

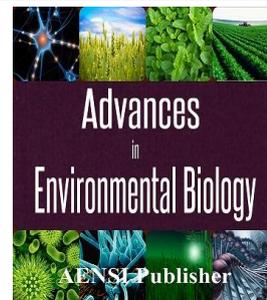


AENSI Journals

## Advances in Environmental Biology

ISSN-1995-0756 EISSN-1998-1066

Journal home page: <http://www.aensiweb.com/AEB/>



### Hanna mineh's view about woman

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article history:

Received 25 October 2014

Received in revised form 26 November 2014

Accepted 12 December 2014

Available online 15 January 2015

##### Key words:

Hanna mineh, woman, fictional literature of Syria

#### ABSTRACT

Many writers in Syria and the Arab world before Hanna mineh had noticed that the women were oppressed by the Arab patriarchal society and thus they had written articles, story and versified poems to defend the women's rights and they have supported women especially derelict and poor women in the society. However, it can be stated unequivocally that no writer in the Arab world and Syria has covered women's social and economic problems as the same extent as Hanna mineh. Hanna Mineh differs from other writers regarding attitude towards the current situation of women in the society, their source of problems and paying attention to all the women in the community. He has not changed his opinion about women since he has started writing career so that he has dedicated all his eight literary works to women; in all his works, the role of women is very crucial. He has told about different classes of women whether woman's role as a mother or as a wife; such as wealthy, educated, poor, worker, derelict, queen and even alien women.

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**To Cite This Article:** Mrs. Seyedeh Hamideh Najib and Nahid Gandomi Kal Akbar Azizifar Hanna mineh's view about woman *Adv. Environ. Biol.*, 8(25), 531-535, 2014

### INTRODUCTION

#### Hanna Mineh's view about woman:

Regarding that Hanna mineh is a Christian writer, there are some remarks in his works that are related to Christianity and Christian thought. There is no favorable view toward the woman in this distorted culture, she is considered as the source of sin, corruption and deceit, for example, where men want to highlight the weakness of women, they say: "woman has been made of left ribs of man" [10,16]. And anytime they want to accuse woman to corruption and subordination, they say: "From the time that man ate the forbidden apple was entitled to curse; because he did not listen to creator's talk about not eating apples and he was deceived by serpent then he didn't follow Lord's order; the serpent is the same Eve" [18]. They believe that Eve made Adam expelled from paradise "Adam was deceived by Eve but Adam awakened Eve from ignorance" [21] or they believe the woman is a symbol of deceit and deception and say: "This is the Eve who deceives at all times and places, even if there are no conditions to deceive" (same reference, 376) and they always blame women for being women: "Damn Eve that you've played her role." [14] Or "I do not trust women; this damned genus does not believe any covenant." [16] And "curse of Eve who you're playing her role." [14] "You belong to Eve's generation, the generation which is damned eternally. All feminine creatures deserve the curse." [18] or they stated that men do not trust women, he states: "I do not trust women; this damned genus does not believe any covenant." [16] and say that "Adam awakened Eve from ignorance" [21]. They believe if a man does not live, woman will be in ignorance. These words represent the common religious beliefs in society as it has been stated in Genesis; so the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib she had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man..." (The Old Testament, Genesis, 2: 21-25). And woman is also introduced as a dependent and parasite creature in the Old Testament who has been created from man's ribs and she is also the agent of deceiving man. According to the followers of this religion, woman is the source and origin of sin and corruption, because she tempted Adam at the beginning of their creation. And one of the punishments God has set for her was that Eve and women coming after her must be forever under the rule of

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men" (Old Testament Genesis, 3, p. 16). We see that there is no positive attitude toward women in these remarks but Hanna mineh's purpose of stating these sentences isn't to express personal beliefs or commitment to this opinion; rather it is to reflect the current views about woman in the society; but Hanna mineh has very different perspective about women. He never agrees with the idea of men and common religious thoughts in the society; so he has transferred his real thoughts to readers of novels. He states in the book of "Hekayat Bihar": "all human beings are equal in committing sin and there is no difference between man and woman" (p, 86). He gives tremendous importance to women and the majority of his work is dedicated to women. Hanna mineh's view toward all women in his works has been positive, because he says: "Women have been oppressed by their husbands and society; however in every duty they try to support their husbands and even sometimes they can be a cause of essential development of the community" [22]. Woman has been depicted as innocent in Hanna mineh's novels, "the woman who owns heart, body, spirit and affection. He helps women and justifies all the accusations against her. Accusations which underdeveloped societies attribute to women and women are sacrificed by their rigid and violent rules" [2]. For example in the novel of "Baqaya Sour", the thieves rushed to a house of a woman named "Catherine" and forcibly raped her at night when his husband was not in the village. Despite her innocence and cruelty of the rapists, her husband beat her severely and expelled her outrageously from the house and even he deprived her from seeing her children. The society of Syria in that time was underdeveloped so that even her female relatives didn't accept and support her. They considered her guilty, and thus she was wandering many years in the fields having desire to see her children [11]. Therefore the author depicts "Catherine" with sad style to provoke revenge in the hearts of readers against bad habits of society and the oppression of men. Hanna mineh has been able to portray one of the important social aspects in a view toward woman. Hanna mineh was questioned the fact that very little has happened in his novels to talk about bad or evil woman while evil men have been repeatedly mentioned in his literary works. Woman is always sacred even when she falls. Is it really your views about the woman?

-Yes it is absolutely true, the women in our society have been socially oppressed enormously, although current living conditions for women in Syria are better than before and women are living comfortably, they have not achieved their own legal rights. The woman is not an absolute saint; rather she is like a martyr due to her sacrifice and her sufferings in the society of men and thus a sacred word is needed for every martyr. In addition, the woman is effective in advancement of community and no social movement is successful without women's effort. And I suffer from the point that men are attributed advanced characteristic and women are considered backward creatures [21]. Hanna mineh sometimes believes the woman does not betray her husband in vain; he mentioned the reasons of betrayal of men and women toward each other: "the woman lies to his husband because she is afraid of her husband's vicious acts [18]. And "the woman betrays her husband because her husband sometimes does not pay any attention to her inner needs and desires" (same reference, 63). The women sometimes deviate from family principles because the men freely go to different women and have relationship with them, thus women betray their husbands to take a revenge of them (same reference, 45-46). Hanna mineh's good feeling with reverence and humility for the women and his positive attitude toward some women has led some critics believe that Hanna mineh only helps prostitutes and adulterers and this causes the value of a safe married woman to be decreased. A Syrian writer called "Samar Hamareneh" in an interview with Hanna mineh asks him this question and he answer as: "I love Hanna mineh who loves the woman." Samar Hamareneh says: "This is an important aspect of a man's life, but you will respect all women?" And Hanna mineh answers: "I give a right to all characters to live according to circumstances of their own time without thinking of the injustice. The women of my stories are in the condition of thinking, social and historical" [5]. Love and adore a woman is a matter which isn't neglected in Hanna mineh's literary works. Love is something for which there is no limit and it cannot be bought with money, Love is a fire kindled in the dark heart and illuminates it. Love has surrounded the stories of Hanna mineh and has established inseparable relationship between sexual love and Pervasive affection of man and according to him; these area source of wisdom and glory. Some people don't have positive attitudes toward Hanna mineh's opinion about women due to the combination of emotional and sexual relationship; because it seems that in most of his novels, woman is viewed in the perspective of sex and this benefit is based on the physical pleasure. According to some authors, "the Role of wife in most of the time as an active element in the family structure is ignored and instead the mistress bears a positive charge" [7]. Hanna mineh was asked: "Why do some women in your stories have an important social role, and some of your novels have been selected for sexual issues? And Hanna mineh replies:

- When the issue of sex is in a human relationship, it leads to social movement. I'm not a sex writer and I reject this approach. The woman is more valuable than the short-sighted view that I view her in bodily perspective but the matter of sex has been mentioned in many of my novels, such as a spouse's interest (Altarusiva Nujui) Or a romantic interest (Altarusi and Maria) or interest of human love (Persian and Randeh) or interest that requires intimacy and closeness between two human beings (Zechariah Almursanly and Shabakyeh).

It can be said that there are two main reasons for numerous women's figures in the works of Hanna Mineh: first, he is a realist author and cannot ignore the realities of the community; therefore he shows the facts as they

exist, he offers an image of women that are consistent with the views and opinions of society. Hanna mineh explains more about it as: "If I don't consider absolute perfection for the women in the stories, it is because I want to retain honesty in portraying a Syrian woman. I've tried in my stories to awaken the Syrian woman and show her confusion and negligence in some stages of the 20th century; nevertheless I have avoided showing this wakening in places where they are not, in works such as: (Baqayasour, Al-yater, Al-shams fi yavmghaym, Almorsad). It must be stressed that the Syrian woman didn't go out of the determined border except gradually even in the late 20th century and she wasn't permitted to learn science until after the second half of this century. So I have provided examples of women where there are honesty, truth, enthusiasm and the signs to break the shackles that had captured them. Another important point in my works: the pressure of long centuries on this seemingly weak creature has failed to destroy her spirit or violate her humanity or break her spirit of freedom. "[5]. For example, in the novel *Almasabih alzarq "Aalst Barbara"* French teacher's wife who is corrupt and west-oriented, she even doesn't have sense of responsibility toward her country; because she agrees with French presence in this country and she has relationship with them. As she was a sample of a profligate and corrupt woman, she captured the young Fars in her lust and she had a crucial role in his homelessness, hopelessness and moral decline; whenever she could not use her feminine guile to achieve her goals, she would resort to the French people. She has realized that woman is one of the main pillars of society and she is influential and thus her negligence makes her artistic work worthless. Hanna Mineh says in this regard: "the woman always or at least most of the time is magnificent in my stories; ... I have said repeatedly that the woman is always the essence of all things; she is a partner of a man. She is a mother in the first position; she is a friend and a companion to her husband. Men and women are equal in terms of upbringing in the family in this age. She is the creator of culture, because she is the first inspiring for art and literature. In addition, women is the creator of social progress; Although man is a modern person, he is afraid of the strictness of the society, culture, its customs and it's kind of attitude but the woman has such innate courage that she fearlessly breaks barriers that impede scientific progress. And the first woman who takes steps in the way of science is a martyr. Despite the fact that men and women are equal in their rights, women have fought very much in order to achieve this right and they have been able to be in places such as policies, leadership and governance, and this is not only in Europe and the West but also in the Arab world. It is true that woman has been oppressed by men and community but she isn't weak and she has not had a less crucial role than man in revolutions and creating the community. As it is said in the famous poem: "He who rides dangerous boat, he does not fear of drowning." A woman who takes action in a work, she is not afraid of anything. "(faqih 13 \ 3 \ 1980). Another matter is that a woman: "Whatever it is, although she has reached the falling stage, her soul is continuously pure and clean; uncleanness doesn't reach to her essence. Surely improper upbringing, backwardness and social system lead him to evil; because if the woman is mentally healthy, she will achieve high degrees whether she is old or young, whether she is a mother or not, then she is a woman and devoted too. Like "Ghunavj Al-zarqa" in the novel of Sera Omaratin. Firstly, her home was the centre of swinger Arab and French men because of poverty, social and economic problems but as she found a real man in her life and she recognized his personality value, she married with him and abandoned all her previous actions; But society still viewed her as a corrupt and sinning woman and the people believed that her behavioral correction was impossible and they repeatedly accused her of treason. So in the ceremony held in the city, in order to erase the stigma she courageously killed "Kabtin Rujih" who was a cruel French man that fighters weren't safe of his torture. Here Hanna Mineh "has a universal view toward Ghunuj and finally she is introduced as a patriotic hero for separation of fault and shame" [5] When Hannamineh speaks about woman characters in his stories, he mostly talks about human and emotional dimensions. He always breathes life spirit upon them; he is never negligent of paying attention to the women of his stories; rather he depicts love, affection and tenderness in their soul and sometimes he goes beyond of this; despite the fact that the man plays a major role in most of the stories, he explicitly states that if a woman didn't live, a man wouldn't have peace, movement, tolerance against problems, spirit of fighting in the political and social events. And even women and their actions stimulate men for political movements and patience against disasters. For example, a character in the novel "nahayat Rajolshoja" called "Labibeh". She was lonely and homeless as similar to the other women who was oppressed by men but after she had acquainted with "Mufid Vahsh" as if she found her missing half, became a noble woman [14]. And she tries to be away from other men under any circumstances; although she hasn't married with Mufid, she shows his loyalty and fights against numerous social and economic problems. Here Hanna mineh has been able to portray a clear example of love, dedication, patience and perseverance of a woman before her husband. The important role of Labibeh is to make his wandering character consistent and causes Mufid Vahsh to change into a useful and beneficial personality. As she acknowledges that: "Labibeh is the woman that I wished her every time; so I felt consistency for the first time in my life and I felt the world rewarded me because of my patience and I felt happiness that I had not experienced before. The happiness which I haven't tasted, I put my head calmly on the pillow, as if I've been born again and all my discomfort have been resolved while I live with Labibeh and I know what I should do in my life" (same reference, 303). And he praises the woman in another place saying: "When a man lives with a woman as if he has got the whole world" (same reference, 336). Therefore he encourages men to marry and

argues that while a man can easily have relationship with many women, but true happiness comes only with marriage; rather than a single life and relations with prostitutes. It must be noted that the women of his stories always don't have an absolute, positive and constructive role; rather women's personality of his stories sometimes fall to degree of lewd, chatty, ignorant, cynical, drunk and voluptuary; since he is the realist author and his goal is to express the facts rather than portraying of idealized fantasy world. He wants to show to the readers a period of time that his stories belong to. Due to the fact that a society in each period of time has a particular view towards women and her position, the author has to follow the attitude of society towards women. So the description of the woman in Hanna mineh's stories is influenced by the society and the time period in which the story is narrated. As he states in the book "Hvajesfi Altajrobat Al-ravaeyh": "Despite women's living conditions have been improved and they achieved some of their rights in Syrian society and they have been employed in many positions, they are still subject to social injustice" [21]. And he states as a reaction to the criticism of some seemingly intellectuals, "the people in the society have accustomed to talk about civilized and enlightened woman to show themselves as eminent; these people speak about women with intellectual logic, but they treat the women with the dogmatic logic". Many writers have spoken about women but none of them as much as Hnamynh has talked about the women known as "prostitutes" in justice and he writes in his famous novel (Al-rajol allazi Yakrahunafsahu): "Quean women are the victims of society in which there is no justice and equality. Having sex with quean woman is something like that a live person intercourses with a dead body and what is resulted is that the man has got her body's coldness while lacking the warmth and heat. Of course it's not her fault; a man who has relationship with such a woman, he doesn't want to give her a sense of love and affection too; rather he gives her a lifeless property and this is equality. If the problem is related to masculine force of man, baker and ironmongery have more masculine force than the artist; a woman needs love, preparation and adoption of the spirit before sexual relations. She needs an elevated position with respect; the position which is away from any meanness, procurement and humiliation of all the men" (Same reference, 71). Therefore the woman in spite of their positions, does not like humiliation and she isn't interested in any man; rather women in anywhere in the world "love three characteristics: generosity, courage and social status" (same reference, 201). And in the continuation of supporting women in other parts of the novel he states that knowing women isn't an easy job; he says by the words of one of the characters: "woman is a strange creature, a thick book that whatever man reads, he cannot say he has finished because her book is the book of life" (Same reference, 202). Although numerous women have been mentioned in Hannamineh's works, the role of women in his narrations is generally very pleasant and different and he says in this regard: "I have mentioned a lot of examples of women in my stories and I have sketched her in her true face. Women are certainly victims of social conditions and the traditions of the ancients in all of these cases; man dominates woman completely and he supposes that this is the man's rights. However woman appears fine in all of these remarks in the black heart of the men and in unfavorable conditions that dominate her life; her spirit is a bright and luminous place. The greater awareness and perfection of woman is the more achievement of her alertness. She won't be far from the hopes and aspirations. Woman is tireless in the dedication, hard work and in his fighting spirit, because despite all of the violent factors dominating her life, a violent revolutionary spirit can be found in her soul. That is why the women in my stories have a general and vital role in the community".

#### *Conclusion:*

Hanna mineh witnessed in his personal life that hard-working and innocent women were oppressed in the society. So he tried to emancipate women from social and economic problems by writing. He was a scholar and intellectual that he devoted his life in defense of women to get rid of old customs and human cruel laws. Hanna mineh in his works defended women whom human laws had misled; man and society had prevailed upon them; as a result, these women needed a brave warrior to free them from the shackle of society and to care about the fact that although they are drowning in a social corruption, they are full of energy and human emotions and if a good condition is provided, they can manage their own life and moreover they can change the lives of others.

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