored what he gave her and then tempted her that he would return it to her as if he was representing the statement of Stanley Fish: "the promised thing that the man cannot

achieve is certainty or knowledge of the truth that falls outside the scope of literature³⁴. What helped the man is his ability to bring the suitable words and employ them to what he wanted. Besides his personal choices and the inherited literary expression, he exploited the bitter reality that the woman lived in. Then, he reformulated this reality using simple words that were understood by everyone. Thus, the proverbs appeared and moved in all directions. This leads us to say that the man and the woman were not isolated from social circumstances or from the context of the proverbs.

II. SUMMARY

In my view, responsibility for that is to be put on the woman more than on the man because the woman accepted the conditions that the man made for her. I believe that there are no differences between the two sexes in their abilities and concerns, and consequently, we should get rid of the idea of 'female roles' and 'male roles' in our life.

In my view, it is necessary to sieve the popular proverbs especially those that contradict the human values and exclude them from usage. The stress should be put on proverbs that give an illuminating image of the woman especially that the woman has proved her equality and even supremacy in most fields of life and science. Here, I call the scholars and linguists to stop spreading negative proverbs in their writings, and stop including them in encyclopedias and books that are concerned with teaching proverbs due to their dangerous effect on the collective mind of our societies.

The woman is considered to be a main element in most of the popular proverbs whether in standard Arabic or colloquial Arabic. Therefore, this study tried to deal with the points of weakness and points of strength in a group of proverbs that describe the position of the woman in the institution of marriage. The study found that the Arabic popular proverbs about the woman introduce her and her position in a large way.

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