
Propaganda by Deed and the Destruction of Authority in *Ahlam Alnisa' Alharem*: An Goldman's Anarcho-Feminist Reading

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Abstract

This study examines the forms of women's resistance against patriarchal structures in Fatima Mernissi's novel, *Ahlam Alnisa' Alharem*. In contrast to previous liberal feminist approaches that generally emphasize negotiation and systemic reform, this research employs Emma Goldman's Anarcho-Feminist perspective to analyze direct and confrontational resistance strategies. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical qualitative method, the present study draws upon two primary concepts: Propaganda by Deed and The Destruction of Authority. The findings indicate that the female characters within the Harem articulate their autonomy through direct action, the assertion of bodily rights, and civil disobedience, rather than mere compliance. Furthermore, these acts aim to deconstruct three intersecting forms of authority conceptually referred to as the "trinity of oppression," which encompasses the manipulation of religious tradition, state repression represented by territorial boundaries (*hudud*), and social class hierarchies. The culmination of this resistance is the liberation of women from internalized patriarchal control, identified within the narrative as the "internal tyrant". In conclusion, emancipation within this text is realized through the dismantling of both structural confinement (the physical spaces of the Harem) and psychological subjugation.

Keywords: Emma Goldman; Anarcho-Feminism; Propaganda by Deed; The Destruction of Authority.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of gender inequality is deeply rooted in a system of masculine domination that legitimizes male superiority and reduces women to objectified positions (Arianty et al., 2020). This patriarchal power operates in a coercive yet subtle manner through cultural institutions such as religious and familial norms (Mukminto, 2020). Consequently, women are conditioned to obey external authorities that restrict their free will (Swastini et al., 2025). Such obedience is not a natural entity, but rather the product of internalizing social demands reproduced by institutions safeguarding the status quo (W. Z. Goldman, 1993). It is within this structure of domination that individual liberty is systematically suppressed by the three main pillars of oppression: religion, property, and the state (E. Goldman, 2008).

Literary works play a crucial role in illustrating the lived reality of such oppression (Hidayat & Rohanda, n.d.). In addition, literature inherently reflects the intellectual dynamics and sociological conditions of its time (Rohanda, 2016). The representation of this authoritarian control is distinctly illustrated in the novel *Ahlan Alnisa' Alharem* by Fatima Mernissi (F. Mernissi, 2008). The inner struggles of the women within the narrative are not only physically isolated but also psychologically repressed by the doctrine of *hudud* (sacred boundaries), which restricts access to public spaces (Ishaque, 2018). Through this setting, the Harem transforms into a miniature authoritarian state where men monopolize control over women's bodies and minds (Mernissi, 1994). This condition ultimately triggers the characters to challenge these boundaries through various tactical strategies of rebellion (Marlina et al., 2022).

This study dissects the dynamics of this resistance using the framework of Emma Goldman's Anarcho-Feminism, an analytical lens that demands absolute freedom from authoritarian interference (Kornegger, 2019). Within this theoretical construct, true emancipation is posited to require the comprehensive deconstruction of authority, rather than mere negotiation for legal reform (Mernissi, 2008). Furthermore, Goldman argues that women's liberation involves challenging internalized forms of authority, which necessitates dismantling the "internal tyrant," a psychological barrier rooted in fear toward public opinion and conventional morality (Putra, 2018).

Deconstructing ingrained prejudices and customs is positioned as a necessary step to liberate the mind from repression (Goldman, 2020). Theoretically, this freedom must be seized through "Propaganda by Deed," defined as specific, conscious acts of direct action meant to catalyze broader awakening (Berkman, 2001). This resistance is directly focused on the state and its apparatuses, which continuously enforce hierarchical obedience to secure the status quo (Mollès & Parada-Ulloa, 2025). Within the structure of the Harem, this method of direct action successfully sparks a wave of collective resistance among its female inhabitants (Mernissi, 1994). Their actions substantiate the anarchist postulate that genuine change emerges from the praxis of concrete action (Goldman, 1917). The concept of *hudud* within this novel functions as the territorial borders of a state, engineered primarily as an instrument of control (Emma et al., 2022). Thus, the Harem is analytically positioned as a representation of absolute tyranny (Baarle, 2024). Consequently, it is a structure the characters actively dismantle to live sovereignly (Mernissi, 2008). These confrontational strategies are effectively implemented to tear down the oppressive system (Larasati & Noviani, 2021).

To construct a systematic analysis, five key studies serve as the foundation for this research. Sociopolitically, (Asmarani (2022) establish the groundwork regarding Arab women's dynamics. In line with this, Hawazen, (2025) dissects the concept of *hudud* as a spatial tool of absolute control. While sharing similarities in the object of study, the present research advances this discourse by focusing on the physical resistance tactics aimed at obliterating those boundaries. Furthermore, Hasanah (2022) maps out marginalization using a liberal feminist lens. Meanwhile, Suhaenah (2024) highlights women's reformist negotiations to improve their status.

The fundamental departure of the present study lies in its rejection of this reformist narrative, opting instead for a radical anarcho-feminist approach. Finally, while Syarif & Sari



(2022) theoretically discuss Goldman's "trinity of oppression," their work does not extend to narrative literary analysis.

Responding to the research gap from this focused literature review, this article provides novelty through the rigorous application of anarcho-feminist theory to a narrative structure. Specifically, this study aims to analyze the practice of Propaganda by Deed among women in their efforts to achieve the Destruction of Authority. The central hypothesis is that emancipation in *Ahlam Alnisa' Alharem* is not oriented toward compromising with domestic rules, but rather aims to totally deconstruct both external and internal tyrants through direct action. To systematically unpack this hypothesis, the present study is explicitly guided by three interrelated research questions. Primarily, it investigates how the concept of Propaganda by Deed is represented within the novel's narrative. Subsequently, it examines the precise ways in which the female characters challenge patriarchal authority. Finally, the study explores what specific forms of authority are effectively deconstructed as a result of these resistance efforts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive-analytical method. The selection of a qualitative method is based on the research orientation, which focuses on the interpretation of meaning and an in-depth understanding of literary texts, rather than numerical quantification (Alandira et al., 2025). Conceptually, qualitative research functions to investigate the condition of an object in its natural setting, where the final outcome emphasizes the extraction of meaning rather than generalization. This approach is considered highly relevant for producing a descriptive data exposition in the form of accurate written words regarding the behavior of the observed characters (Rohanda, 2016). As the analytical framework, this study applies the Anarcho-Feminist theory pioneered by Emma Goldman. This theory is applied because it specifically focuses on the rejection of oppressive authorities that curtail women's freedom, both in the political and moral realms (Goldman, 1910).

The material object as well as the primary data source in this study is the novel *Ahlam Alnisa' Alharem* by Fatima Mernissi (Mernissi, 1997). The original Arabic edition of the work was published in 1997 by Ward for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, comprising 265 pages. Serving as the specific unit of analysis, this research focuses on narrative passages, discursive exchanges, and behavioral depictions that explicitly illustrate acts of resistance performed by the female characters. Consequently, the types of data utilized from the object consist of words, phrases, sentences, and discourses containing these critical indicators of resistance. The data collection technique is carried out through a textual study procedure, which functions as an extension of the researcher's sensory capabilities in gathering empirical facts (Ramdhan, 2021). This data collection process is implemented through the stages of reading the text meticulously, observing the linguistic structures, and recording discourse findings that are relevant to the research problem. The criteria for textual data selection strictly required passages demonstrating direct defiance against patriarchal norms or explicit acts asserting bodily and spatial autonomy. Through this rigorous filtering process, a total of 13 primary data points were selected for in-depth examination. To fulfill academic standards of rigor, data credibility was firmly established through repeated reading and theoretical triangulation utilizing Goldman's anarcho-feminist framework.

The data analysis technique employs a series of interpretive processes that demand a directed and comprehensive understanding of the text (Rohanda, 2005). Data processing is constructed into four systematic stages, namely textual description, categorical classification, critical analysis, and interpretation. Operationally, the coding mechanism involved annotating the 13 selected data points based on their alignment with Goldman's theoretical concepts. During this data categorization technique, the extracted narrative units are systematically sorted and coded into two primary thematic groups: the practical manifestations of Propaganda by Deed and the specific forms of patriarchal authority being dismantled. The application of the Anarcho-Feminist perspective in this analytical phase is positioned as an absolute methodological necessity to fully interpret the characters' radical actions. Through Goldman's analytical framework, acts of

sabotage and rule violations by the characters are identified not merely as ordinary domestic disobedience. These actions are sharply extracted as tangible manifestations of Propaganda by Deed, operating as a conscious political resistance strategy. In the final interpretation stage, this method is directed to prove that the Destruction of Authority against the "Trinity of Oppression" within the Harem is realized through the instrument of direct action, affirming that freedom is seized through the path of absolute confrontation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on an in-depth reading and analysis of Fatima Mernissi's novel, *Ahlam Alnisa' Alharem*, thirteen discourse data points were identified that represent women's resistance against patriarchal authority. All of these data findings were dissected using the analytical lens of Emma Goldman's Anarcho-Feminism and classified into two primary tactical frameworks, namely Propaganda by Deed and The Destruction of Authority.

1. Propaganda by Deed

The concept of Propaganda by Deed in this novel is represented through the characters' direct actions in challenging obedience, as well as their conscious efforts to assert autonomy over their own bodies. The data classification for this category is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Data Classification of Propaganda by Deed

No	Data	Page	Category
1	<p>في أغنيتها «أهوى». وأذكر تماماً المرة الأولى التي نعتتنا النساء فيها - أنا وسمير - بـ «خاين» أسمهان (بالخاننين)؛ لأننا أجينا والدي: إننا استمعنا إلى إذاعة صوت القاهرة»، عندما سألنا - في أحد الأيام - عما فعلناه أثناء غيابه. لقد وشى جوابنا بوجود مفتاح غير نظامي - أو بتعبير أدق - كان جوابنا يعني: إن النساء قد اختلسن المفتاح الأصلي لصنع نسخة عنه. إذا امتلكن نسخة عن مفتاح خزنة المذياع فقد يحصلن قريباً على نسخة عن مفتاح البوابة» زمجر أبي غاضباً (F. Mernissi, 1997,P; 20)</p> <p><i>(Asmahan in her song 'Ahwa'. I remember perfectly the first time the women called us - Samir and me - 'traitors'; because we answered my father: 'We were listening to Radio Cairo', when he asked us - one day - what we did during his absence. Our answer betrayed the existence of an illegal key - or more accurately - our answer meant: 'The women stole the original key to make a copy of it. If they possess a copy of the radio cabinet key, they might soon obtain a copy of the gate key', my father roared angrily.)</i></p>	20	Direct Action
2	<p>بهما، فترتدي جلبابها بسرعة فائقة، وتتقّب بمنديل من الموسلين (موصلي) أسود، وتجري مسرعة وراءهما، (Quickly puts on her djellaba, covers her face with a black muslin veil, and runs hurriedly after them.) (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;150)</p> <p><i>(Quickly puts on her djellaba, covers her face with a black muslin veil, and runs hurriedly after them.)</i></p>	150	Direct Action
3	<p>حين تصبح النساء على قدر من الذكاء يمكنهن من طرح هذا السؤال بالتحديد بدل أن يتأين بمهانة أعمال الطبخ والنفخ والغسل والمسح من مطلع النهار حتى زواله؛ فإنهن سيكن قادرات على إيجاد طريقة لتغيير القواعد، طريقة ستقلب صورة الحياة على وجه هذه الأرض (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;87)</p> <p><i>(When women become intelligent enough to ask exactly this question instead of submissively following the routines of cooking, blowing, washing, and wiping from dawn to dusk; they will be able to find a way to change the rules, a way that will turn the image of life on this earth upside down.)</i></p>	87	Direct Action
4	<p>فشرحت لها مشكلة اليهود والألمان والقنابل والغواصات، لكن لم يبد عليها التأثير الكلامي، وقالت إن كان هاي - هتلر ملك الألمان القادر بإلحاحك فعليك أن : مكشوفة الرأس؛ لأن لا فائدة ترتجى من تغطية الرأس والا ليس بالاختباء تحل المرأة مشاكلها، بل إنها تتحول به إلى بسهل اصطباها.. لقد عانيت وجدتك بما فيه الكفاية من الأفتحة والحجابات. نحن نعرف أن هذا ليس صحيحاً. أريد أن تشمخا برأسيهما عالياً على أرض الله، وهما تنظر النجوم». بناءً على هذا نزلت المنديل عن رأسي تاركة إياي دون أية وسيلة دفاع في مواجهة جيش حفي يلاحق الأشخاص الشعوب السوداء (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;131)</p>	131	Self-Assertion and Bodily Autonomy

	<p>(So I explained to her the problem of the Jews, the Germans, the bombs, and the submarines, but she did not seem affected by the words, and said: 'If this Hitler, the king of the Germans, is capable of chasing you, then you must be bareheaded; because there is no use in covering the head, and it is not by hiding that a woman solves her problems, but rather she turns into easy prey to hunt. I have suffered enough from masks and veils. We know this is not true. I want you both to hold your heads high on God's earth, looking at the stars.' Based on this, I took the veil off my head, leaving myself without any means of defense facing a hidden army chasing black-haired people.)</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>لدى سماعها هذه الكلمات، كانت العمة حبيبة تبتسم إزاء بحثي الدؤوب مطلق العنان عن التفسيرات الدقيقة. ممكن يا طفلي المسكين، لست بحاجة إلى تعقيد حياتك. الجمال كامن في البشرة. أحيطها بالعناية وطريها ورطبيها ونظفها وافركيها وعطريها، ثم ارتدي أجمل ثيابك، حتى إذا لم تكن لديك مناسبة خاصة، وحينها سوف تشعرين كأنك ملكة. إن كان المجتمع قاسياً عليك، فلتردي عليه عن طريق عنايتك ببشرتك، إن الجلد «قضية سياسية الجليدة سياسة». وإلا فلم يأمرنا الأئمة بتغطيته؟ (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;291)</p> <p>(Upon hearing these words, Aunt Habiba smiled at my relentless search for precise explanations. 'Possible, my poor child, you don't need to complicate your life. Beauty lies in the skin. Surround it with care, soften it, moisturize it, clean it, scrub it, and perfume it, then wear your most beautiful clothes, even if you don't have a special occasion, and then you will feel like a queen. If society is harsh on you, respond to it by caring for your skin. Skin is a political issue... the cuticle is politics.' 'Otherwise, why did the Imams order us to cover it?')</p>	<p>291</p> <p>Self-Assertion and Bodily Autonomy</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>أريد لا يبتني أن تعيش حياة نابضة وأخاذة تملؤها السعادة بنسبة مئة إلى مئة، لا أكثر ولا أقل. كنت أرفع رأسي، وأنا أنظر إليها بجديّة، ثم أسألها عم تعنيه عبارة «السعادة بنسبة مئة إلى مئة فقد كنت أريدها أن تترك أن على بدل قصارى جهدي لبلوغ تلك السعادة عندنا كانت تفسر لي أن السعادة هي ذلك الشعور العميق الذي ينتاب المرء بأنه مرتاح ورشيق وخلاق ومحبوب وراض وعاشق وحر فالإنسان التسع هو من يشعر بوجود حواجز تقف عائقاً أمام تطلعاته وملكاتة الجوانبية، والمرأة السعيدة هي المرأة التي تستطيع أن تمارس حقوقها كلها، بما فيها حق التنقل من مكان إلى مكان إلى سواء وحق الإبداع وحق مقارنة نفسها بالآخرين وتحديدهم دون أن تتعرض بذلك للطرْد أو النبذ وقد ينجم جزء من السعادة عن رجل يحب القوة التي تتمتع بها زوجته ويفخر بمواهبها (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;105)</p> <p>(I want my daughters to live a vibrant and captivating life filled with happiness at a rate of one hundred percent, no more, no less. I would raise my head, looking at her seriously, then ask her what she meant by the phrase 'one hundred percent happiness', because I wanted her to realize that I had to do my utmost to achieve that happiness. She explained to me that happiness is that deep feeling that a person has that he is comfortable, agile, creative, loved, satisfied, a lover, and free. The miserable person is the one who feels that there are barriers standing in the way of his aspirations and inner faculties. The happy woman is the woman who can exercise all her rights, including the right to move from one place to another, the right to create, and the right to compare herself to others and challenge them without being subjected to expulsion or ostracism. A part of happiness may result from a man who loves the strength his wife enjoys and is proud of her talents.)</p>	<p>105</p> <p>Self-Assertion and Bodily Autonomy</p>

In Table 1 data on page 20, the characters of the Mother and Chama manifest a form of Propaganda by Deed that operates through civil disobedience concerning property. The act of secretly duplicating the radio key constitutes a tangible manifestation of direct action. Viewed through Emma Goldman's anarcho-feminism, rather than requesting permission from patriarchal authority, the women of the Harem choose to assert their agency by circumventing the rules of ownership. Their courage to express themselves through dance also serves as a method of claiming autonomy over their bodies and well-being. The impact of this resistance is reflected in the Father's apprehension, which conceptually aligns with the initial stages of destabilizing authority. The Father's anger, which immediately associates the breaching of the cabinet lock (a symbol of property monopoly) with a potential threat to the main gate's lock (a symbol of territorial boundaries), illustrates the inherent vulnerabilities within systems of strict control. Textually, the Father recognizes that this localized act of defiance functions as a significant challenge that could

destabilize the established foundation of obedience and question his authoritative control within the Harem.

Furthermore, in Table 1 on page 150, physical resistance and Propaganda by Deed are manifested by Chama to challenge gender and spatial boundaries. Chama's physical escape attempt, spontaneously running toward the front gate, functions as a concrete embodiment of direct action. Through the lens of Goldman's framework, structural change is theorized to require proactive engagement rather than mere compromise. Rather than passively accepting confinement inside the Harem, Chama consciously mobilizes her body as an instrument of resistance to transgress the boundaries of patriarchal territory (*hudud*). Her decision to rapidly dress and follow the men demonstrates a clear rejection of the rules that restrict women's freedom of movement. Analytically, this instantaneous physical action illustrates how structural limitations can be effectively destabilized when individuals exercise control over their own bodily autonomy to challenge spatial restrictions.

In Table 1 on page 87, the character Yasmina articulates a desire to substantially reorganize the patriarchal legal order. Yasmina's statement represents an awakening consciousness aimed at destabilizing patriarchal authority through intellectual liberation. From an anarcho-feminist perspective, women's emancipation requires questioning the confinement to monotonous domestic routines, such as continuous cooking and washing. These household routines are often utilized by the prevailing system to limit intellectual development and divert attention from broader structural inequalities. Therefore, cultivating the intellect and the courage to question these norms serves as a foundational premise for Propaganda by Deed. As women within the narrative become critical of their exploited labor, they begin to seek ways to challenge rather than merely accommodate these rules. This determination to alter their social reality aligns with the goals of anarchist resistance, aiming to dismantle restrictive power structures in order to foster a more equitable social order.

In Table 1 on page 131, the Mother executes a Propaganda by Deed action rooted in bodily autonomy and the rejection of submissive symbols. Within that data, the physical act of removing the headcover serves as a tangible manifestation of resistance to liberate both physical and mental constraints. Through the lens of anarcho-feminism, restrictive clothing rules can function as an "internal tyrant" that instills fear, conditioning women to accustom themselves to remaining hidden. The Mother firmly rejects this inherited cultural practice by advising her daughter that hiding from the outside world does not resolve structural problems; rather, it often leaves individuals more susceptible to systemic marginalization. The Mother's desire for her children to stand with their "heads held high looking at the stars" operates as a declaration of fundamental autonomy. Through this act, the narrative suggests that genuine agency is attained when individuals confront their internalized fears and reclaim control over their bodily autonomy to face their social reality directly.

In Table 1 on page 291, bodily maintenance is represented as a political declaration and a symbolic resistance against cultural repression. In this excerpt, Aunt Habiba's action of politicizing her skincare routine constitutes a nuanced form of symbolic resistance. In Goldman's view, the female body is frequently subjected to systemic control that mandates concealment. Aunt Habiba recognizes this dynamic and intelligently reinterprets the seemingly trivial activity of beauty maintenance into a political maneuver. By caring for and pampering her skin, she consciously refuses to let her physical well-being deteriorate under the pressures of the Harem environment. Her assertion that "skin is political" demonstrates that maintaining one's physical self independently can be a tangible assertion of autonomy. Through this action, she declares her body as a territory of personal sovereignty, framing self-care as an effective method to challenge a system that consistently encourages female inferiority.

In the table data on page 105, the Mother formulates the desire to be free (*will to be*) as a fundamental prerequisite for women's well-being. The Mother's philosophical statement regarding "one hundred percent happiness" embodies the *will to be* concept in anarcho-feminist thought. The Mother understands that holistic well-being is difficult to achieve as long as

individuals remain restricted by physical and social pressures that limit their potential. By consciously demanding the right to move freely, create, and compete without the fear of social ostracization, she actively questions the patriarchal social order that frequently reduces women to objects of obedience. She instills an awareness that freedom is not merely a concession from authority, but rather an existential right that must be actively pursued. This determination to dismantle specific social barriers serves as a fundamental foundation for women to assert equality and exercise sovereignty over their life choices.

2. The Destruction of Authority

These direct actions function to destabilize the foundational pillars of control that restrict women's existence. The data classification for this strategy is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Data Classification of the Destruction of Authority

No	Data	Page	Category
1	كانت العمة حبيبة - التي طلقها زوجها وطردها دون أي سبب بعد أن كانت تحبه بحنان - تزعم أن الله قد أرسل جيوش الشمال عقاباً للبشر الذين انتهكوا الحدود» التي تحمي الضعفاء بإيذاء امرأة هو خرق لحدود الله المقدسة، وإيذاء الضعفاء هو خروج على القانون... لقد بكت العمة حبيبة لسنوات طويلة. (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;14) <i>(Aunt Habiba - whose husband divorced her and expelled her without any reason after she loved him tenderly - claimed that God had sent the armies of the North as a punishment to humans who violated the 'boundaries' that protect the weak. Harming a woman is a violation of God's sacred boundaries, and harming the weak is a departure from the law... Aunt Habiba cried for many years.)</i>	14	Religious Authority
2	من سمع يوماً عن عشرة عصافير تحيا في العش عينه؟ ليس من الطبيعي العيش مع جماعة بهذا العدد، إلا إذا كان الهدف منه خلق مُتَعَسِّة الننا. (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;101) <i>(Who ever heard of ten birds living in the same nest? It is not natural to live with a group of this number, unless the goal is to create human misery.)</i>	101	Traditional Authority
3	كانت بوابة الدخول إلى منزلنا تستخدم حداً حقيقياً، وخاضعاً للرقابة على قدر ما تخضع لها بقية الحدود في عرابة. كنا بحاجة إلى إذن الدخول والخروج، وكان مفروضاً على كل انتقال أن يكون مبرراً، و فقط بغية الوصول إلى البوابة (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;37) <i>(The entrance gate to our house was a real boundary, subject to surveillance as much as the rest of the borders in Arbaoua. We needed permission to enter and exit, and every movement had to be justified, and only in order to reach the gate.)</i>	37	Religious/Legal Authority
4	كانت أعصاب أمي تتور، وهي ترى شامة تخفق في الهروب ويؤتي بها كمجرمة، وكانت تخاطب حمد متنبئة بالمستقبل: «سوف ترى يا حمد. سوف تصبح عاطلاً عن العمل عما قريب؛ إذ ستغدو النساء حراتٍ في أن يطفن حول العالم. (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;18) <i>(My mother's nerves would flare up when she saw Chama failing to escape and being brought back like a criminal. She would address Ahmed, prophesying the future: 'You will see, Ahmed. You will soon be unemployed; as women will be free to roam around the world.)</i>	18	State/Government Authority
5	كانت لدى لالاظم مقرعة طويلة مرعبة وقد كنت أوافقها الرأي في كل شيء: الحدود والمسيحيون والتربية الإسلام يعني احترام «الحدود»، وبالنسبة إلى طفل احترام الحدود يعني الطاعة كنت أتمنى من أعمامي أن أرضي لالاظم، وما إن تمكنت من الإفلات من رقابتها يوماً، حتى طلبت من «ابنة عمي مليكة - التي تكبرني سنأ بعامين - أن تريني أين تقع هذه الحدود (F. Mernissi, 1997,p;15) <i>(Lalla Tam had a terrifying long whip, and I agreed with her on everything: borders, Christians, and Islamic upbringing means respecting the 'boundaries', and for a child, respecting the boundaries means obedience. I wished from the bottom of my heart to please Lalla</i>	15	State/Government Authority

	<p><i>Tam, and as soon as I managed to escape her surveillance one day, I asked my cousin Malika - who is two years older than me - to show me where these 'boundaries' are located.)</i></p>	
	<p>كانت ياسمينة التي تنتمي إلى بيئة ريفية متواضعة كسائر الزوجات - ترفض الانبهار بهذه المظاهر وتعبير عن ذلك: «لا يمكنني أن أعتبر شخصاً ما متوقفاً على مرتبة، فقط لأنه يحوز تاجاً. وفوق ذلك، مهما بلغ غناها، فإنها ليست أقل مني احتباساً؛ فهي مثلي تماماً: حبيسة في حريم». وعندما سألت ياسمينة عن معنى عبارة: «حبيسة في حريم» قدمت لي عدة إجابات مختلفة، وأي من تلك الإجابات لم يوضح لي شيئاً على الإطلاق.</p> <p>(F. Mernissi, 1997,p;51-52)</p>	
6	<p><i>(Yasmina - who belongs to a modest rural background like the rest of the wives - refused to be dazzled by these appearances and expressed that: 'I cannot consider someone superior to me in rank, just because she wears a crown. On top of that, no matter how rich she is, she is no less confined than me; she is exactly like me: a captive in a harem.' When I asked Yasmina about the meaning of the phrase: 'a captive in a harem', she gave me several different answers, and none of those answers clarified anything to me at all.)</i></p>	51-52 Authority of Property and Class
	<p>ويُحدّد الحريم من خلال فكرة الملكية الخاصة والقوانين التي تنظمها. وفي إطار هذا المعنى - على إذا كان المرء يعرف المحظورات فهذا يعني: حد قول ياسمينة - تصبح الجدران عديمة الجدوى إنه يحمل حريماً في باطن ذاته. إنه الحريم الخفي، وهو «قائم» داخل الرأس. مكتوب على الجبين، وجاري في الدم». إن فكرة حريم خفي، وقانون مدون على جبھتي دون علمي، ومستقر في دماغي قد شوشنتني بصورة مريضة لم أحب هذه الفكرة البتة،</p> <p>(F. Mernissi, 1997,p;85)</p>	
7	<p><i>(The harem is defined by the idea of private property and the laws that regulate it. And within this meaning - according to Yasmina - the walls become useless. 'If one knows the prohibitions, this means: he carries a harem deep inside himself. It is the invisible harem, and it is 'existing' inside the head. Written on the forehead, and running in the blood.' The idea of an invisible harem, and a law written on my forehead without my knowledge, and settled in my brain confused me terribly. I didn't like this idea at all.)</i></p>	85 Internal Tyrant

In Table 2 on page 14, Aunt Habiba deconstructs the patriarchal religious interpretations that frequently legitimize domestic inequality. The reversal of the religious narrative executed by Aunt Habiba constitutes a crucial step toward The Destruction of Authority. Through the analytical lens of anarcho-feminism, religious institutions and traditional dogmas can be manipulated by those in power as tools to subjugate women under the guise of divine will. However, Aunt Habiba intelligently exposes this dynamic by reinterpreting the existing patriarchal logic. She asserts that it is the men who arbitrarily harm women who are actually violating sacred boundaries (*hudud*). By characterizing the invasion of foreign forces as a consequence of male injustice, she highlights the inconsistencies of the Harem's rulers. This sharp indictment fundamentally questions the moral legitimacy and perceived superiority of the male figures, illustrating that domestic oppression is a form of systemic injustice rather than a sacred mandate.

In Table 2 on page 101, the Mother systematically questions the legitimacy of the communal family tradition, which she views as a mechanism that restricts independent reasoning. The Mother's critique of communal living within the extended family manifests as an effort toward destabilizing traditional authority. From a theoretical perspective, rigid traditional family institutions are frequently maintained not solely for harmony, but as structural tools that can limit individual agency. The Mother's analogy of "ten birds in one nest" logically dismantles the idealization of this tradition, arguing that living under overcrowded communal rules is restrictive and induces distress. This verbal critique acts as a form of resistance aimed at severing the moral obligations that demand blind obedience to historical family structures. By recognizing that these communal rules operate as constructed systems of control, the Mother effectively challenges the prestige of traditional authority, thereby advocating for greater independence and spatial mobility within the Harem.

In Table 2 on page 37, the Harem gate is identified as a representation of systemic control over mobility. The presence of the gate and its guarding system in the narrative indicates that the Harem operates not merely as a residence, but akin to a micro-authoritarian space. Analyzed through Goldman's framework regarding the deconstruction of authority, the rigid bureaucracy and the requirement of justification for exiting constitute a tangible form of spatial repression. The establishment of physical boundaries (*hudud*) and the deployment of guards like Ahmed serve to restrict women's fundamental right to mobility. The narrator's critical approach in examining the layout of this spatial restriction marks a vital starting point of consciousness. Through this understanding, the characters begin to recognize that the power of the Harem largely relies on enforced physical boundaries; thus, questioning the legitimacy of these territorial limits becomes a primary step in destabilizing the broader system of control.

In Table 2 on page 18, the Mother initiates a direct verbal confrontation against the gatekeeper to challenge systemic authority. Her anger upon seeing Chama retrieved against her will operates as a direct confrontation aimed at destabilizing the ruler's prestige. Viewed through an anarcho-feminist lens, the gatekeeper Ahmed functions as a micro-level apparatus of control tasked with enforcing obedience. Instead of yielding, the Mother issues a sharp critique that highlights the vulnerability of the guard's position. Her articulated vision of the future—where women transcend their confinement to travel freely—effectively destabilizes the narrative of the Harem gate's invincibility. This courage to challenge the guarding apparatus serves as a critical challenge that delegitimizes patriarchal enforcement, asserting that the structural rules confining women's mobility are inherently unstable and subject to eventual deconstruction.

In Table 2 on page 15, the exertion of systemic power is represented through the threat of physical punishment utilized to manufacture obedience from an early age. The figure of Lalla Tam and her whip serves as textual evidence of how fear is institutionalized during childhood. In Goldman's theoretical perspective, obedience within such structures is often not natural, but rather conditioned through doctrines that leverage cultural values to maintain hierarchical power. The concept of *hudud* is introduced alongside the threat of punishment to naturalize absolute compliance as the sole acceptable path. However, the young narrator's stealthy initiative to locate the physical embodiment of these "boundaries" marks the beginning of the collapse of the teacher's authority. This action symbolically questions the legitimacy of patriarchal rules, demonstrating that the conceptual restrictions implanted in their minds rely heavily on unquestioned acceptance, and their perceived authority diminishes once subjected to critical inquiry.

In Table 2 on pages 51-52, Yasmina demystifies the authority of material property as the primary determinant of human dignity. Her refusal to be captivated by the allure of a crown and material wealth operates as a direct resistance against social class hierarchies. Drawing upon anarcho-feminist thought, the accumulation of wealth can be utilized by patriarchal systems as an illusion that masks underlying inequalities. Yasmina's statement effectively deconstructs this assumption; she argues that material possessions hold little value if the owner remains structurally confined within the Harem. This critical consciousness challenges the myth of superiority based exclusively on physical luxury. Through her observation, Yasmina not only critiques the social class divisions that separate women but also highlights a unifying textual reality: the systemic restrictions of the Harem impact all its female residents, regardless of their material wealth or status.

In Table 2 on page 85, the narrator reflects on dismantling the deepest layer of cognitive oppression, conceptualized as the "Internal Tyrant." The notion of an invisible Harem implanted in the mind reveals a highly pervasive form of control within anarcho-feminist theory. Yasmina's reflection illustrates that authoritative control is most effective when physical walls are supplemented by internalized restrictions, relocating the enforcement of obedience directly into the subconscious. The narrator's unease and conceptual rejection of the *Harem Khafiy* (the invisible Harem) manifest as a critical stage in *The Destruction of Authority*. Recognizing the profound impact of these deeply rooted psychological constraints, the characters begin to actively



challenge their own internalized limitations. This cognitive awakening is presented as an essential prerequisite for individuals to cease acting as enforcers of their own confinement, allowing them the potential to emerge as subjects less constrained by societal manipulation and fear.

CONCLUSION

Based on the elaborated analysis, this study concludes that women's resistance within the novel *Ahlam Alnisa' Alharem* is represented primarily through the praxis of Propaganda by Deed rather than through negotiation efforts or compromising regulatory reforms. The female characters consciously articulate their independence through direct action, ranging from civil disobedience—such as sabotaging property keys and rejecting restrictive clothing—to the assertion of autonomy over their own bodies. Consequently, within the narrative framework, freedom is represented as being achieved through direct confrontational action and spatial defiance rather than passive negotiation.

Furthermore, the culmination of these direct actions manifests in the Destruction of Authority, systematically dismantling the "trinity of oppression" within the Harem. The characters effectively delegitimize the manipulation of religious doctrines and communal traditions, destabilize the prestige of the gates (*hudud*) that operate akin to an authoritarian state prison, and deconstruct the illusion of material property ownership. The pinnacle of this textual deconstruction is the eradication of the "Internal Tyrant" implanted by the ruling system into women's subconsciousness. Thus, the text conceptually posits that emancipation necessitates the simultaneous dismantling of external tyrannical structures and internalized psychological barriers, ultimately facilitating the emergence of a sovereign individual.

Beyond textual interpretation, this research provides substantial theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study contributes to feminist literary criticism by demonstrating the applicability of anarcho-feminist theory in interpreting spatial resistance and systemic oppression within harem narratives. Academically and practically, it expands the methodological possibilities for analyzing Middle Eastern literature by offering a radical analytical alternative to conventional liberal or reformist feminist frameworks. For future research, it is highly recommended to conduct comparative studies utilizing this theoretical lens on other contemporary Arab literary works, or to explore the intersection of anarcho-feminism with post-colonial theories to further enrich the critical discourse on women's structural resistance.

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